

To Understand the Righteousness
of God in Romans
is to Understand How the Gospel
is the Power of God for the
Salvation of Those Who Believe.

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SECTION ONE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SALVATION

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1:1 OVERVIEW

My thesis is that an understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ - the righteousness of God - will explain how 'the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe' (Romans 1:16). In Section Two I intend to show that to understand the usage of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans will explain how the gospel can *continue to be* the power of God for salvation. And in the third part of the thesis I shall show that because the theology of Romans is inseparable from its missiology, this understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for mission.

Historically, there have been three main ways of understanding the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and these have not always been seen to be compatible with each other. Commentators often will choose to emphasize one understanding at the expense of the other two. My thesis is that, while not all three meanings of the phrase can be true at any one time in any one verse, the most fruitful understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ comes from seeing a dynamic interplay between all three meanings of the phrase.¹ This dynamic interplay emerges as one continues to read through the epistle.

The three ways of understanding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ I take to be 'God's inherent righteousness' (possessive genitive), the righteousness which is the status given by God (genitive of origin), and God's 'saving righteousness' (the dynamic activity of saving, which may be termed subjective genitive).

The dynamic interplay to which I refer is this: The Law is the revelation of God's inherent righteousness (possessive genitive). Paul uses the Law, and other writings, to expose human beings' inherent *unrighteousness* in the face of God's righteousness (Rom 3:20). This brings about an awareness of the need to be

¹ 'Every possible combination of the three basic interpretations is found in the literature.' Moo, D 'The Epistle To The Romans' p72. Let me note here also that the word programme I have been using seems not to be able to provide the footnote numbers in the text as superscriptions. For this I apologize.

saved, which is the necessary precondition to accepting by faith the righteousness which is offered by God in Christ as a free gift (Rom 3:22-24) - ie the righteousness *from* God (genitive of origin). When this righteousness is received, the recipient has been saved, and will begin to manifest God's righteousness in his/her life situation (Rom 8:4; 10:4; 12-16 etc) so that the 'dynamic saving activity of God' (subjective genitive) begins to be realised.

Throughout the first part of my thesis I shall enlarge on the three different understandings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ before discussing more fully the inter-relationship briefly outlined above. I hope that one of the results of an analysis of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ will be to bring a critique of the New Perspective on the theology of Paul. I shall therefore discuss some of the more prominent apologists for the New Perspective, such as E.P. Sanders, J.D.G. Dunn, and N.T. Wright, note that which is valuable in their insights, but ultimately conclude that their perspective fails to deal with the heart of the gospel, which is the answer to the problem of universal human powerlessness, sin and guilt before a righteous and holy God.

The thesis will have implications for mission. The epistle to the Romans is missional in its intention (Rom 1:14). At the time of his writing, Paul has been prevented (Rom 1:13) from going to Rome, so the writing of the epistle is intended to achieve the same purpose that the preaching would have had, had he been permitted to be present in person. Moreover, Paul expressly states in his epistle that salvation can only come from *hearing* (Rom 10:17) the 'revelation of the righteousness of God'.² This is why he is 'obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks' (Rom 1:14). This means that the proclamation of the gospel is a necessary condition for true mission. And from a consideration of salvation - what we have been saved *from* viz God's righteousness experienced as judgment (Rom 2:5,6), what we are saved *by* viz God's righteousness as a dynamic saving activity, and what we are saved *for* viz 'peace and joy in the Holy Spirit', wherein the very basis for existence is God's righteousness (Rom 14:17), we shall see that the knowledge of this righteousness necessarily impels the saved person to proclaim the gospel him/herself. So the righteousness of God provides a *sufficient* condition for mission. I intend to develop this in the third part of my

2 It is true that the NT records of Paul's preaching do not always have him following the 'gospel according to Romans'. In Acts 17, for example, he speaks about knowledge and ignorance rather than righteousness and sin. But my belief is that while Paul may have differing 'starting points' in his communication with his hearers, the fact that Romans is his full statement of that gospel which is 'the power of God for the salvation of those who believe' (1:16), means that he is unlikely to have omitted the essential content of his Romans thesis whenever he preached. Even in Acts 17 Paul concludes with the announcement that 'God is calling all people everywhere to repent, for he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice...' I shall discuss the relationship between the gospel as laid out in the epistle to the Romans and Paul's actual evangelism in Part 3 of my thesis.

thesis.

1:2 DEFINITION OF 'GOSPEL'

There has also been a number of ways in which εὐαγγέλιον has been understood. Many take 'gospel', which literally means 'good news' both in the Greek and the etymology of the English word³, to begin with the announcement that the gift of righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Understood in this way, 'good news' could be contrasted with the 'bad news' that God's wrath is being poured out on all the godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (1:18), and that even the attempts to obey God's law fail to make a person righteous, for "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law' (3:20a (NRSV)). After the revelation of the plight of all human beings, the 'good news' is introduced with the adversative 'but' in 3:21, so that Martin Lloyd Jones can exclaim with joy, 'There are no more wonderful words in all of Scripture than just these two words, 'But now'. What vital words these are!'⁴ Thus, for many, the 'good' in the phrase 'good news' refers to the announcement of the way of salvation, and the freedom from the consequences of the 'unrighteousness' which have been demonstrated prior to the heralding of the good news. But although 'There is now no condemnation' would summarise for many the starting point of the gospel, I prefer to take a broader meaning for εὐαγγέλιον, and would extend its scope to include the declaration and description of the human predicament before God which *leads* to the joyous announcement of the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is difficult to see how the announcement 'There is no condemnation' could come as 'good news' – or even be intelligible – if there were not the threat of condemnation obtaining beforehand.

My thesis intends to explain *how* the gospel is able to be the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe', and essential to this explanation will be the awareness of the individual's plight in his or her powerlessness to be righteous before a righteous God. As this 'awareness of plight' is a necessary precondition to receiving the gift of righteousness, and as salvation is not achieved until this gift of righteousness is received, 'gospel' must be extended to include all of Paul's teaching which brings about conviction of this plight, if the gospel is to be the 'power of God for the salvation of all who believe'.

³ The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, p1129 has, 'Old English *godspel*, ie *god* GOOD adjective, *spel* news, tidings'

⁴ Lloyd Jones, M, *Romans: Exposition of 3:20-4:25* p25

1:3 DEFINITION OF 'SALVATION'

Romans chapter 1 verse 17 is introduced with the connective 'for', which means that there is a logical connection in Paul's thought leading from the gospel being the means whereby God saves, to the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ being revealed. As this thesis is concerned to discuss δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and as there is an essential logical connection between σωτηρία and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, it will be helpful briefly to discuss the meaning of the word σωτηρία.

In the Scriptures σωτηρία means 'deliverance from peril and restoration to wholeness'.⁵ In the Old Testament, salvation as deliverance often has the temporal meaning of rescuing from enemies or some form of physical destruction. Even in the New Testament salvation can have this meaning (cf Acts 16:31; 27:20). But, as Moo notes, 'Paul uses the word only of spiritual deliverance'.⁶ If salvation is 'deliverance from peril, and restoration to wholeness' *and* has spiritual significance, then we may understand that salvation has the eschatological reference of salvation from the judgment at the last day (cf Rom 2:6; 3:19), and entry into the eschatological blessings promised by the prophets at the end of the age. But with Paul there is a certain 'realised eschatology', in that the salvation from judgment on the last day has been secured *now* for the believer (Rom 3:24; 5:1; 8:24 etc). Even the eschatological blessings promised which will be entered into in their fullness at the end of the age are in a certain measure enjoyed now (5:17; 8:13 etc).

These two aspects of salvation *viz* the negative aspect of deliverance *from* judgment and the positive aspect of deliverance *for* fullness of life, will be very pertinent to our discussion of the righteousness of God.

I would note here that I have not sought to be exhaustive in my interaction with the literature on Romans, particularly with the journal literature (as the journal literature, especially, is vast), and this is a Master thesis and not a PhD. My goal has been to develop an argument arising from my work on the text of Romans.

⁵ Dunn, Romans 1-8 p39. Moo, 'The Epistle to the Romans', p66 (footnote 15), cites Exod 14:13; 15:2; Judg. 15:18; 1Sam11:9 as instances of salvation in the OT, and notes the relationship between the temporal and spiritual: 'The peculiar OT interplay between the historical/temporary and the spiritual/eternal, and the frequent use of the former to represent the latter, makes it difficult to determine the degree of spiritual significance in the use of this word group. Some texts, however, clearly use σωτηρια (salvation) to depict God's eschatological deliverance (cf Isa 12:2; 25:9; 46:13; 49:6; 52:7,10). Of these, Isa 52:7 is particularly significant: in addition to σωτηρια, it also uses εὐαγγελίζομαι ('preach good news'; note that Paul quotes it later in the letter (10:15)).

⁶ Moo D, 'The Epistle to the Romans' p67

CHAPTER TWO

THE THREE MEANINGS OF

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ

In this chapter I shall discuss the three meanings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which scholars have identified as possible candidates for Paul's intended usage in the epistle to the Romans. My intention is to discuss each of the three kinds *as found in the Old Testament*, without, at first, relating them directly to their usage in Romans. I shall do this (a) to try to give the reader a 'feel' for each meaning, and (b) as Paul himself gives me permission to do this by averring that the gospel, of which 'the righteousness of God' is so very central, is witnessed to by 'the law and the prophets' (3:21) and is promised 'by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures' (1:2).⁷ Having examined the presence of each of the three kinds of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in the Old Testament Scriptures, I shall then consider which of the three kinds, or which combinations of each kind, fits certain key passages in the epistle. The key passages I wish to consider are 1:17 and 3:21-26. I hope that this discussion will enable me then to demonstrate *how* the gospel is the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe'.

2.1 ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ AS AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD: POSSESSIVE GENITIVE

This is the understanding of God's righteousness as being something God himself possesses as a personal attribute or quality.⁸

2.1.1 God's faithfulness to himself

The first way of understanding the righteousness of God as a possessive genitive is fundamental to my whole thesis. It is this understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which undergirds the whole gospel from beginning to end. This aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is really the Alpha and Omega of the gospel, and all that God does. This is the aspect of the possessive genitive which we may call God's faithfulness to his own character. I cannot express it better than has Piper: ' "The righteousness of God" refers most basically to the characteristic of God's nature or the unswerving inclination of his will which precedes and grounds all his acts and gifts. It is his inviolable allegiance to act always for his own name's sake – to maintain and display his own divine glory'.

⁷ I acknowledge that it is not expressly 'the righteousness of God' that Paul says is promised by the prophets, but the gospel itself. Nevertheless, 'the gospel' and 'the righteousness of God' are so closely linked that to promise the former must entail promising the latter.

⁸ Daniel Wallace writes of the Possessive Genitive, 'Key to Identification: Instead of the word *of* replace it with *belonging to* or *possessed by*. If this paraphrase fits, then the genitive is probably a genitive of possession.' Wallace, D 'Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics' p81.

⁹ Piper, J The Righteousness of God in Romans 3:25-26 (JSNT 7 (1980) pp 2-32) p3

It is this 'inviolable allegiance to act always for his own name's sake' that initiates the plan of the gospel, and which ends in the revelation of God's glory forever, as exclaimed by Paul in Romans 11:36: 'For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.' The glory to which Paul refers may also be thought of as the revelation of God's righteousness radiating forth for the enjoyment of all whom he has saved.

Ernst Käsemann equates this aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ with glory: 'God's righteousness has a field of radiation and a place of manifestation... It will become clear in 3:21 that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and δόξα θεοῦ are used synonymously and that in 8:30 and 2 Cor 3:18 Paul speaks analogously of the present glorification of Christians. Finally, in 2 Cor 3:8 he uses 'ministry of righteousness' and 'ministry of the Spirit' alternatively. Must we not infer from this that in some respect righteousness, glory and Spirit are identical for him?'¹⁰

I shall be making much of Käsemann's understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ having a 'field of radiation and a place of manifestation' when I come to discuss my third understanding of 'the righteousness of God', namely δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ considered as subjective genitive. There I shall be arguing that the 'field of radiation' of God's righteousness is the believer, both individually and in community. Under this dimension of the righteousness of God I shall be considering Käsemann's other observation, namely that God's righteousness is a power.¹¹ How δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ functions as a power that sanctifies, or begets further δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ I shall also show in the second and third sections of this thesis.

The Westminster Confession well states that 'the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever'.¹² The supreme good of God's people, and God's glory coincide. But he could not be glorified if there were no creatures in his presence to experience his glory. Thus the motive for the initiation of the gospel plan is God's faithfulness to his own glory.

This is tellingly evinced in Daniel chapter 9. Daniel acknowledges that God *in his righteousness* has punished his people, because his punitive action is in keeping with 'with all the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses' (Dan 9:11). But then Daniel prays, 'O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city,

¹⁰ Käsemann, E 'Commentary on Romans' p28

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² 'Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, Shorter Catechism, Directory of Public Worship, Presbyterian Church Government' (Blackwood and Sons Ltd: Edinburgh, 1897) p115

your holy hill.' (Dan 9:16). Notice that Daniel sees no contradiction in God's righteousness revealing itself in punishment against Israel, and later, in acting to save Israel. This is because both the punishment and the salvation are the *outworking* of a prior understanding of God's righteousness, namely his commitment to act for his name's sake, for his own glory. And this, we find, is the target of Daniel's ultimate appeal: 'O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! *For your sake* O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people *bear your Name.*' (Dan 9:19).¹³

This faithfulness to act for his own name's sake may be considered as the first aspect of 'the righteousness of God' considered as possessive genitive. The final radiating forth of God's glory I understand as being the revelation of God's righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive) revealed in the kingdom of God which is 'the home of righteousness' (Rom 14:17).

That the end of the gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness, for the display of his glory, is hinted at in Rom 3:5 and 7, where the 'bringing out of God's righteousness' (3:5) will be for the 'increase of his glory' (3:7).

That δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) is God's unswerving commitment to act for his own glory may be seen from the Apostle's locating the root cause of human *unrighteousness* as the *failure or refusal* to glorify God: διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἔδοξασαν ἢ ἠὺχαρίστησαν (1:21)¹⁴ This unrighteousness is further described four verses later, not only as a refusal to glorify God, but as the actual glorification of that which God himself has created: καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνης φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετῶν (1:23).¹⁵ The essence of righteousness is that which brings glory to God. The essence, conversely, of unrighteousness is the refusal to give glory to God.¹⁶

13 In Isaiah we see the Lord promising to save his people, and the reason is for his own name's sake: 'I will say to the north, "Give them up!" and to the south, "Do not hold them back." Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is *called by my name, whom I have created for my glory*, whom I have formed and made' (Isa 43:6,7). The righteousness of God in Isaiah announced so frequently (46:13; 51:5,6,8; 54:14; 56:1; 60:17 etc), his acting for 'his own name's sake', for the display of his glory all may be said to be expressed in Isaiah 61:3e 'they will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord, for the display of his splendour'.

14 For although they knew God they neither glorified him as God, nor gave thanks to him.

15 ...and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

16 Piper writes, 'Then Paul confirms that this is the essential problem by explaining sin in terms of this exchange of God's glory for created things: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (πάντες γὰρ ἡμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, Rom. 3:23). The word for "fall short of" (ὑστεροῦνται) means "to lack". This is a reiteration of Romans 1:23. The point is that we "lack" the glory of God because we "exchanged" it. We have suicidally traded it for the poisonous pleasure of idols. Thus, for Paul, sin is essentially preferring and embracing other things and other people as more to be desired than the infinitely valuable and all-

Faithfulness to his promise to Abraham

We shall see below that another aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive is his faithfulness to his covenant promises. We shall see also, that strict faithfulness to his covenant promises is *not* good news for God's people, because of God's commitment to punish all who fail to keep their commitment to covenant undertakings. But before his conditional promises (obedience would be blessed (Deut 28:1-14); disobedience would be punished (Deut 28:15-68)) to his people expressed at Sinai, God has made an *unconditional* promise to Abraham that 'all nations on earth will be blessed through you' (Gen 12:3). Faithfulness to his own character, to act so that his people will be blessed by experiencing his glory, is the explanation for his unconditional promise to Abraham, and fidelity to this promise has, throughout, fidelity to his own character as its supreme motive 17 'Paul wants above all to demonstrate that the gospel he preaches is in full accord with the divine plan. *More exactly perhaps, he wants to show that the gospel agrees with who God is – Lord of all peoples and forever true to his own nature and purpose*'.¹⁸

2.1.2 God's holy character: the second understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive

This understanding of the 'righteousness of God' is God's inherent righteousness. It is essential to the character of God that he will always act righteously, in keeping with the nature of his perfect being. Under this understanding of God's righteousness we can distinguish between (a) conformity to an absolute standard or norm i.e. what scholars term *iustitia distributiva*, and (b) God's faithfulness to his covenant promises.

(a) This former understanding has come under severe criticism for two reasons: firstly, that the righteousness of God is better understood as a relational concept: a party in a relationship is righteous when he/she acts in keeping with the requirements of the relationship.¹⁹ Thus Gerhard Kittel states, 'This (relational) conception stands diametrically opposed to that of a judge who gives judgments according to a specific norm on the basis of a *iustitia distributiva*. Appeals to the Old Testament based on the idea of a *iustitia distributiva* which operates

satisfying glory of God. This is the essence of sin and (as we saw in the Old Testament) the essence of unrighteousness.' Piper, 'The Future of Justification' pp 66-67.

17 'The foundation stone of Paul's whole argument is that God keeps his promises to 'the father of us all' (4:16). That means that He is the steadfast and faithful One true to the intention he announced to the patriarch even though every human being should prove false' Williams, S K 'The Righteousness of God in Romans' (JBL 99/2 (1980) 241-290) p244

18 Williams *ibid* p254 (italics mine)

19 George Ladd illustrates this point by citing the case of Tamar, who played the harlot but fulfilled her relational demands, and who was therefore more righteous than Judah, who did not (Gen 38:26). Ladd, G E 'A Theology of the New Testament' p439

according to a fixed norm of absolute morality will necessarily miss the mark.'
 20 The second reason for criticising this understanding is that it makes God (so it is claimed) answerable to a Necessity outside of God to which he must be subservient. God himself must always conform to this standard of rectitude outside of himself.²¹

The truth often emerges through the dialectical interaction of ideas. In responding to these two criticisms of *iustitia distributiva* two vitally important truths emerge: Firstly, the opposition to *iustitia distributiva* because it fails to understand the relational nature of righteousness in the Old Testament can be addressed by seeing that the two understandings need not be mutually exclusive. There is indeed a 'norm' or standard, and that is nothing less than the perfect moral rectitude of God (before whom all people must one day stand) as revealed in his law. But righteousness is still a relational term when we understand that it refers to the demands engendered by the terms of the covenant of which the two parties are God and his people.²² And secondly, the criticism that *iustitia distributiva* refers to a standard outside of God to which even he must conform, can be met by considering the very character of God. It is not the case that God is essentially love, but is required to act justly because there is an external standard of justice which he recognizes and to which he must be subservient. In him both love and justice perfectly combine. When he acts justly he is acting in keeping with his own character, and not in conformity to an external norm. 'Because he is holy, and has a righteous hatred of sin and wickedness, he must needs stand over against the world in wrath. But because of the kind of God he is – He is love – he moves towards the world in love. Stands over against the world in wrath, but moves towards the world in love. That is a contradiction, and the key that unlocks this contradiction is God's gracious provision of his Son as a sacrifice of propitiation for our sin'.²³ Thus, righteousness is no necessity external to God.²⁴ The need to recognize the righteous – indeed, the holy – character of God cannot be over-emphasized as we seek to understand the theology of the epistle to the Romans. 'That God can punish seems to the modern man to need elaborate explanation: that He can forgive seems to Paul to

20 Kittel, G; Friedrich G, 'Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament' p926.

21 Ladd engages with N H Snaith at this point, noting that this is Snaith's thesis in his book, 'The Distinctive Ideas of the OT' pp 165-167

22 Moo writes, 'The long-standing debate over whether the basic meaning of the root *sdq* is "conformity to a norm" or "mutual fulfillment of claims arising from a particular relationship" may be bypassed if we agree with Ziesler that the "norm" in question is the demands that stem from God's relationship with his people in the covenant.' Moo, D 'The Epistle to the Romans' p80.

23 Said within a lecture on 'The New Perspective on Paul' given by Dr Don Carson at the Bible College of New Zealand, winter 2006.

24 'God is righteousness; God is *holy* love. It is a caricature of the biblical doctrine of God to speak of him as part love and part justice as though God were divided; God is perfect love and perfect justice; and all of God is love and all of God is justice.' Ladd, G 'A Theology of the New Testament' p445

be what needs to be explained'. 25

It is appropriate that we have introduced the idea of the holiness of God at this point, as we have been considering God's righteousness in relation to *iustitia distributiva*. I have said that this understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ means that he will always act justly, in conformity with the perfect moral rectitude of his character. This is nowhere better conveyed in the Old Testament than in Genesis 18:25: 'Will not the judge of all the earth do right?' This righteousness of God is an essential dimension of his holiness, and it is therefore impossible to speak of God's righteousness apart from the context of his holiness.²⁶ Isaiah is confronted with God's holiness and his experience on that occasion could well be described as an empirical realization of 'being a sinner and falling short of the glory of God'.²⁷

In the light of this understanding of 'the righteousness of God', it is not difficult to see how Martin Luther was driven almost to despair. Until his great revelation that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ could mean something in addition to this possessive genitive, his experience must have been that of Isaiah who cried, 'Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.'²⁸

The righteousness of God, then, is all that is implied by his holy, transcendent being as Creator and Judge of the earth. 'His ruling and judging of the world includes his absolute right to be God, even to the point of the destruction of the

25 Guillebaud, H E 'Why the Cross?' p67. Guillebaud continues, 'If God, Who is Love, can so punish as our Lord teaches that He does, then the claims of His Holiness must be so tremendous as to suggest the need for explanation how He can forgive at all. So far, then, Paul is in agreement with his Master's teaching about God.' *ibid*

26 It is for his holiness that God is worshiped before any other attribute (Isa 6:3), and this is revealed consistently throughout the Scriptures. In all of God's dealing with his people, and his instructions for worship and service, the motive is repeated like a refrain, 'Be holy, for I am holy' (Lev 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:26 etc). God gives his law for this same purpose, to reveal his holiness, and his consequent demands on those whom he is going to call his people. Habakkuk reveals that God's holiness is such that he 'cannot look upon evil' (Hab 1:13). Failure to meet the ethical demands occasioned by the holiness of God is expressed in the stern verse, 'The soul who sins is the one who will die' (Ezek.18:4, cf 18:20).

27 Commenting on Isaiah 6:5, Oswalt writes, 'Such confrontation cannot help but produce despair. For the finite, the mortal, the incomplete, and the fallible to encounter the Infinite, the Eternal, the Self-consistent, and the Infallible is to know the futility and the hopelessness of one's existence. Modern existential angst is a species of such despair, for confronted with the apparent meaninglessness of our existence in this universe we wonder why we should go on living. Existentialism presumes there *is* no meaning in the universe and that we are thus meaningless. Isaiah knows, more horribly, that there is Meaning, but that he has no part in it. But it is not the recognition of his finitude that crushes Isaiah; it is his uncleanness. The primary element about God's holiness that distinguishes him from human beings is not his essence but his character. Nor is this uncleanness merely ritual, for it is an uncleanness of the lips, of the expression of their lives.' Oswalt, J The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39' pp 182-3

28 Isaiah 6:5

old and the establishment of a new creation'.²⁹

(b) The second dimension of this second understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ conceived as possessive genitive is his faithfulness to his covenant promises (see p7 above). It is important at this point to distinguish between his *quality* of faithfulness and his *acting in keeping* with his faithfulness. When we speak of the latter, we mean what I shall denote as the third understanding of God's righteousness, technically termed 'subjective genitive'.³⁰ For the moment, his faithfulness to his promises as the *basis* for his acting thereupon, is what I intend by this aspect of God's righteous. It is surely no better expressed in the Old Testament Scriptures, than in Exodus 34:6: 'And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."..'

It will be seen that there is a significant difference between these two aspects of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ seen as the second understanding of possessive genitive (God's holy character). The human perception of the first aspect might be encapsulated in Isaiah's despairing cry in the temple; the second expressed in the hopeful cry of the psalmist: 'Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me.' (Psalm 71:2). As we continue to examine the next two understandings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (i.e genitive of origin, and subjective genitive), and relate all three meanings to the gospel in Romans, we shall see how these differing aspects of the possessive genitive can be synthesized.

2.2 ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ AS GENITIVE OF ORIGIN

It was the revelation that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ could mean 'a righteousness from God' that gave Martin Luther his rapturous 'tower experience' in which he 'broke through' and saw that Paul was telling him that the righteousness of God was a righteousness that was something given *by* God, received by faith. Martin Lloyd Jones quotes Luther, 'As I had formerly hated the expression "the righteousness of God" I now began to regard it as my dearest and most comforting word; so that this expression of Paul's became to me in very truth a

²⁹ Siefried, M A 'The New Perspective on Paul and its Problems' *Themelios* Vol 25, No 2, February 2000, p 15

³⁰ Dunn, intending this subjective genitive, frequently refers to God's faithfulness to his covenant promises. For example, in commenting on 3:26, Dunn writes, 'God is just, not because he acts in accordance with abstract ideal of justice, but because he has acted in fulfillment of the obligation he took upon himself as covenant God of Israel.' Dunn, J 'Romans 1-8' p175. Moo, however, is careful to distinguish between God's acting and the motive for his acting: 'A second meaning is closely related to this first, and indeed, is not always easy to distinguish from it. In a number of texts, God's δικαιοσύνη is not his saving activity but the basis, or motivation, for that saving activity. Psalm 31:1 is characteristic: "in your righteousness deliver me and lead me out"'. Moo, p82

Gate to Paradise'.³¹ Understanding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as a 'genitive of origin', then, would convey to us that the gospel reveals a 'righteous status' that is given to us *by* God. The question Job asked so long ago has now been answered, 'how shall a person be right with God?' (Job 9:2). The righteousness of God, understood as the 'genitive of origin', reveals that the gospel shows that a person can be righteous before God, with a righteousness that fulfills the perfect desideratum of God, as demanded by his holy law.

2.2.1 The 'righteousness of God' as genitive of origin in the Old Testament

Studies in the Septuagint where δικαιοσύνη translates the Hebrew *sdq* reveal that Paul was influenced by the meaning of the *sdq* words. There are two of these *sdq* words: *sedeq* (the adjective: righteous) and *sedaqa* (the noun: righteousness). As Moo informs us, *sadaq* in the qal means 'to be righteous', in the piel 'to be demonstrated as righteous' and in the hiphil 'to declare righteous'. The important conclusion from this is that 'the verb is almost always used with a judicial or forensic flavour'³²

Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, then, when considered as genitive of origin, can be thought of as 'the righteous status a person enjoys because God has declared him/her to be righteous'. Moo helps us by noting that a certain confusion may arise for the English reader as there are two different English roots, viz 'just' and 'right' used in translation of the one Greek root: δικ. In fact, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ could literally, though very clumsily, be translated, 'the righteousing of God', because the verb δικαιοῶ means to declare righteous. Or, if we take the English root 'just', we might say that δικαιοῶ means 'to justify', and, with a clumsiness almost equal to 'the righteousing of God', we could translate δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as 'the justifying activity of God'.

In the Old Testament Scriptures, the verb δικαιοῶ appears almost exclusively in the forensic sense. Psalm 9:4, for instance, says Ὅτι ἐποίησας τὴν κρίσιν μου καὶ τὴν δίκην μου, ἐκάθισας ἐπὶ θρόνου ὁ κρινῶν δικαιοσύνη.³³ We have been intending to discuss the righteousness of God as genitive of origin, which, as stated above, is the gift of the righteous status or standing before God. But our discussion has taken us, inevitably, to the borderline of the third kind of righteousness, namely, God's dynamic activity of bringing

31 Lloyd Jones, M 'Romans: The Exposition of Chapter 1: The Gospel of God' p309

32 Moo, D 'The Epistle to the Romans' p80. Moo goes on to inform us 'Sometimes the 'judge' who pronounces righteous' or acquits, is human (Deut. 25:1; Isa 5:23) and at other times divine (Exod. 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; 2 Chron. 6:23; Ps. 82:3; Isa 50:8). Even when the term is not used with explicit reference to the law court, the forensic connotations remain (cf. Gen. 38:26; 44:16; Jer.3:11; Ezek. 16:51-52). The high degree of translation correspondence between δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and *sedeq/sedaqa* means that these can be considered together.' *ibid*

33 'For you have upheld my right and my cause; you have sat on your throne, judging righteously.'

righteousness, in such a way as to save. We shall develop this below, but for the moment let us note that it is not possible to talk of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as genitive of origin without at the same time speaking *of* the origin, who is, of course, God.³⁴ Thus, the received gift of righteousness (genitive of origin), and the giving of this gift (subjective genitive) are complementary poles of the same great event.³⁵

In the Old Testament Scriptures there are several instances of God's people enjoying the gift or status of righteousness. It is worth citing the following two Psalms from the Septuagint: Psalm 34:27 (LXX) Ἀγαλλιάσαιντο καὶ εὐφρανθείησαν οἱ θέλοντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην μου.³⁶ And Psalm 35:7 (LXX) Ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου ὡς ὄρη θεοῦ, τὰ κρίματά σου ὡσεὶ ἄβυσσος πολλή.³⁷ It was, indeed, the great prophetic hope that this gift of righteousness would arrive in its fullness at the time of God's eschatological deliverance of his people at the end of the age. Isaiah promises his hearers: Καὶ ὄψονται ἔθνη τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου³⁸ That this righteousness is a gift of which God's people are desperately in need can be seen in Isaiah 46:12,13b: 'Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness. I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away.' Micah holds out the hope of this gift of righteousness when he prophesies, 'You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.' (Micah 7:19b).

We shall see more clearly how these different understandings of 'the righteousness of God' relate to each other to bring about salvation in the full light of the gospel according to the epistle to the Romans, but for now let us note, in passing, the extraordinary apparent contradiction between the Old Testament revelation of God, the righteous Judge who *condemns the guilty* and acquits the innocent (cf Ex 23:7; 34:7; Num 14:18; Deut 25:1 etc) and Paul's revelation that God is the One who 'justifies the wicked' (Rom 4:5).

34 Moo writes, 'Most interpreters make a decision at this point, choosing either activity or status and offering more or less convincing explanations of the data that appear to conflict with the view they have chosen. But must we make this choice? Do we have to choose between theology (*God* acting) and anthropology (the *human being* who receives) – as some have stated the dilemma? Could we not take the righteousness of God here to include *both* God's activity of "making right" – saving, vindicating – *and* the status of those who are so made right, in a relational sense that bridges the divine and the human? Moo, D 'The Epistle to the Romans' p74.

35 Moo quotes Stuhlmacher, who says, '... "the righteousness of God" in Paul includes "both poles of the event of justification... The gracious activity of God himself and the end result of the divine work in the form of the righteousness granted to the sinner"' *ibid*: footnote 51

36 May those who want my vindication rejoice and be glad (New English Translation of the Septuagint).

37 Your righteousness is like divine mountains; your judgments are like a great deep...(New English Translation of the Septuagint).

38 And nations shall see your righteousness...(Isa 62:2)(New English Translation of the Septuagint).

2.3 ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ AS SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE

The third understanding of 'the righteousness of God' is his righteousness as revealed in his saving activity. This dynamic, relational aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ has an extensive witness in the Old Testament Scriptures.³⁹ In many passages God's righteousness is virtually synonymous with salvation. David cries, Ῥύσαί με ἐξ αἱμάτων ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός τῆς σωτηρίας μου, ἀγαλλιάσεται ἡ γλῶσσά μου τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου.⁴⁰ Isaiah clearly views God's saving intervention on behalf of his people as a manifestation of his righteousness. In Isaiah 46:13 we read Ἦγγισα τὴν δικαιοσύνην μου, καὶ τὴν σωτηριάν τὴν παρ' ἐμοῦ οὐ βραδυνῶ⁴¹ David declares, in Psalm 97:2 (LXX): Ἐγνώρισε Κύριος τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ ἐναντίον τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπεκάλυψε τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ⁴²

We noted above, under the first category of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ known as 'possessive genitive', that a quality of God's inherent righteousness is faithfulness to his covenant promises. This we saw as the motive for this third kind of righteousness, his saving righteousness. When God acts to save his people, he is acting righteously because he is 'fulfilling the covenant obligations he took upon himself to be Israel's God, to rescue Israel and punish Israel's enemies.'⁴³ If God's righteousness is his acting in keeping with his covenant undertakings, we would expect to see the manifestations of his 'love and faithfulness' (the *chesed we emeth* of God's self disclosure to Moses in Exodus 34:6, quoted above) revealed as expressions of his righteousness. And this is what we find. In Exodus 15:13 we read, 'In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed'. In the LXX 'unfailing love (*chesed* in the Hebrew) is translated δικαιοσύνη. In Psalm 31:1 (30:2 LXX) we read ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ σου, ῥύσαι με καὶ ἐξέλου με⁴⁴ Here the psalmist is appealing to God's faithfulness. Both God's *chesed* (covenant love) and *emeth* (covenant faithfulness) come together in Psalm 36:5,6, where they are identified, through Hebrew parallelism, with the righteousness of God. 'Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep'. And Psalm 98:1-3 perfectly

39 Moo notes sixteen occurrences of God's righteousness being equivalent to his saving intervention on behalf of his people: Pss. 22:31; 35:28; 40:10; 69:27; 71:15,16,19,24; 88:12; 98:2; 119:123; Mic. 6:5; 7:9; Isa. 51:5,6,8. Moo, D 'The Epistle to the Romans' p81, footnote 13

40 Rescue me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my deliverance. My tongue will rejoice at your righteousness. (Psalm 50:16 New English Translation of the Septuagint).

41 I brought near my righteousness, and I will not delay the salvation that comes from me... (New English Translation of the Septuagint).

42 The Lord has made known his deliverance; before the nations he revealed his righteousness (New English Translation of the Septuagint).

43 So Dunn, p41

44 In your righteousness rescue me and deliver me (New English Translation of the Septuagint).

expresses God's righteousness revealed as saving intervention on behalf of his people:

*Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has worked wonders,
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him,
The Lord has made known his salvation,
To the eyes of the nations he has revealed his righteousness
He has remembered his constant love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

That God's righteousness is equated in the above psalm with his faithfulness can be seen in the parallelism between 'his righteousness' (line 4) and 'his constant love and faithfulness' (line 5).

If we bring the second (genitive of origin) and third (subjective genitive) categories of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ together, we may say that God's righteousness is revealed when he acts to establish his people's right, or righteousness. This was the eschatological hope held forth by the prophets: Israel's righteousness would be revealed.⁴⁵

2.4 THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN ROMANS

Having considered the Old Testament witness to our three categories of the righteousness of God, we may now turn to the epistle itself. I have averred that it is unwise to choose any one of these understandings to the exclusion of the other two, and believe that not only are all three kinds of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ present in Romans, but that the gospel being the power of God for the salvation of those who believe' (1:16) is the consequence of the dynamic interplay between all three understandings.

To illustrate my point that all three meanings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ occur in Romans, let us consider, by way of anticipation, the following passages: In 1:17 δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ has both the subjective genitive and the genitive of origin. 5:17, by contrast, uses the phrase purely in the sense of genitive of origin: 'For if, by the trespass of one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and *the gift of righteousness* reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.' And in 3:26 we have both the possessive genitive and the subjective genitive in conjunction: 'He did it to demonstrate his justice (possessive genitive) at the present time, so as to be just (possessive genitive) *and* the one who justifies (subjective genitive)⁴⁶

⁴⁵ It is this very hope which animated old Simeon, who was 'waiting for the consolation of Israel' (Luke 2:25), and Anna, who was 'looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem' (Luke 2:38).

⁴⁶ Daniel Wallace writes, 'If a subjective genitive is suspected, attempt to convert the verbal noun to which the

those who have faith in Jesus.'

In the following chapter we shall discuss in greater depth 'the righteousness of God' in two extremely significant places in the epistle, 1:17 and 3:21-26.

genitive is related into a verbal form and turn the genitive into its subject. Thus, for example, "the revelation of Jesus Christ.. " in Gal 1:12 becomes "[What/the fact that] Jesus Christ reveals ..." Wallace, D 'Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics' p113. The verbal noun to which the genitive is related is δικαίωσις: 'to render a favorable verdict, *vindicate*' ... As affirmative verdict Rom 2:13. Esp. of pers. δικαιοῦσθαι *be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous* and thereby become δικαίος, receive the divine gift of δικαιοσύνη through faith in Christ Jesus and apart from νόμος as a basis for evaluation.' 'A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature' p249.

CHAPTER THREE

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ IN 1:17 AND 3:21-26

3:1 The righteousness of God in Romans 1:17

The 'righteousness of God' in Romans 1:17 is an instance of 'subjective genitive' with implications of 'genitive of origin'. I argue this, firstly because the meaning is clearly positive. That it is positive can be seen by the obvious juxtaposition between the revelation of God's righteousness in 1:17 and the revelation of God's wrath in 1:18.⁴⁷ The wrath of God is manifestly that from which people need to be saved⁴⁸, and the righteousness of God, in fulfillment of, and consistency with, the Old Testament Scriptures, means nothing less than God's acting to save his people from this very wrath. There, then, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a subjective genitive in 1:17. But God's righteousness does not operate in a vacuum, and if there are those who are the objects of salvation – the beneficiaries of God's saving righteousness – then we come to this righteousness considered as a gift.⁴⁹ And so we meet δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as genitive of origin.⁵⁰ The righteousness of God as a saving activity of God, and the status of righteousness enjoyed by those who have been saved by the gospel, meet in the one event. Subjective genitive produces genitive of origin, and salvation occurs.⁵¹ If we can be forgiven the laboriousness of the English, we

47 Fitzmeyer comments, 'In 1:16-17 the attribute sense or the subjective gen. is just as suitable as the gift idea: for God's uprightness even as an attribute can be the object of the gospel's revelation. In fact, it is more suitable than the gift idea, being immediately paralleled by not only "the power of God" (1:16b), but also "the wrath of God" (1:18), another attribute of divine activity...' Fitzmeyer, J 'Romans' p262. Fitzmeyer clearly opts for one sense of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ at the expense of all others, but my thesis is that no one understanding is sufficiently robust to carry the meaning of the phrase throughout the entire epistle. For example, the NRSV translates δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as genitive of origin in 10:3, 'For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own....' In this the NRSV has the approval of Daniel Wallace, author of 'Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics', in which Rom 10:3 is cited as an example of genitive of origin (p110) (contra Fitzmeyer, '... some modern interpreters... prefer to understand the gift idea there (Rom 10:3), as the NRSV still tendentiously translates the Pauline neutral phrase.' (Fitzmeyer, p263)).

48 Dunn writes, 'Assuredly, the logic of Paul's exposition is that the wrath of God (expounded in 1:18-3:20) is somehow averted by Jesus' death' Dunn, J 'Romans 1-8' p171

49 The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament has, '*dikaiosis* one who as a doer of the law will be vindicated by God's sentence (Rom 2:13). On the other hand, no one is righteous by doing the law, for all are under sin (3:10). One becomes *dikaios* by receiving God's *dikaiosis* the power and salvation of God. This reception is by faith. In support, Paul adduces Hab. 2:4 (Rom.1:17; Gal.3:11).' TDNT, Vol 1, p171.

50 In keeping with Moo's assertion that many commentators prefer to opt for one understanding of Paul's genitive to the exclusion of the others, Rev J Barmby, expositor for the august Pulpit Commentary, arguing for the subjective genitive and expressly denying the genitive of origin, reasons that Paul would have used ἡ ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη if he had intended us to understand 'a righteousness from God'. (Barmby, J 'Pulpit Commentary: Romans p (x)) But in reply we would say that if Paul intends both, then he would not use a construction which precluded the subjective genitive.

51 If we take this 'both/and' approach to Paul's genitive, we need not wrestle with the task of trying to choose between them. Käsemann, for example, presents the choice as 'the old battle lines'. He writes, '(some have it

might say (as a kind of amplified paraphrase of 1:17a), 'in the gospel the saving activity of God, in keeping with his faithfulness to his covenant promises, has intervened to bring people into a right relationship with himself.' Dunn expresses it well when he comments, 'It is God's righteousness which enables and achieves man's righteousness.'⁵²

There is another reason for holding 'the righteousness of God' in 1:17 to include genitive of origin: it is a righteousness which is 'from faith to faith'. The faith here is the means by which the recipient of God's righteousness receives this blessed gift.⁵³

3.2 The wrath of God and its bearing on our understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ

Hitherto our discussion has focused much on words such as 'salvation' 'faithfulness', 'mercy', 'truth', and 'saving intervention'. But it is inescapable that Paul, after his introduction to the epistle in 1:1-15, and his summary statement of the theme of the whole letter in 1:16 and 17, begins his explanation of the gospel with the phrase Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ.⁵⁴ In 2:3 Paul asks if the reader thinks he/she will escape God's judgment. In 2:5 Paul warns his readers of stubborn and unrepentant hearts that are 'storing up wrath against themselves for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed', and 11:22 exhorts us to 'consider the kindness and sternness of God'. This severe aspect of God is inseparable from the epistle, and must, therefore, be an inseparable part of our understanding of the gospel itself.

Having said this by way of introduction, we may now notice that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ does not always have a positive meaning. Psalm 50:6 has, 'And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for God himself is judge. Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God, your God.' God's righteousness, then, can assume a negative or judgmental meaning. If his covenant people are not fulfilling their covenant obligations, or if Israel's enemies are in view, then the severity of God's righteousness is revealed as judgment. This should come as no surprise, because the covenant God made with Moses and the children of Israel is accompanied by the severest of

that) Paul's genitive construction denotes a *nomen actionis* and designates the eschatological action of salvation. Against this line of interpretation, which now seems to be predominant, the following objections arise: it unduly neglects the Pauline characteristic that the righteousness granted to faith is a gift; it frequently overlooks the forensic and apocalyptic horizon of the Pauline expression; it simply makes righteousness an alternative term for the mercy, kindness, and love of God.' äsemann 'Commentary on Romans' p27

52 Dunn, p41

53 It is true that some, such as Douglas Campbell, argue that the first reference to 'faith' here is a reference to Christ's faithfulness. I shall discuss this below.

54 'The wrath of God is revealed'

sanctions if Israel should fail to fulfill what God expects of them. It is interesting that after the reading of the law, the blessings in Deuteronomy that attend obedience have thirteen verses enumerating them, while the curses consequent upon disobedience have forty eight verses. No person in the covenant had the excuse of ignorance that punishment would attend disobedience to covenant expectations. Deuteronomy 27:26 has, “Cursed is the person who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” Moo puts it well: 'We want to “stand on the promises” – and this is entirely appropriate. But we must not forget that God promises (in the NT as well as in the OT) to rebuke and chastise his people for sin as well as to bless them out of the abundance of his grace.' 55

3.2.1 God as Creator

There is another reason for fearing, as well as welcoming the righteousness of God. Before God enters into any covenant, he is the Creator of the universe, to whom all things are accountable. Paul tells us in Romans 8:20, 'the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of him who subjected it'. This surely refers to what we call the Fall, when God cursed the ground because of Adam's 'trespass' (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12,15).⁵⁶ The whole creation looks forward to its rectification, when God will display his righteousness.⁵⁷

God's righteousness, then, is essential to his role as creator, ruler and judge of the cosmos. But we have already seen that there are those who deny God this role. Romans 1:18 speaks of the godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth by their wickedness, and 1:21 enlarges on this 'wickedness' by explaining that it is direct rebellion against the glory of God.

There are, then, two reasons for expecting a negative dimension to God's righteousness: (a) He promises punishment as a consequence of his people's failure to fulfill their covenant expectations, and (b) prior to his even entering into any covenant⁵⁸, God is the Creator and therefore Judge of the whole earth,

55 Moo, D 'The Epistle to the Romans' p197

56 Moo writes, 'In light of Paul's obvious reference to the Gen. 3 narrative – Murray labels these verses “Paul's commentary on Gen. 3:17,18” – the word probably denotes the “frustration” occasioned by creation's being unable to attain the ends for which it was made.' (Moo, p515). He comments further, 'Paul must be referring to God who alone had the right and power to condemn all of creation to frustration because of human sin.' (p516).

57 Psalm 98 sings, 'Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity (Ps 98:7-9). Isaiah utters the same hope, 'My righteousness is near, my salvation has gone forth, and my arm shall judge the peoples. Upon me shall the coast lands wait, and for my arm they shall hope' (Isa 51:5).

58 'While the expectation that God would act to put his people in the right is usually founded on the covenant

who 'insists on his rightful claim to be God against the world which denies him'.
59

3.2.2 God as Judge

It was noticed above (p13) that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is usually a forensic righteousness. In the Old Testament Scriptures, Israel's frequent crying out to God for salvation were tantamount to an appeal for God to display his righteousness by intervening on Israel's behalf to bring her vindication in the face of her enemies who were contending with her. So in Psalm 143 the psalmist cries, 'O Lord hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief' (verse 1). Then (vv 11,12) 'For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble. In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.'

As we have seen above, the psalmist desires salvation, which is to say that he desires God to reveal his righteousness, and vindicate Israel by judging Israel's enemy to be in the wrong. In the law-court, Israel expects God to 'find in her favour', declare her righteous and her enemy to be wrong. All of this, the psalmist believes, is a righteous expectation, for has not God covenanted to uphold Israel and judge her enemies (Ex 15:13-18; 23:20-33; 34:11-16; Deut 7:1-6; 12:1-4, 29-32)? And when God does thus judge, we shall find that it will be for either of the two reasons we have found above: namely, faithfulness to his covenant promises to 'rescue Israel and judge her foes' (or to punish Israel in accordance with his promised judgments for covenant unfaithfulness), or as the righteous judgment of the Creator of the whole world who reserves the right to be God in the face of those who deny him. We find the first kind of judgment (faithfulness to his people Israel) in God's treatment of Egypt, where 'Egypt is called to account for its treatment of Israel rather than for its moral or religious corruption.'⁶⁰ We find the second kind of judgment (God reserving the right, as Creator of the universe, to judge all who deny him) in the accusations against Nineveh and against Babylon. With the former, the Assyrians 'plot against the Lord' (Nahum 1:9,11). Isaiah condemns the wilful pride and 'the haughty look' which 'put the imperial power on a collision course with God, setting no bounds in space or time to its ambition; but God will punish, exercising his authority to call the nations to account.'⁶¹

commitment, some texts, such as Ps 143, Dan 9, and probably Isa 46 and 50, anticipate an irruption of God's righteousness that cannot be tied to the covenant as such.' Moo, pp 84-5.

59 Seifrid, M 'The New Perspective on Paul and its Problems' *Themelios*, p14 February 2000

60 Lilley, J 'The Judgment of God: The Problem of the Canaanites' p4 *Themelios* January 1997

61 *ibid* p5

3.2.3 Israel as the Accused

We have just been considering God's judgment of the nations, but wholly crucial to our understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans is the fact that in the Old Testament Scriptures, *Israel too comes under the just judgment of God*. In Amos 3:1-2 we read, 'Hear this word the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel – against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: “You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins”'⁶²

It has been well observed that in the Hebrew court system there was no state prosecuting counsel. There were the two parties in the dispute, and God was presiding.⁶³ The verdict was not so much 'guilty' or 'not guilty' as one or other of the two parties being found to be vindicated and the other found to be in the wrong. The judge would decide for one or other of the two parties, and the party for which the judge found in favour was the righteous party – or the justified party. And if one of the two parties was adjudged to be 'in the right', then the other party was necessarily adjudged to be 'in the wrong'. That one party was justified entailed the other party being condemned. 'There can be no justification without judgment'.⁶⁴ We have seen above that Israel would cry to God to decide for her against her enemies. Her expectation was always that God, in keeping with his covenant faithfulness, would justify Israel, and condemn her enemies.

But if we were to follow one of our Old Testament references above, a glimpse of a deeper reality emerges: another kind of court case. In Psalm 143 verse 2 we read, 'Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.'

If we retain the picture of the two parties contending with each other, we may

62 The third and fourth chapters of Amos enlarge on the reasons for Israel being judged with such severity: she has forsaken her covenant Lord, and her atrocious conduct is the direct result. Isaiah (e.g. Isa 39:5-6) and Jeremiah (e.g. Jer 10:17-18) who prophesy imminent exile as punishment for Israel's faithlessness to her covenant obligations, and Hosea (Hos 1:2) and Ezekiel (Ezek 16:15-19) who denounce Israel's faithlessness as spiritual adultery, all may be summarised by Paul's words in Romans 1:18, 'the godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth by their wickedness', and further amplified by his explication of Israel's unrighteousness in Rom 2:17-3:20.

63 Long before the court system was established through Moses this fact was clear: Sarai says to Abram, 'May the Lord judge between you and me.' (Gen 16:5); Laban says to Jacob, 'May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.' (Gen 31:53); 'The Assembly (as the vehicle of God's judgment) must judge between him and the avenger of blood.' (Num 35:24); If anyone despised the judge or priest (as the vehicles of God's judgment), they were to be put to death.' (see Deut. 17:12). David said to Saul, 'May the Lord judge between you and me.' (1Sam 24:12). A special instance of their being only two parties in the dispute is seen in Isaiah where God, as one of the parties, calls upon the 'dwellers in Jerusalem and the men of Judah' to judge between him (God) and his vineyard. (Isa 5:3).

64 Chester, T 'Justification, Ecclesiology and the New Perspective' *Themelios* Winter 2005, p15

say here that Israel is one of the parties, *and the other is God himself*. Several times in Isaiah we see the law-court with God contending against the unbelieving nations: 'All the nations gather together and the people assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true"'.⁶⁵ But eventually it is Israel herself who is the party against whom God is bringing a charge, and who will be found to be in the wrong. 'Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! Who is blind like my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the Lord?'⁶⁶

The dispute will, in the end, be between God and *all* the nations, including Israel, and the final outcome will be, of course, that it is God who will be vindicated, and Israel and all the nations of the earth who will be condemned. The psalmist's admission above (Psalm 143:2), that no one can be found righteous before God, is given empirical verification in the judgment of Israel voiced through Nehemiah, when God's righteousness is revealed *through* Israel's defeat: 'In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong.' (Neh 9:33).

Knowing that in the ultimate court room trial between God and all the nations, including Israel herself, the verdict will not be found in the nations' favour, the psalmist pleads to the Lord to postpone the trial: 'do not bring your servant to judgment'. But in Romans, Paul tells us that this trial has come to pass. We have seen that righteousness is forensic. This is born out by the fact that Paul adds the phrase $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\hat{\omega}\ \theta\epsilon\hat{\omega}$ (before God) in 2:13 and $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\hat{\omega}\pi\iota\omicron\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\hat{\omicron}\upsilon$ (before him) in 3:20.

But if we consider the phrase 'before God' we realise that God is not only one of the two contending parties in the court-room trial. He is also the Judge who decides between the two parties, who must decide for one and against the other. We must picture a courtroom scene in which God is in two places. He is one of the two contending parties, bringing a charge against his people (and ultimately against all people), *and* he is the Judge who presides and makes the final ruling, finding *himself* justified and all people, including Israel, condemned.

These two different locations for God in the court-room (namely, as one of the contending parties, and as Judge over all), correspond with the two different reasons we gave above for fearing, rather than welcoming, the righteousness of

⁶⁵ Isaiah 43:9 cf Isa 44:6-8, and indeed anywhere where the Lord calls upon Israel to be his 'witness'.

⁶⁶ Isaiah 42:18,19

God. We said that one of the reasons for expecting the righteousness of God to be experienced as a negative judgment was precisely *because of* his covenant faithfulness. His covenant promise is to 'curse the person who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out' (Deut 27:26). Again and again throughout her history, God's prophets would remind the people that they were *not* 'carrying out the words of this law'. Thus, ultimately, as one of the two parties in the covenant who is bringing his grievance against the other, God will appear, at the time of the judgment, in order to bring charges against his enemy – namely, all people, including his people Israel. And as the Creator and Judge of the whole earth who always reserves the right to be God, despite humanity's rebellion against him, and as the One who reveals his righteous and holy character *prior* to entering into any covenant (Gen 18:25), and then *through* his covenant (Lev 11:44,45, Ex 34:6,7)⁶⁷, God is the presiding Judge who rules that he is justified, and his enemies condemned.

Relating this to the possessive genitive

These two locations of God in the court-room trial correspond also with the second and third aspects of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ understood as possessive genitive.⁶⁸ The second aspect of the possessive genitive was God's inherent righteousness as Creator and Judge of the universe, holy and perfect in moral rectitude, hating sin, and always judging with complete justice. Thus we picture God as presiding over the courtroom trial, and who will judge justly. The third aspect of the possessive genitive was God's faithfulness to the covenant promises he made in good faith as one of the two parties in the covenant. He had promised to bless obedience to his revealed law, but to punish disobedience. As one of the two parties in the trial, God is contending that he has upheld his promises, but that his people have consistently failed to uphold theirs.

God's righteousness, then, understood as possessive genitive, can only result in negative judgment. Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive brings condemnation, and is, in and of itself, *not* good news. This insight is part of what Paul means when he declares that the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ revealed in the gospel is a righteousness to which the Law and the Prophets testify (Rom 1:2; 3:21).

If the righteousness of God, with this understanding of the phrase, is something which can bring only condemnation, then for the gospel to be 'the power of God

⁶⁷ It is important to remember that when Moses pleaded with the Lord for him to reveal his glory, God appeared to Moses as compassionate and gracious, abounding in love and faithfulness, and also 'not leaving the guilty unpunished' (Ex 34:6,7).

⁶⁸ The first aspect, to reiterate, was to act for his own name's sake, for the ultimate display of his righteousness as the basis for his glory, which is the *summum bonnum* for the human being.

for salvation', something which transcends the 'blessing for obedience/cursing for obedience' dichotomy must be looked for, because, in the end, *all* will be found to be disobedient.⁶⁹

3:3 DIKAIOSUNE ΘΕΟΥ IN ROMANS 3:21-26

We have seen above that the righteousness of God, considered in one of its aspects (possessive genitive) is not good news. But the gospel itself, as Paul understood it, *is* good news. There must, therefore, be another aspect of God's righteousness to be revealed, which will mean salvation from the condemnation to which δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive leads. And this righteousness is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as God's saving activity. The righteousness of God as subjective genitive now intervenes in our discussion, to bring salvation.

We saw above that when the court-room dispute is brought to judgment, God will be vindicated and his enemies – that is, all people, including Israel, will be brought to judgment. God's case must be upheld. 'God, the plaintiff must be vindicated.'⁷⁰ And God the Judge will, in complete justice, find humanity to be 'in the wrong', and will judge accordingly, with the destruction that is promised. None of this is, *per se*, good news, but it is essential to our understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.

For this revelation of the righteousness of God to become good news rather than bad news, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ must ultimately have a meaning that is positive for God's people. That is, it must equate to salvation. And salvation, as we have seen, amounts to being found 'in the right', or being justified. But how can God's people, who are demonstrably *not* in the right, be found to be 'in the right', or in right standing with God? The answer, in this 'gospel of God' (Rom 1:1) lies in 'regarding his Son' (1:3). God has set him forth in the place of humanity, to receive the promised judgment and destruction on our behalf. God thus holds true to his promised judgment, punishing destruction occurs, and

⁶⁹ This deeper understanding of the 'righteousness of God equating to the salvation of God', that it must somehow transcend the 'blessing for obedience/cursing for disobedience' dichotomy, may be inferred from the Old Testament Scriptures, but its transcendence rendered its presence opaque until the Spirit of God illuminated the apostles, enabling them to bring their explication of the gospel – this gospel to which the Law and the Prophets testify. Jesus, on the Emmaus Road, upbraided the disciples for being 'foolish and slow of heart' not to discern what the Scriptures taught: 'Did not the Christ *have to* suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.' (Luke 24:26). We might add that this deeper understanding of 'the righteousness of God equating to the salvation of God', which is testified to by the Law and the Prophets, but which transcends (is apart from) them, is explicated by all the apostolic writing in the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews, for example, says, 'The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.' (Heb 10:1).

⁷⁰ Chester T, 'Justification, Ecclesiology and the New Perspective' *Themelios*, Vol 30, Issue 2, Winter 2005, pp 15,16

God's righteousness is upheld. But because the Son of God has been set forth in humanity's place, believing humanity itself is free from condemnation. God has acted to save us, revealing his righteousness as saving intervention on humanity's behalf. Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive has appeared. Thus, God's righteousness as possessive genitive has been upheld, and his righteousness as subjective genitive is revealed. God has been seen to be just, *and* the one who justifies, those who believe.⁷¹

Having presented this brief sketch of the gospel as encapsulated in 3:21-26, we are now in a position to examine more closely the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in these verses.

3:21-26

We noted above that strict adherence to his covenant promises means that God must find unfaithful Israel (2:1-3:20) guilty before him, and that as Creator and Judge of the whole earth, evil-following (2:9) Gentiles will also be found, in judgment, to stand condemned. Thus far, God's righteousness considered as possessive genitive, must mean condemnation for all people. But let us remember the very first aspect of God's righteousness considered as possessive genitive. We noticed that this is the over-arching, under-girding *motive* for God's initiation of the gospel, the alpha and omega of all that God does: this is God's faithfulness to himself, to act always for the 'sake of his name' (Dan 9:19) and for the display of his righteousness which, when radiated forth, amounts to the glory of God." We noticed, too, that to initiate the plan whose glorious consequence would be the manifestation of God's righteousness, God made an unconditional promise to Abraham, which *must* come to fulfillment, irrespective of human sin and failure. ;Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true' (Rom 3:4 NRSV). No barrier will hinder him from pouring out his blessing.

We stated above that one of the aspects of God's righteousness considered as possessive genitive, namely his faithfulness to his covenant promises (the covenant entered into at Sinai), provided the motive for his acting to save his people (revealing his righteousness as subjective genitive) – the *chesed* and *emet* God manifests repeatedly during his leading the people of Israel through

71 'God's righteousness is both judicial and gracious at the same time in the one act of salvation in Christ.' Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, p173.

72 I argued above that this 'over-arching' motive for God's initiation of the gospel is for the manifestation of, and enjoyment (by God's people) of God's glory. I argued that this would appear to be the case from the beginning of the gospel, as the original sin from which the news of the gospel saves human beings is the *failure* to give God glory (Rom 1:18,22). I would note also that the climax of Paul's contemplation of this gospel is the summary paean of praise, 'for from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever!' (11:36). And the last verse of Romans, in which I argue can be seen the end (*telos*) of the gospel, is 'to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.'

the pages of the Old Testament history. In the same way, God's faithfulness to his intention to reveal his righteousness for the manifestation of his glory, in which is grounded his unconditional promise to Abraham to bless all the nations of the earth, is the motive for his acting to fulfill his promise to Abraham. So again, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive results in δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive – God's dynamic, saving righteousness.

But there is a crucial difference between God's faithfulness to his promises at Sinai and his faithfulness to his promise to Abraham. The former promises were conditional upon the faithfulness of Israel; the latter was an unconditional undertaking that remains irrespective of any human failing. Indeed, the final consequence of God's promises to his people at Sinai meant condemnation for Israel, as we saw above with our courtroom trial. But this condemnation is the necessary precursor for the good news of the gospel. For in the 'but now' (3:21) that follows the revelation of the condemnation of sinful humanity before God, we have a glimpse of the depth of the riches of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in all three of its aspects: possessive genitive, genitive of origin, and subjective genitive. We see something of the extent of the wonder of God's faithfulness in his promise to Abraham. And we see the awful revelation of 'the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven, God's holy response to sin (1:18) (both aspects of possessive genitive). We are given a glimpse of the value (and the price paid for its purchase) of the gift of righteousness (genitive of origin): the very righteousness of God in Christ (13:14) becomes *ours*. And in the heart of the transaction described in the following verses, we are witnesses to the glorious grace revealed in God's saving righteousness (subjective genitive).

3:21

Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in this verse is subjective genitive. The *καὶ* δὲ provides a logical adversative from the statement of the preceding verse. 3:20 has brought us to a consciousness of sin, which is the very reversal of the right standing humanity needs before God. Thus all that can be logically expected, in the light of 1:18, which gives the consequence of God's just response to human sin, is wrath. But 1:17 has already prepared us that the news, ultimately, must be good. The wrath of 1:18 has its opposite in 1:17, the saving righteousness or the justifying activity of God, and it is this meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which appears here in 1:21.

The phrase *χωρὶς νόμου* should be read to qualify *πεφανερωται* rather than *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. "The righteousness of God is not itself, distinct or apart from

73 "Apart from the law" could go with "righteousness of God" (cf. KJV, "the righteousness of God without the law is manifested"), but it makes better sense if taken with the verb "is manifested" (cf. NAB, "the

the law, but the way it has now been *revealed* is 'apart from the law'. How this δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is now revealed is about to be expounded by the apostle in the ensuing verses. It is no longer revealed through the law, because the law, *now* in the light of the gospel, is revealed as powerless to save (8:3). In fact, in the light of the gospel, the law's real purpose is to bring about an awareness of the *need* for salvation (3:20).

But it is still a righteousness to which the law and the prophets testify (3:21b cf 1:2). If asked how these so testify, we could reply that the *mode* of the salvation, shortly to be described in verse 25, is foreshadowed in all the substitutionary sacrifices prescribed in the worship of the Levitical tabernacle (Lev 1-7), and most clearly of all in the Day of Atonement (Lev 16), the *means* whereby this salvation is appropriated, namely faith, has its primary Scriptural exemplar in Abraham (cf Romans 4), and the *reality* of the salvation experienced by the blessed ones who have been rendered fit to enjoy God's presence is glimpsed proleptically in many passages of the prophets.⁷⁴

3:22

Here in this verse δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ comes as the genitive of origin. It was noted above that God's acting to save cannot operate in a vacuum. There must be those who are the objects of his salvation, and the recipients of the status of righteousness his justifying activity confers. That δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is here genitive of origin can be seen from the following phrase: διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: through faith in Jesus Christ (22b). Faith in Jesus Christ is the means by which God's righteousness becomes ours. Despite the growing popularity of interpreting this phrase as a subjective genitive, ie. the faith, or faithfulness, of Jesus Christ,⁷⁵ I prefer to read it as an objective genitive, ie. 'faith *in* Jesus

righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law"). Moo, p222. 'In the preceding passage (3:1-8) Paul has juxtaposed human and divine (un)righteousness. Human sinfulness served only to enhance the righteousness and fidelity of God (3:3-6). 'The implication was that God would display righteousness by executing righteous judgment upon a sinful world. What is now being proclaimed, however, is that God is displaying righteousness in a way that saves rather than condemns and doing so without any injury to the principle that righteousness on the part of human beings is required for the establishment and salvation of the eschatological people of God.' Byrne, B 'Sacra Pagina Romans' p123. Jewett writes, 'The place of emphasis in this opening sentence is the unusual phrase χωρὶς νόμου ("apart from law"). Since it is dependent on the verb "manifested" rather than the noun "righteousness", the phrase describes not the "process by which people are made right with God", but rather the method that God has chosen to reveal herself.' Jewett, R 'Romans', pp273-4.

74 For example: 'And a highway will be there; it will be called "The Way of Holiness". The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it' (Isa 35:8). And 'I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant splendour to Zion, my splendour to Israel.' (Isa 46:13).

75 D Campbell argues for the subjective genitive interpretation of διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and D Moo gives what are, to me, satisfactory responses to these. One of Campbell's arguments, to which Moo does not respond, refers to the New Perspective on Paul. He writes, '... since World War Two and the Holocaust, Pauline scholarship has been reorienting its presentation of late Second Temple Jewish soteriology away

Christ'.76

Εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (3:22c) (to all who believe) is not a redundant repetition, as those who argue for the subjective genitive contend would be the case if διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ were an objective genitive. Rather than being redundant, the phrase is strikingly placed to form a parallel with the phrase in the following verse: πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον, the πάντες in 3:23 answering the πάντας in 3:22c.⁷⁷

καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ (3:23). We saw above that the overarching understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ considered as possessive genitive is God's commitment to displaying his righteousness, which is the basis for the radiation of his glory. Here we see that because of human sin, the glory of God is precisely *not* revealed in fallen humanity. One of the results of the gospel, the revelation of God's righteousness as God's glory, will be the restoration of the image of God in believing humanity, so that they will come increasingly to be conformed to Jesus Christ, who is *the* image of God (8:29,30).

from a depiction that saw it in terms of crabbed legalism. Several studies have revealed this portrait to be a gross caricature, and have replaced the catch-word 'legalism' with phrases like 'covenantal nomism' that convey the devout spirit of much of Second Temple Judaism more accurately. This has in turn necessitated a reorientation of Paul (something still far from complete), but within this reorientation it has often been overlooked that Paul and Second Temple Judaism now share the principle of individual faith, since it exists at the heart of the covenant relationship. Consequently, it no longer seems necessary for Paul to state, particularly to a Jewish, or Jewish taught audience, that God requires a response of faith. This would be not merely superfluous, but banal and perhaps even insulting.' Campbell, D 'The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26' pp 61-62. In response to this statement of Campbell's, I would say, firstly, that it is not merely individual faith *per se* that Paul enjoins (which Campbell avers would be superfluous), but faith *in Christ*, which, so far from being superfluous, is the new way, apart from the Law, by which God's righteousness is obtained. Secondly, to criticize any statement of Paul's as being 'insulting' seems singularly out of place, given that Paul has been at pains to convey to all his readers, Jew or Gentile alike, that 'there is no one who does good, not even one' (3:12). Fitzmeyer writes, 'Some commentators would understand it as subjective ...'through the fidelity of Jesus Christ'... While this interpretation might seem plausible, it runs counter to the main thrust of Paul's theology. Consequently, many commentators continue to understand the gen. as objective "through faith in Jesus Christ".... Paul does not draw attention to Christ's faithfulness elsewhere in the extended exposition of Romans, even where it would have been highly appropriate, especially in chap. 4, where Abraham's *pistis* is the model for the believer.' Fitzmeyer, J 'Romans' p345. Jowett writes, 'The nature of "God's righteousness" is defined as coming "through faith in Jesus Christ" and being available "to all who have faith." It therefore seems preferable to assume that an objective genitive is employed here as in the preceding verse.' Jowett, R 'Romans', p275.

76 It is true that πιστις in 3:3 does mean 'faithfulness', but this faithfulness is God's, not Christ's, just as in 3:24-26 the faithfulness and righteousness are not of Christ, but of God. It is also true that in 5:19 Christ's obedience is an integral part of the ground of our justification, but we have to wait until we reach the fifth chapter before being introduced to this aspect of Paul's soteriology. The overwhelming emphasis on the faith exercised by believers, both in chapter 3 and chapter 4, as the only means of acquiring the righteousness of God, renders the 'objective genitive' interpretation of πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3:22 compelling.

77 An observation offered by Don Carson in his series of lectures on 'The New Perspective in Paul' given at the Bible College of New Zealand in the winter of 2006.

3:24a δικαιοῦμενοι δωρεὰν τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι

The righteousness of God as God's commitment to the revelation of his own glory continues to unfold in this verse, as we see that it comes as a gift from God's grace. It was grace that preceded and initiated God's promise to Abraham (4:16), and it is his faithful and gracious commitment to this promise that has brought the revelation of his righteousness to the climactic point that is about to appear in the second part of this verse.

3:24b διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

The ninth verse of this chapter has stated that 'all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin', which denotes a power from which all people are powerless to escape. Not only is sin a power, but it merits righteous condemnation, as is seen from 3:8: 'Their condemnation is just.' Paul presents all humanity as being in this plight, but under the glorious manifestation of the saving righteousness of God the means of deliverance is revealed: a ransom has been provided. This ἀπολυτρώσις, in the time of Paul's writing of the epistle to the Romans, referred to the payment of a ransom price in order to secure the release of prisoners of war, condemned criminals or slaves. In our gospel, then, we understand ἀπολυτρώσις as intending the payment of a price to secure liberation: the liberation of all who understand, and place their faith in the significance of this ransom.⁷⁸ As we consider this redemption as being the payment of a ransom price, we approach the very heart of the revelation of God's righteousness. His commitment to his righteousness as the basis for the manifestation of his glory, his integrity as a God who abhors and justly punishes sin, his faithfulness to his promise to Abraham that not only Abraham, but all his offspring (4:6) would be 'credited as righteous' (all aspects of his righteousness considered as possessive genitive) – all these are about to be displayed. Moreover, the righteousness received, and *how* it is received (genitive of origin) are to be revealed in the following verse (3:25) which illuminates the ἀπολυτρώσις of 3:24. And in this ἀπολυτρώσις with its elucidation in verse 25, we see the heart of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as God's dynamic intervention to save his people.

Ἀπολυτρώσις and ἰλαστήριον 3:24b-25

⁷⁸ Campbell, after a comprehensive discussion, taking a history of the debate surrounding the word, concludes that 'there is, at the very least, a strong sense of liberation in the word ἀπολυτρώσις. The word may mean more than this, but it means at least this' Campbell, D 'The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26' p121. Thus far I would concur with Campbell. But he then goes on to doubt the propriety of the word's meaning 'ransom payment' by asking 'who stands to receive the ransom payment when God pays the ransom price?' (ibid p122). In response to Campbell, I would suggest that it need not be crystal clear exactly *how* the payment is received. Suffice it to say that 'God, who must render just verdicts, is the recipient of the ransom' (Moo, p230). If all that Paul wanted to convey was the notion of liberation, he could have used a different word.

The slavery from which believing humanity is redeemed by Christ Jesus, as stated above, is the plight of being in bondage to the power of sin, and living under the sentence of the penalty of sin. The consequences of both the enslavement to the power of sin, and the just punishment for sin, is death (see 6:21 for the former and 6:23 for the latter). If redemption is the payment of a price, and the price is the death of Christ, 'and if the payment of the price effects the release of the party redeemed, which was otherwise under sentence of this very death themselves, then it follows that Christ's death was *instead of* the death of those whom he redeemed.'⁷⁹ Objections to the notion of ransom as payment seem unsound. Campbell, for example, says, 'Such an understanding would mean that his acceptance of Calvary and endurance of the Cross could somehow be quantified (!). Perhaps this is a marginally easier equation if the price is simply Christ's blood (since liquid is quantifiable, to put it crudely, although not usually in the sense of payment).'⁸⁰ But to see Christ's death as the payment of a ransom need not mean that his death is somehow quantifiable. It is no more quantifiable than the evil of the sin for which Christ's death is the punishment. That neither entity is quantifiable does not mean that there is not justice in the transaction. Moo's citation of Anselm's warning could not be more apt: 'You have not yet considered the weight of sin'.⁸¹ And the objection to the 'payment' concept that there can be no party who would be the recipient of the price, is also unsound. Because God initiates the transaction (3:25), and is therefore the one paying the price, it need not mean that God cannot be the one to whom the price is paid. As Carson notes, 'He is both the *propitiator* and the *propitiated*, the subject and object alike of propitiation.'⁸²

Before turning to ἰλαστήριον it is important to discuss for a moment the assertion we have made that Christ's death was *instead of* the death of those who believe. Paul has said that the gospel is witnessed to in the Scriptures, so we would expect to see evidence of redemption as 'the payment of a price' in the

79 Some commentators have wanted to suggest that ἄιμα means 'life'. In presenting the blood of the sacrificed animal, the offerer was somehow presenting God with the life of the animal. But Campbell summarises well the response to this thesis: 'The controversy over the meaning of ἄιμα in the NT, and in particular its use in Rom 3:25, is both simpler and more one-sided than the two preceding debates. As James Denney has said, the argument to the effect that shed blood signifies the release of life rather than death is a 'strange caprice', and 'a more groundless fancy never haunted and troubled the interpretation of any part of Scripture'. Leon Morris's analysis provides an excellent summary of the relevant texts and arguments. Morris concludes, concerning the suggestion that sacrificial blood is the offering of life to God: "the whole idea is dubious to say the least".' Campbell, pp 113-115

80 Campbell himself cautiously admits that ἀπολυτρόσις has a substitutionary meaning when he says, 'The word also probably carries (at least, at times) the connotation that this liberation is effected by some sort of substitutionary act.' (Campbell p126). But he goes on to say, 'But that it suggests an actual payment gives rise to a series of difficulties – some of them apparently quite insuperable.' (ibid).

81 ibid p124

82 Moo, p242

83 Carson, D 'Lectures on the New Perspective' delivered at the Bible College of New Zealand, winter 2006.

Old Testament. And we do indeed find such passages. The Hebrew root *pdh* denotes 'redemption by the payment of a price'. In Exodus 13:12 we read, 'You are to give over to the Lord the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the Lord. Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons.' As Morris observes, 'The firstborn belong to the Lord; they should be sacrificed to Him upon the altar. But in certain cases it is permitted, or required, to offer a substitute in lieu of the forfeited life, and this idea of a substitute is basic to *pdh*.'⁷ Notice too that the Lord's claim on the firstborn expressed itself *instead* by the taking of the Levites (Num 3:40ff). There were more firstborn among the children of Israel than there were Levites, so the excess were redeemed by the payment of five shekels each (Num 3:46). The Hebrew that is translated 'instead of' is *tachath*, which, in the LXX is ἄντι. Morris indicates a wealth of instances wherein ἄντι in the Septuagint is translated with 'instead of'.⁸ Leading up to the very telling instance in the New Testament, 'just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom (λύτρον) for (ἄντι) many' (Mat 20:28).⁹

The payment of the price, expressed in the ἀπολυτρωσις of 3:24, is illuminated by the ἱλαστήριον of 3:25. The effect of the redemption, the payment of the price of the death of Christ instead of the death of those for whom he died, was the propitiation of the wrath of God. As with ἀπολυτρώσις, ἱλαστήριον has had much debate concerning its meaning.⁸⁷ The ἱλαστήριον is the name in the Septuagint given to the covering of the ark of the covenant within the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle (Lev 16:2). This 'atonement cover' (NIV) is translated 'mercy seat' in the Authorised Version and NRSV88, and was the very place where, on the great Yom Kippur (Day of

84 Morris, L 'The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross' p15

85 'and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of (ἄντι) his son (Gen 22:13). 'Let your servant, I beseech you, remain instead of (ἄντι) the lad as a servant to my lord (Gen 44:33). 'I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of (ἄντι) all the firstborn' (Num 3:12). He continues into the New Testament: 'if he asks for a fish, will give him, instead (ἄντι), a serpent' (Lk 11:11). Ibid p30

86 There are those who oppose the substitutionary understanding of the atonement, because, for all we have said above concerning ἄντι, Paul does not use the preposition ἄντι: he uses ὑπερ (as in 1 Tim 2:6: ὁ δούς ἑαυτον ἀντίλυτρον ὑπερ πάντων, τὸ μαρτύριον καιροῖς ἰδίοις. Indeed, according to Ladd, Paul 'uniformly' uses ὑπερ throughout. But Ladd notes also that in Hellenistic Greek the preposition ὑπερ is often used in the place of ἄντι. For example, 'in the papyri ὑπερ is used of a man who writes a letter in the stead of another.' Ladd, p428.

87 The Greek Lexicon of the New Testament provides two understandings for ἱλαστήριον, both of which are related, and neither of which need preclude the other: '1. *Means of expiation*, of Christ ... *whom God set forth as a means of expiation* Rom 3:25... The unique feature relative to Gr-Rom. usage is the initiative taken by God to effect removal of impediments to a relationship with God's self. In this passage ἱ. has also been taken to mean 2. *place of propitiation*. The LXX uses ἱ. of the lid of the ark of the covenant, *kaporeth*, which was sprinkled w. the blood of the sin-offering on the Day of Atonement.' BDAG, p474.

88 Moo points out that 'mercy seat' comes from Tyndale's translation, which was in turn, influenced by Luther's German 'Gnadenstuhl' (Moo, p232).

Atonement), the High Priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice for the atoning of the sins of the nation and of himself. The one other occasion where ἱλαστήριον occurs is Hebrews 9:5, where it has an identical meaning. Moo points out that in 21 of its 27 LXX occurrences, ἱλαστήριον refers to this mercy seat.⁸⁹ Thus Paul presents, here in 3:25, Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary as the very *place* where the sins of believing human beings are atoned for.⁹⁰ There is a significant contrast, moreover, with the ritual of Leviticus 16. The old tabernacle prescription had the ark, with its surmounting mercy seat, concealed within the Most Holy Place into which no one dared (excepting the High Priest, once a year), on pain of death, enter. But here Paul presents, or declares that God presents (προέθετο), Jesus publicly, in full view, for all to see.⁹¹

That ἱλαστήριον means 'mercy seat', and the place of atonement for the sin of believing humanity, then, is not a proposition that is much contested. But as to *how* this atonement happens, much debate has occurred, and continues to occur. The essence of the debate is the question of whether we are best to understand the atonement as removing – *expiating* – sin by simply 'wiping it away', or is it closer to the truth to see sin as being dealt with by God's holy wrath against sin being *propitiated*.

I would wish to argue that the latter understanding need not preclude the former, for the following reasons: The wrath of God is an aspect of God that is abundantly witnessed to in the Old Testament Scriptures.⁹² There are numerous passages wherein God is said to be 'slow to anger'⁹³ But 'for those who wrote such words the idea that God is 'slow to anger' was not regarded as a truism, but as a surprising revelation, something to be received with awe and wonder'.⁹⁴

A noun cognate to ἱλαστήριον, ἱλασμος, is often translated as 'forgiveness'. In Daniel 9:8, the forgiveness (ἱλασμος) is hoped and prayed for, in the light of

89 *ibid*

90 There have been those (e.g. Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel*, pp. 47-72) who have argued that Paul would not have intended his readers to understand ἱλαστήριον with its Old Testament meaning as Gentile Christians would not have been conversant with such happenings, but this objection hardly stands when we consider that in all of his writings Paul expects his readers, Jew and Gentile alike, to be conversant with the Old Testament Scriptures.

91 Paul, defending himself before King Agrippa, says to Festus, 'I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner' (Acts 26:26)

92 Carl Trueman, former editor of *Themelios*, writes in his superb editorial, 'The Marcions Have Landed!': 'Now, maybe I'm missing something, but of all the things taught in the bible, the terrifying wrath of God would seem to be among the most self-evident of all' *Themelios* Vol 28 Issue 1 Autumn 2002 p2

93 Eg Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Jer 15:15; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:2; Na 1:3 (cited by Morris, p136).

94 Morris, p 136

the afflictions which the wrath of God has brought upon the people (9:11). So Daniel prays (9:16a), 'O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill.' Many further passages could be cited, but to encapsulate what I wish to aver here, I cannot do better than quote Morris, 'The general picture the Old Testament gives us of God is One who is by nature merciful, and who cannot be swayed by man's puny efforts, so that forgiveness is always due in the last resort to God's being what He is, and not to anything that man may do. Because God is God, He must react in the strongest manner to man's sin, and thus we reach the concept of the divine wrath. But because God is God, wrath cannot be the last word. 'The Lord is good; his mercy endureth forever' (Ps 100:5).⁹⁵

We noted above that God is both the subject, and the object, of propitiation. This fact redounds to his glory, which is one of the key understandings of the 'possessive genitive' aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.⁹⁶

It should be noted too, that much of the opposition to the notion of the wrath of God is due to unfair caricatures of this divine quality. His wrath is not like that of the pagan deities who could be capricious or even vindictive.⁹⁷ 'In the heathen view expiation renders the gods willing to forgive; in the Biblical view expiation enables God, consistently with his holiness, to do what he was never unwilling to do. In the former view sacrifice changes the sentiment of the gods towards men; in the latter it affects the consistency of his procedure in relation to sin.'⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Morris, p136

⁹⁶ The Lord declares in Isaiah 40:25, 'To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?' (note that Paul quotes from the 13th verse of this chapter in 11:34). In fact, any comparison of God to pagan deities can only bring glory to his name. If we take the very subject under discussion, the propitiation of the wrath of God, and compare it with pagan gods, we notice that with pagan worship it was the human worshiper who offered the propitiatory sacrifice, and the pagan deity that was propitiated. But it is not thus with God. He alone is responsible for the propitiation of his righteous wrath against sin, and to him alone belongs the glory.

⁹⁷ In speaking of the righteousness of God's wrath, Peter Bolt writes, 'Why is Paul comfortable with speaking of divine wrath? Perhaps because it, unlike human anger, is restrained by God's justice. In this regard it is interesting that Paul avoids exactly the terms associated with vengeance, while nevertheless using the emotional language of wrath. When ὀργή and θυμός occur of God, they are set within a forensic framework in which wrath is expressed in terms of justice. Although human anger does not achieve the righteousness of God (to borrow from Jas. 1:20), God's wrath and righteousness are of a piece (cf. Rom. 1:16-17,18), and God's wrath is always thoroughly righteous and just (Rom. 2:5; 3:5). This is also the case in the present state of wrath under which the world labours. For this manifest wrath comes as a result of God handing human beings over to the desires of their hearts (Rom. 1:24,26,28), which is certainly completely impartial and fair, even though this is a terrible 'grace', because it is impossible to live in God's world without him. In this way, the tragic effect of sin working its own judgment (*a la* Hesiod, and his modern counterparts) are felt in the world at large.' 'The Philosopher In The Hands Of An Angry God', Bolt, P, (from 'The Gospel To The Nations', ed Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson, pp 338-9.

⁹⁸ G.B. Stevens, *The Johannine Theology* pp 183-184, quoted by Moo 'The Epistle to the Romans' p236. I acknowledge that Stevens uses the word 'expiation' here, while I have been discussing 'propitiation', but the

I hope, in the above commentary on 3:24-25a, that I have substantiated my thesis on p23 that God, in the courtroom trial, has demonstrated his righteousness in all three of its aspects. In his contention with his people, he accuses them of failing to uphold their side of the covenant, and that they therefore merit the promised destruction announced at the covenant's initiation. God's contention that his people are in the wrong, and that he is justified in finding them so, may be seen as a revelation of his righteousness as possessive genitive: his faithfulness to his covenant promises to bless obedience (there was no obedience) and to punish unfaithfulness (testified to in 2:24; 3:3 etc). His verdict, from his position as presiding Judge in the trial, that he is justified and the people of Israel – and everyone else – condemned, is a revelation of the other dimension of the possessive genitive: his holiness, his commitment always to act with integrity to his character which is just, and to judge with justice (Gen 18:25; cf Rom 2:2). The punishment for the guilty in Exodus 23:7, the justice of which is assented to by the Israelites at Mount Ebal (Deut 11:29), and promised by the God who cannot lie (Num 23:19), *must* fall. But there is another dimension yet in the possessive genitive aspect of God's righteousness: it is his commitment to act for his glory, that his glory might be revealed, that his righteousness might have its 'field of radiation and place of manifestation' (Käsemann, p28). It is this primary and prior understanding of God's righteousness, as we saw above, which is the grounding and rationale for his gracious, unconditional promise to Abraham that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3). Of what this blessing is ultimately to consist, Isaiah reveals with his words, 'They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God (Isa 35:2).

If God's righteousness is to be manifested in such a way that it is experienced, and experienced for the glory of God, then there needs to be people who will enjoy such a blessed experience. And these people, God's gospel tells us, are those who have been justified by faith (3:26; 5:1), who are the true children of Abraham (4:16), to whom have come the righteousness of God (3:22) through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (3:24). These are the ones upon whom the just judgment was justly going to fall. And yet it did not fall. It did not fall upon them, because they have been, through faith in the atoning death of Christ Jesus, justified. But we saw above that for God to be true to his character, the punishment for the unfaithfulness of his people, and the wickedness and suffering that ensued (Rom 1:18) must be executed. And it was. In our courtroom scene, Jesus took the place of God's people, and experienced the

difference between 'expiation' and 'propitiation' does materially affect the point I am making about the difference between the character of the pagan deities and that of God.

destruction God had promised. The ransom price was paid by the Son of God whom God substituted for his people so as to be just (in executing punishment) and the one who justified (not only did not punish, but positively established as righteous) his people.⁹⁹

It is not difficult, then, to see the other two aspects of the righteousness of God revealed in the transaction described above. In keeping with the promise he made to Abraham to bring blessing to all the nations of the earth, God demonstrated his faithfulness (*emunah*) and his mercy (*chesed*) – that is, he demonstrated the saving righteousness promised by his prophets, for which Israel had been longing, and the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which Paul announces at the outset of his gospel (Rom 1:17) – and God's saving intervention to justify his people (subjective genitive) is revealed. The consequence of this revelation is that God's people, who were demonstrably guilty, have been declared righteous, and have received the righteousness of God (genitive of origin).

3:25b εἰς ἐνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων (to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed. (NRSV)).

In this verse δικαιοσύνη moves from the subjective genitive of 3:21, whose complementary pole, the genitive of origin appears in 3:22, to the possessive genitive. Here God reveals himself, through the apostle, as one who in the holiness and integrity of his character, detests sin, and will always justly punish it.

There has been some disagreement expressed concerning this understanding of δικαιοσύνη in 3:25. There are those who, in this verse, prefer to see the subjective genitive, in continuity with 3:21-22, as meaning God's saving righteousness. Such commentators would take Paul to be saying that God is only right to forgive the sins committed in the past (because of his covenant promises), and therefore righteous to justify (3:26) those who have faith in Christ.¹⁰⁰ To argue for this, such scholars point out that πάρεσιν (translated as 'passed over' in the NRSV) has a respectable tradition of being translated 'forgave'.¹⁰¹ There was no problematical 'passing over' of the sins committed in

⁹⁹ The substitutionary nature of this redemption is poignantly expressed in Jesus' words in Gethsemane, 'if you are looking for me, then let these men go.' (John 18:8).

¹⁰⁰ Campbell writes, 'Paul is stating that God is right *within the very act* of rightwizing the one who lives out of the faith of Christ.' Campbell, 'The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26' p170.

¹⁰¹ 'The meaning of the rare word *paresis* is debated ... Ancient interpreters and the Vg understood it to mean "pardon, remission," a meaning found in extrabiblical Greek for the remission of debts or punishment... This meaning is preferred by Luther, Calvin, Bultmann [for whom it is a synonym for *aphesis*]. Fitzmeyer, p351. But BDAG provides us with the definition, 'πάρεσις: deliberate disregard, *passing over, letting go* unpunished. 'A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p776

the past. They say: 'previously God was angry with sins (1:18-3:20), but now he releases us from them out of his forbearance.'¹⁰² Holding that δικαιοσύνη means here, and everywhere, 'covenant faithfulness', they take the meaning of this verse to be that God, from his saving faithfulness, has acted to secure forgiveness for sins committed in the past. But a number of studies present compelling semantic evidence that πάρεσις does indeed mean 'pass over'.¹⁰³ If we combine this consideration with the fact that διὰ can really only be translated 'because of'¹⁰⁴ ('because of the passing over of sins committed beforehand'), we shall see that δικαιοσύνη can hardly mean 'saving faithfulness'. That is, God could hardly have passed over the sins committed under the Old Covenant *because of* (διὰ) his saving faithfulness. Thus, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ here refers to the righteousness of God as his acting in keeping with his own character as a God who righteously abhors sin, and punishes it with the justice it deserves.

3:25a-26 ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ. (in the forbearance of God, for a demonstration of his righteousness at the present time, in order that he might be just and the justifier of the person who has faith in Jesus.)

A statement from Guillebaud quoted above (p9) has particular relevance to this verse: 'That God can punish seems to the modern man to need elaborate explanation: that He can forgive seems to Paul to be what needs to be explained'. If God, again and again through the Scriptures, reveals himself as a God who does not 'acquit the guilty' (Ex 23:7), how can he now, in a way that accords with his just character, declare those who are (3:23a) demonstrably guilty, righteous? The answer is the sacrifice of atonement, which propitiates God's wrath against the sin of all who believe. This ἱλαστήριον explains the parallel situations of 25a and 26d. Because of the sacrifice of atonement, God is able both to punish the sins which were passed over beforehand, and declare righteous those who, in the present time, place their faith in Christ Jesus. God is able justly to declare the guilty righteous, because Christ has satisfied the demands for justice upon which God's righteous character insists. 3:26, then, announces both the wonder of God's merciful justifying of sinners, and summarizes the theodicy that justifies him in so doing.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰²ibid

¹⁰³Moo summarizes these well and states, 'On the basis of the meaning of its verbal cognate, παράημι ('neglect', 'slacken'; cf Luke 11:42; Heb 12:12), and its use in several key texts, Trench concluded that πάρεσις means 'suspension,' 'passing over' (*Synonyms*, pp. 114-19). It is therefore to be distinguished from ἀφεσις which denotes 'forgiveness,' 'remission' (cf Eph 1:7; Col 1:14).' Moo p239.

¹⁰⁴ '98 Διὰ can have a telic meaning, but such a reading for διὰ would make no sense here: Paul would not be wanting to say that God demonstrated his righteousness *in order to* pass over sins beforehand.

¹⁰⁵ Piper comments: 'Paul recognizes that what was at stake was not just God's being seen to be righteous, but

I shall argue below that this 'surprising' announcement of Paul's actually redounds to God's glory. The atoning sacrifice presented by God in the cross of Calvary is the ultimate revelation both of his mercy *and* his justice. But, as noted above, not all scholars agree with the 'contrasting' understandings of righteousness in 3:25-26. Those who say that δικαιοσύνη means 'saving faithfulness' throughout the entire passage do not recognise the incongruity between the two meanings of δικαιοσύνη which are at the heart of God's character and the very ground of the radiation of his glory. This means, too, that such scholars will assign a different meaning to the conjunction καὶ in 3:26. Because, in their view, God is only right (because of his covenant promises) to declare believers righteous, they see no incongruity between the δίκαιον and the δικαιοῦντα of 3:26d. Thus the καὶ, for them, indicates an instrumentality between the two phrases: God is just *by means of* justifying those who believe. But if we maintain the *incongruity* between the phrases, argued for above, we will see that the καὶ is actually *concessive*. That is, God is just *even in* justifying the unrighteous.¹⁰⁶ In the ἰλαστήριον the goodness and severity of God meet.

3:4 THE GOSPEL AS THE POWER OF GOD FOR THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE

We come now to the central point of my thesis: that rightly to understand δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ will explain *how* the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. We have seen how God's commitment to the revelation of his glory, to experience which is the ultimate meaning of blessedness for those who are to be saved through the power of the gospel, is the alpha of salvation. It is this commitment to the revelation of his glory (the very first aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ considered as possessive genitive discussed above) that is the rationale for his gracious and unconditional promise to Abraham which is the first event in the process that is to find its culmination in the salvation of all who believe. Once the salvation has occurred, that is to say, once those saved have been granted the status of right standing, that enables them to stand, without destruction, in the presence of God, God's righteousness will begin to manifest itself through these blessed people, who have now been translated into the kingdom of God, the home of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (14:17). In this kingdom, the righteousness of

God's being righteous' (underlining his). Piper, 'The Righteousness of God in Romans 3:25,26' p14
 106 Piper is one scholar who maintains this traditional view, and informs us that Bultmann too concurs: 'Bultmann, with most exegetes, is correct at least in denying that the righteousness of God in Rom 3:25 can refer (with 1:17 and 3:21ff) to the action of God in justifying sinners, since there it is the *wrath* of God Paul is claiming to be just' 'The Demonstration of the Righteousness of God in Romans 3:25,26' (unpublished article by John Piper from Bethel College, 1980) p13

God has its 'sphere of radiation, and place of manifestation'¹⁰⁷ – the omega of salvation. So we have δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ revealed, in fulfillment of the Scriptures' prophecies which anticipate God's righteousness as God's salvation. Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive is realized. Understood in this light, with the dynamic interplay between the various aspects of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ we may say that the righteousness of God is the alpha and the omega of salvation.

But we have not yet enlarged on exactly *how* people are justified. How exactly are God's people placed in this right standing, which is the beginning, and necessary condition for salvation? What brings about the change of status in those who believe, and how exactly does God bring his people into right standing, so that they have 'peace with God' (Rom 5:1)?

The answer is from being made aware – by hearing, seeing, or reading (10:14) – of the righteousness of God as revealed in his holy and perfect character. The perfection and holiness of God is revealed, for the Jews, through the law (Lev 19:1,2,37 etc)¹⁰⁸, the writings (Psalm 19:7a; 119:96 etc)¹⁰⁹, and the prophets (Isa 6:3-5; Ezek 1:28 etc).¹¹⁰ The absolute right of God to receive worship – worship which is unforthcoming – is revealed to the Gentiles through the creation itself (1:21), and the moral perfection of conduct upon which God insists, is revealed through their consciences (2:12, 14-15). Upon being confronted with this holy perfection, and realising at the same time that nothing less than this perfection will enable a person to stand in the presence of God, a person becomes aware of their own sin. 'Through the law we become conscious of sin' (3:20).

This is the first step in the 'mechanics' of salvation: the awareness of *not* being in right standing, of having 'fallen short of the glory of God' (3:23), and in desperate need, therefore, of salvation. This awareness is brought about, as we have said, from being vouchsafed a vision of the holiness of the God before whom every human must stand. And this vision is occasioned by being exposed

¹⁰⁷ Käsemann , p28

¹⁰⁸The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. (Lev 19:1,2) 'Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the Lord.' (Lev 19:37)

¹⁰⁹ The Law of the Lord is perfect' (Ps 19:7a); 'To all perfection I see a limit; but your commands are boundless' (Ps 119:96).

¹¹⁰'And they were calling to one another, "Holy holy holy is the Lord God Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." (Isa 6:3-5). 'Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell face-down, and I heard the voice of one speaking.' (Ezek 1:28).

to God's law. But it is not the Law itself that is the power of God for salvation. It is the gospel. And the gospel begins with Paul, by means of the Law, facing his readers with the perfection that God requires. But it is the Law *accompanied by his apostolic commentary and explanation* which serves to accentuate, highlight, and fully reveal God's perfection, and contrast with such devastating clarity the sinfulness of his readers.

The Gentiles, then, being made aware of their sin in failing to give glory to God for his eternal power and divine nature as revealed in creation (1:21), and being convicted moreover by an awareness of falling short of the law written on their consciences, learn that before God 'their mouths will be silenced' (3:19). And the Jewish reader, from being exposed to his or her own writings, is also made to see that he or she 'is not righteous' (3:10), 'does not understand' (3:11), has a throat that is an open grave, a tongue that practises deceit (3:13), 'feet that are swift to shed blood' (3:15), and that he or she 'has no fear of God' (3:18). Thus convicted, the Jewish reader realises that he will join his Gentile neighbour with a closed mouth, standing accountable to God (3:19).

It is this conviction of being conscious of sin and, eschatologically unable to stand before a holy God who reveals his righteousness through his perfect Law, that is the necessary precondition to being saved. Without this awareness of one's plight, one remains uninterested in the solution.¹¹¹

3.4.1 God's righteousness (possessive genitive), as revealed through the Law, is revealed pre-eminently through the Cross itself: νόμον ἰσχύνομεν: we uphold the law (3:31).

In 5:19 Paul will tell his readers that their righteousness has come through the obedience of Christ. This obedience is integral to our understanding of the apostle's meaning that the message of the cross *upholds* the Law.¹¹² There on the cross is to be seen Christ Jesus fulfilling the Law whose primary command is to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength' (Deut 6:5). The Son of God demonstrated this perfect obedience, the fulfillment of the Law, by being the 'sin offering' (8:3) that enabled God to condemn sin so that 'the righteous requirements of the Law might be fully met' (8:4). In suffering the just penalty for sin (8:3), Christ on the cross fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah who told of the Servant who would be

¹¹¹ Jesus said, 'I have not come to bring the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.' (Mk 5:32).

¹¹² Cranfield comments here, 'In this connection it is most instructive to note that (all the initial) statements with reference to the law can also be made with reference to the gospel. The gospel reveals sin – the Cross shows our sin; the gospel enhances sin, giving to our continuing sin the character of wilful rejection of God's love; the gospel increases sin – for when God's claim on man is most clear and pressing, it enrages our sinfulness most, our self-centredness recognizing the seriousness with which it is threatened; the gospel declares God's condemnation – it is declared on the Cross even as it is borne for us.' Cranfield, 862, footnote 1.

'pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities' (Isa 53:5) and who would, thereby, 'justify many' (Isa 53:11). And the Cross 'upholds the Law' by revealing God's detestation of sin and righteous punishment thereof. The witness in the Scriptures is clear that God hates wickedness (Deut 12:31; 16:22; Ps 11:5; Prov 6:16 etc), and on the Cross is revealed, actually and proleptically, God's wrath against sin (Rom 2:5,6,8 etc). The reader or hearer of the gospel is confronted, in the righteousness of God embodied in the Law and upheld in the Cross, God's judgment against his or her sin. And he or she is aware of the eschatological implication.¹¹³ The judgment that is implicit on the Cross of Calvary will one day be made explicit.¹¹⁴

But with this 'awareness of sin' (3:20) the reader is now – and only now – ready to hear that his plight does not mean an irreversible doom. It *is* possible to stand before this holy God – but *not* because of any righteousness on the reader's part. It is going to be possible to stand before God because there is available to the convicted person, a gift of righteousness that comes from God. This gift of righteousness is nothing less than the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ which the reader is invited, and enjoined to 'put on' (13:14).

And it is a gift which God is able to confer in perfect consistency with his righteousness. God has not abrogated his righteous demands for justice. His holy character justly insists on sin receiving its due penalty, and in perfect consistency with his righteous character, who has said in his law that he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished (Ex 23:7), God has executed justice on the one whom he presented as a sacrifice of propitiation. 'What was showing itself in the death of Christ is God's exacting demand of a recompense for sin.'

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The reader who hears these words and responds by placing his or her faith 'in his blood' (3:25) is now saved (1:16), having been put in right standing with

¹¹³Ladd expresses this well: 'The divinely initiated apostolic interpretation includes an eschatological dimension. The righteousness and the wrath of God that have already been revealed in God's redemptive acts in history (Rom 1:17,19) await their consummation at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thes 1:7) in both glory and judgment (1 Cor 3:13; Rom 2:5). In fact, the true locus of revelation is eschatology. This means that what God has done in history is inseparable from the eschatological consummation, for it is an anticipation of the eschatological redemption.' Ladd, 'A Theology of the New Testament' p386. I would add to this last sentence of Ladd's, '... and eschatological judgment'. I would, moreover, qualify Ladd's statement that 'the true locus of revelation is eschatology' by saying that the true locus of revelation has *two* loci: the Cross of Christ and the Day of judgment.

¹¹⁴There shall come a time when God the Creator shall 'demonstrate his wrath and make his power known' (Rom 9:22). The cross is the prolepsis of that day of judgment, when God's contention with the world comes to its conclusion. In justifying the sinner God does not set aside his contention with humanity. He brings it to completion in his own Son.' Siefrid, M 'The "New Perspective on Paul" and its Problems' (Themelios Vol 25 No 2 February 2000) p17

¹¹⁵Piper 'The Righteousness of God in Romans 3:25-6' (JSNT 7 (1980)) p14

God, or 'justified freely' (3:24).

3.4.2 The proclamation of the gospel as the power to save

We shall see that this justification occurs through the hearer's identification with Christ, and Paul, in Chapter 6, is going to explain how all the consequences of our being placed in right standing with God – the death of the sinful nature within us, the new nature we have been given, the new sphere into which we have been translated – all these consequences ensue from our being with Christ, and participating in his death, burial and resurrection (6:1-14). In one sense, then, it could be said that the salvation of believers occurred, in a way that transcends a time span of some two thousand years, in the death and resurrection of Christ at Calvary. But this salvation only becomes a reality *for the believer* when he or she places his or her faith in Christ. And this only happens when the gospel is heard. 'How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?' (10:14). Thus, the proclamation of the gospel, which is inseparable from its content, is a necessary condition for salvation to occur. 'The Word of God is both the report about a redemptive event, and is itself a redemptive event, for in the word of the cross the Crucified himself confronts men to communicate to them the benefits of his redeeming death.'¹¹⁶

3.4.3. Being placed in right standing with God is a necessary condition for salvation.

In subsequent chapters the apostle is going to enlarge on the consequences of being placed in right standing with God. Being justified, then, is not the end of the gospel. But it is certainly its beginning, and as such, to draw a dichotomy between 'the totality of God's redemptive historical plan' and 'justification by faith' and debate the comparative merits each has for claiming to be at the centre of Paul's thought, seems to be a misplaced controversy.¹¹⁷ To say that 'justification by faith is central and essential to salvation' is not to claim that it is the end of the gospel. But it must be maintained that justification by faith is *central* to the gospel, for without it God's redemptive historical process would have no dynamic. The hearing of the gospel, the conviction of sin which the confrontation with the law occasions, and the consequent reception of the gift of righteousness offered through the death of Christ, is at the very vanguard of 'the revelation of God's righteousness' (1:17) in history. It is the agent by which the kingdom of God advances.

¹¹⁶Ladd, G 'A Theology of the New Testament' p391

¹¹⁷Ladd writes, 'A Reformed scholar (Ridderbos) has pointed out that there is a danger in making justification by faith the central doctrine, namely, the danger of depriving Paul's message of its "redemptive historical dynamic" and making it into a timeless treatment of individual justification. The unifying center is rather the redemptive work of Christ as the redemptive history.' Ladd, p375

3.4.4 That God declares the believer to be 'in the right' is a judgment based on truth.

That the salvation of God reveals his righteousness implies a severe critique of any suggestion that God's forensic acquittal of the guilty is somehow a fiction. The valuable dual commentators on this epistle, Sanday and Headlam, are famous for their declaration that the 'justification of the ungodly' has as its basis, a kind of 'legal fiction'.¹¹⁸ It should be enough to refute this suggestion simply by pointing to the revelation of God in the Scriptures which testify repeatedly that God cannot lie (Num 23:19; Rom 2:2; 3:4 etc). But further, we would remind the reader of the 'mechanics' of justification: that the declaration of the sinner to be in right standing is because God has accepted the ransom price that was offered in our stead.

For the 'revelation of the righteousness of God' to be 'the power of God for the salvation of those who believe', it is necessary, moreover, to emphasize that the declaration of 'right standing' is a legal declaration only. The 'rightwizing' (to use Campbell's term) of the believer does not change the person him/herself *per se*. This change must inevitably come, and Käsemann's insight that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a gift which has at its essence the power to bring transformation, is going to be helpful below. But to aver that the justified person somehow *becomes* more righteous is a dangerous step towards the false belief that God accepts people once they have become righteous. Such a belief is inimical to the truth of the gospel and must have the consequence of militating against salvation.

3.4.5 Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and the glory of God.

We saw above (pp 6-7) that the first of the three different aspects of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ considered as the possessive genitive is God's commitment to act, ultimately, for the display of his glory – which is inseparable from the good of his creatures, because the *summum bonum* for the human being is the enjoyment of God's glory (as the Westminster Confession expresses).

The purpose of this thesis is to show that a proper understanding of the righteousness of God will explain how the gospel can be the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (Rom 1:16). We have seen, hitherto, how the interplay between the different understandings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ can bring salvation. But one important understanding has yet to be explored, namely the first of the three aspects of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ considered as the possessive genitive. This was the commitment of God to act 'for his own name's sake', for the display of his glory. We have agreed, above, with Käsemann, that God's

¹¹⁸ Sanday, W and Headlam, A 'Romans' p36.

righteousness will have a 'field of radiation and a place of manifestation'. This is his glory. 'The righteousness of the Messiah's kingdom is still to be God's own, manifested in the world and reconciling it to him – flooding it (as it were) with its own glory.'¹¹⁹ This glory will be the splendour of the Kingdom of God, the 'home of righteousness', which is 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom 14:17). This 'manifestation of the righteousness of God' I have suggested above is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive. So the purpose of God to display his glory is the ground of salvation – the ground, indeed, of election itself – that will have as its glorious end, the revelation of God's righteousness (subjective genitive).

But we have not yet considered *how* the revelation of the righteousness of God conceived along *this* pathway, can bring salvation. I believe that the key is in the word 'alone'. When δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is understood to be the righteousness of God *alone*, then the reader/hearer of the gospel realises that he or she is in need of salvation, and is then ready to receive the gift of righteousness God has made available through faith in Christ Jesus (3:22). In other words, when the reader or hearer comes to see, through Paul's exposition of the Law leading to the gospel, that God alone is righteous (3:4-5), because apart from God, no one can lay claim to any righteousness of their own (3:10,20,23), the reader/hearer has been prepared for salvation.

And it is God alone who is glorified *through* this salvation, because it is God alone who is responsible for this salvation from beginning to end. This 'glory to God alone' is another dimension of the revelation of the righteousness of God which is 'promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures' (1:2). The refrain that is repeated again and again in the early chapters of Isaiah is 'The haughty eyes of people shall be brought low, and the pride of everyone shall be humbled' (NRSV) (Isa 2:11, cf 2:9, 17, 19-21).

¹¹⁹Barmby J 'Romans (The Pulpit Commentary)' (London: Funk and Wagnells, 1907) pxii. I am indebted to Barmby for his insight that that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 1:17 is best understood as a subjective genitive, but differ from him in that, as this thesis is arguing, I do not see the subjective genitive unequivocally manifested throughout the epistle. I have one other difference from Rev Barmby which is more serious still. When Barmby writes that the righteousness of God 'must come down to man and take him into itself' (p xiii), I am concerned that the cost of the sacrifice is not sufficiently conveyed here, whereby the righteousness of God *could* take human beings 'into itself'. It is almost as if the 'spread of God's righteousness' is due to some kind of necessity in God whereby He *cannot help* but extend the sphere of his righteousness. Sanday and Headlam write 'The whole scheme of things whereby he gathers to Himself a righteous people is the direct and spontaneous expression of His own inherent righteousness; a necessity of His own Nature impels Him to make them like Himself'. Sanday and Headlam, 'Romans', p25. Campbell's footnote (p154 of 'Rhetoric of Righteous in Romans 3:21-26') informs us that Sanday and Headlam were originally influenced by Barmby on this point. But I would argue that it is at the very heart of the glory of God, which is the telos of all things, that God was not under any 'divine necessity' to bring salvation, but moved solely from an unconstrained grace, a grace which was at the same time infinitely costly to himself, as it meant sacrificing his own Son in order that the just demands of his holiness might be met in the salvation he extended.

All we have said hitherto has led us, inductively, to the great truth that salvation is by grace alone, received through faith alone. If redemption is from God from beginning to end, and no human being can rely on anything within him or herself to contribute towards this salvation, then we are indebted solely to God's grace, which we receive solely by faith. That this must result in God alone being glorified is underlined when the apostle declares that the promise *must* come by faith, *so that it may be by grace* (4:16).

In order to demonstrate that this has *always* been God's way, Paul devotes the entirety of his fourth chapter to the example of Abraham. If a necessary precondition to being saved is to realise one's *need* of salvation, then one must realise that one has no grounds wherein to boast (3:27). To show that no one, not even the greatest of the heroes of the Old Testament Scriptures, was saved through anything in which they could boast, Paul expatiates on the story of Abraham, with a corroborating quotation from another Scriptural figure, David, whose greatness approximated towards that of Abraham.

Abraham, then, worthy though he may have been in the eyes of his fellow human beings, had nothing to boast of before God. But he believed in God's promise, and this belief was 'reckoned to him as righteousness' (NRSV) (4:3). In the preceding chapter Paul has elucidated the news that a person can have the righteousness of God credited to them if they *believe* in God's way of salvation, and now, in the following chapter, Paul reassures us by grounding his assertion in history. God has always credited righteousness to those who believe in him. In 4:6-8 Paul strengthens his argument by quoting the psalmist David to whom the promise of the Messiah was given (2 Sam 7:12-14), and from whom he came (Rom 1:3). David rejoices, in Psalm 32 in the fact that his sin has not been counted against him. Thus, negatively, God does not count sin against the believer (4:6-8), and positively, does credit righteousness to the believer (4:1-5). Thus God is not operating according to the requirements of the law, which demands blessing for obedience and punishment for disobedience. He is proving, on the contrary, that this righteousness from God is *anticipated* by the Law and the Prophets (3:21b), but that it comes to us *apart from* the Law (3:21a).

The apostle continues, through the fourth chapter, to reassure believers that salvation is through faith (and answer objectors) by showing (4:9-12) that circumcision is not the grounds of justification but its seal, and that (4:13-16), justification could not have come through observing the Law because 'the Law brings wrath'. And the crucial point, that God is glorified through our salvation, is brought home with great clarity in 4:18-25. Abraham's faith had the ultimate

consequence of redounding to the glory of God: 'Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God' (4:20).

The reading of δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ as God's commitment to act for his own name's sake, for the display of his glory, provides us with an overarching understanding of the means whereby the revelation of God's righteousness proves to be the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. It is an overarching understanding because it includes within its process all that we have explicated above, when we said that salvation results from the conviction of sin that follows an exposure to God's righteous law, upheld by the Cross of Christ. It is a compelling understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ because, without detracting from the importance and centrality of Christ Jesus, the glory of God himself is everywhere throughout the epistle (and indeed throughout the Scriptures)¹²⁰, the ultimate *telos* of all things.¹²¹ As Morris observes, 'Fundamentally, Romans is a book about God'.¹²²

¹²⁰See Isa 2:22; 40:15,17; 48:9,11; Ps 25:11; 79:9; 115:1; 146:3; Jer 14:7; 17:5; Ezek 36:22,23,32; Ex 9:16;14:4; 1 Sam 12:22; Dan 9:17.

¹²¹Competing with this 'theocentric' understanding of δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ in Rom 3:21-26 is a 'christocentric' reading. Campbell argues strongly for such a reading, claiming that the theocentric interpretation runs into trouble because of the preposition διὰ in 3:25. That is, Campbell finds the reading 'The righteousness of God has been revealed for the purpose of revealing his righteousness (glory)' problematical because it does not make sense to translate 3:25 'This was to display God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he forgave former sins.' (Campbell, 'Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26' p194). Campbell would certainly have a point if only πάρεσιν meant 'forgave'. But as we have seen above (p 33), the overwhelming semantic evidence for πάρεσιν is the meaning 'pass over' (so the NRSV). This being the case, the NRSV's 'This was to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed' is so far from being problematical as being the only possible translation of the Greek. This verse, then, serves as a theodicy, which contributes to the revelation of God's glory. Campbell's christocentric reading is attractive, as he would insist that '(Christ) functions as God's complete salvation. This suggests rather strongly that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ should be understood in salvific terms. Christ reveals God's righteousness, and is basically salvation personified, therefore God's righteousness is also clearly salvific' (Campbell, p 159). I would never take issue with Campbell that Christ reveals God's righteousness, but my point here is one of emphasis: it is God's righteousness as the basis for God's glory that is the *central point* of this passage, rather than Christ as the salvation of God.

¹²²Morris, L "The Theme of Romans," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. pp.249-263.' p251. In this essay Morris interestingly notes that the word θεός occurs once every forty words in Romans, whereas in Acts it occurs only once in one hundred and ten.

CHAPTER FOUR

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ AND THE NEW PERSPECTIVE

4.1 Introduction to the New Perspective

The work which initiated the enormous degree of interest in the new paradigm for understanding the theology of Paul was the book by E P Sanders, 'Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion' (1977). But Sanders was influenced by a number of writers whose thoughts no doubt provided the seedbed for his own. I shall refer to just two of these: George Moore, in an article entitled 'Christian Writers on Judaism' (1921), contended that the writing of three Lutheran Christians (Weber, Schürer and Bousset) based their Christian apologetics on a comparison of Christianity with Judaism, but in so doing, demonstrated a lack of acquaintance with the Jewish documents to which they referred.¹²³ The result was a caricature of Judaism as a legalistic system far inferior to Christianity. Moore's plea, then, was for 'a thorough examination of the original Jewish sources in order to gain an accurate picture of what first-century Judaism was all about.'¹²⁴

The other forerunner to Sanders is Krister Stendahl who published an article, 'Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West' (1963). Moore demolished traditional thinking about Judaism, but did not much address the theology of Paul. Stendahl, though, with this article, accused contemporary scholars of misrepresenting Paul by reading him through the lens of Luther and Augustine. Paul, argued Stendahl, was quite unlike Luther who was burdened by an agonised conscience, heavily burdened by an unbearable sense of personal sin. Paul, by contrast, had a 'robust conscience', from living in his covenant relationship with God, whereby forgiveness of sin could be secured by the sacrifices graciously prescribed by God for his people. According to Stendahl Paul's main concern was not to answer the question of Job, 'how can a person be right before God?' but how God's plan for the world can be worked out through the mission to the Gentiles.¹²⁵ For Stendahl, the community, not the individual,

¹²³When the subject of investigation is the relation of primitive Christianity to its contemporary Judaism, whether the motive be a historical understanding of nascent Christianity or an apologetic exhibition of the superiority of the religion of Jesus to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, the critical ordering and evaluation of the Jewish sources is of much greater importance than when a general comparison of Judaism and Christianity is proposed, or even when, as in Weber, the comparison is restricted to the Palestinian Judaism of three or four centuries following the Christian era.' Moore, G F 'Christian Writers On Judaism', Harvard Theological Review Vol 14 No 3, p253 (published by Cambridge University Press).

¹²⁴ Sprinkle, P 'The Old Perspective on the New Perspective: A Review of Some "Pre-Sanders Thinkers"' (*Themelios* Volume 30 Issue 2, Winter 2005) p23

¹²⁵This statement summarizes Stendahl's thesis, 'Thus even justification by faith, important though we have seen it to be, must be subsumed in the wider context of Paul's mission to the Gentiles, part of God's plan for his creation. Or perhaps we should say it this way: Paul's thoughts about justification were triggered by the

was the main concern.

4.2 Key thinkers in the New Perspective

4.2.1 E P Sanders

The seminal concepts for what came to be known as the 'New Perspective' on Paul, then, preceded Sanders, but it was Sanders whose work produced a weighty analysis of first-century Judaism, and from this, new light on the theology of the apostle Paul that 'shook the grounds of contemporary scholarship leaving various aftershocks that continue to be felt today.'¹²⁶ To present Sanders' thesis as succinctly as possible, he argued that the Jews were not (echoing Moore) seeking to gain approbation from God by following the Mosaic code. They were not legalists, slavishly devoted to earning a 'works righteousness', but in fact, were as aware of, and dependent on, God's grace as was the apostle Paul himself. Sanders claimed that a thorough reading of all Jewish writing: the Dead Sea Scrolls, the teaching of the Pharisees, the Apocalyptic movements, and others – all revealed that the Jews had adopted a pattern of religion he called 'Covenantal Nomism'. This taught that God had chosen Israel, given her the Law and promised to maintain her in the keeping of the Law. This would require obedience on Israel's part, and to encourage the obedience, God would reward and punish her conduct as she either kept to the covenant's demands or strayed therefrom.¹²⁷ Where there is transgression, however, there is forgiveness, as the sacrifices are there to provide for atonement for sin. This atonement provides for the maintenance of the covenantal relationship, which ultimately will mean salvation for all who remain within it.

In the light of this picture of first century Judaism, Sanders averred that the boast of the Jew was not so much in his 'ability to obey the law' but in the fact that he possessed the Torah as the revelation of God.

If this was 'the way things were', then Paul's objection to the 'the works of the law' would never have been that they referred to the self-righteousness that obedience to τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νόμου occasioned, but that it was the 'boundary markers of the Law' (circumcision, food laws and Sabbath observance in particular) themselves that were the misplaced defining mark as to what constituted the true people of God. The real criterion that marked the elect of

issues of divisions and identities in a pluralistic and torn world, not primarily by the inner tensions of individual souls and conscience. His searching eyes focused on the unity and the God-willed diversity of humankind, yes, of the whole creation. Stendahl! K 'Paul Among Jews and Gentiles', p40

¹²⁶ ibid p30

¹²⁷ 'Briefly put, covenantal nomism is the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression.' Sanders, E.P 'Paul and Palestinian Judaism', p75.

God, said Paul, was faith.

That the Jews were not writhing in anxiety from a painful awareness of being unable to obey all the requirements of the Law could be seen from the situation of Paul himself, argued Sanders. Paul was perfectly complacent with regards to his keeping of the Law. 'As for legalistic righteousness, faultless' (Phil 3:6b).

So, argues Sanders, the traditional understanding of Paul's soteriology in Romans which sees Paul's struggle to keep the law as the 'plight' being met and answered by the 'solution' found in Christ, cannot be the real way to read Romans, as it never reflected the experience of Paul himself. Paul's real problem with his former religion was that it did not recognise that Jesus was the Messiah. So he wrote Romans in order to point to the fact that salvation was only in Christ, that to follow any other path is wrong, and that the Law, being a Jewish document, reserved for a Jewish covenant, should no longer be kept as a means for staying in the covenant. Paul, then, 'did not start from man's need but from God's deed.'¹²⁸

Response to Sanders

Although 'scholarship in the Anglo-Saxon world came under the hegemony'¹²⁹ of Sanders' thesis for some considerable time, research in recent years has begun to bring a much needed critique of this New Perspective on Paul. Simon Gathercole, for example, is one of a number of scholars who have shown that 'there are many instances in Jewish literature of counter-examples to this "anti-nomian" ethnocentrism that the New Perspective emphasizes. God's election and Israel's obedience are constantly held together and neither is emphasized at the expense of the other.'¹³⁰ Mark Siefred argues that the Judaism of the first century viewed salvation from at least two perspectives, which they were comfortable to hold in an unresolved tension: election as God's chosen people *and* obedience to the Torah. 'In other words, in the Rabbinic materials, 'covenantalism' (Sanders' 'covenantal nomism') stands alongside 'nomism' without the overarching synthesis Sanders has proposed.'¹³¹ the pre-Christian Paul viewed his status under God as consisting *both* of his election (his heritage within the chosen people) (Gal 1:14) *and* his obedience (Phil 3:5,6). Thus, for Paul, obedience *was* a prerequisite for salvation.

There is considerably more in the way of 'merit theology' evident in first

¹²⁸ Sanders, 'Paul and Palestinian Judaism' p 444

¹²⁹An assertion of Professor Don Carson's uttered in a series of lectures on 'Assessing the New Perspective on Paul' delivered at the Bible College of New Zealand (now Laidlaw College), in the winter of 2006.

¹³⁰Gathercole, S 'Where is Boasting?' p203.

¹³¹Siefred, M 'The New Perspective on Paul and its Problems' *Themelios* (Vol 25 No 2 February 2000) p5

century Jewish writings than Sanders originally had his readers believe.¹³² Gathercole, from an extensive review of Jewish literature of the time of Paul, demonstrates that 'in fact, obedience as a condition and a basis for final vindication and salvation at the *eschaton* is fundamental to Jewish thought.'¹³³ Paul, then, is indeed (contra the New Perspective), 'arguing against a view of justification by obedience to the Torah.'¹³⁴

Gathercole argues, moreover, from the Hebrew itself, that τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ – the works of the law – must mean 'deeds done in obedience to the Torah' because the plural noun *ma-aseh hatorah* comes from the verb *asa* meaning 'to do'.¹³⁵

The benefit of Sanders' work was to draw attention to the literature of Second Temple Judaism, to seek to read it clearly for what it was saying rather than viewing it in its entirety through the lens of a 'crabbed legalism' (to quote

¹³²Paul Spilsbury, in the excellent studies contained in Volume of 'Justification and Variegated Nomism' discusses Josephus, and writes, 'Even in these dire circumstances, though, Josephus still holds out a means of escape. "Yet a way of salvation (σωτηριᾶς ὁδός) is still left for you, if you will," he writes, "And the Deity is easily reconciled to such as confess and repent" (J.W. 5.415). It is significant at this point that Josephus does not call on the revolutionaries simply to surrender. Clearly the salvation of which Josephus is speaking here is more than the deliverance of the city from destruction, though that aspect is, of course, present. What Josephus has in mind goes beyond physical survival to the re-establishment of relationship with God. And the primary basis of that relationship is piety expressed through observance of the laws of Moses.' Spilsbury, P 'Josephus' ('Justification and Variegated Nomism' pp 254-5.

¹³³Gathercole 'Where is Boasting?' p23 It is worthwhile citing some of the readings Simon Gathercole has brought to light from early Jewish literature which, it will be seen, is replete with merit theology: The climax of *Sirach* concludes with a note of reward: "Do your work in due time, and He will give you your reward in His time" (51:3'. In *Tobit* there is reward for alms-giving: "Alms delivers from death and shall purge away all sin. Those who give alms and do righteousness will be filled with life." (Tobit 12:9). From *Baruch* Gathercole quotes words from a hymn glorifying lady Wisdom, "She is the book of the commandments of God and the Law which stands forever. All who cling to her will live, but those who forsake her will die." (Bar 4:1) The *Similitudes* yields the following words, 'When the community of the righteous appears, and the sinners are judged for their sins and are driven from the face of the dry ground, and when the Righteous One appears before the chosen righteous whose works are weighed by the Lord of the Spirits, and when light appears to the righteous and chosen who dwell on the dry ground, where will be the dwelling of the sinners, and where the resting place of those who have denied the Lord of Spirits? (38:1-2) In *IMacabees* we read, "Remember the deeds of the ancestors, which they did in their generations, and you will receive great honour and an everlasting name" (2:51). Gathercole notes (p64) that the *Psalms of Solomon* 9:1-5 very clearly describe salvation in terms of just recompense for good works. And in the *Oracle 2* of the *Sybilline Oracles* we read, "Life is tested in death; whether a person has done what is lawless or righteous, he will be examined when he comes to judgment" (2:93-94). These excerpts can be found in 'Where is Boasting?' pp 38-87.

¹³⁴ Ibid p34

¹³⁵ 'Assemble the people – the men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns – so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and *follow carefully all the words of the law.*' (Deut 12:31). Joshua echoes Moses, 'Be strong and very courageous. *Be careful to obey all the law* my servant Moses gave to you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that may be successful wherever you go. Do not let the this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, *so that you may be careful to do everything in it.* Then you will be prosperous and successful.' (Josh 1:7-8). From the reading of the Old Testament Scriptures – from which first century Judaism would never have differed – we see the necessity for the Jews to be obedient to the Torah 'in its entirety'.

Campbell). The problem with Sanders' approach was that he brought his own reductionism by reading the literature in its entirety through the lens of 'salvation by election', when the research by Gathercole suggests that obedience to the Law was as much a prerequisite for salvation for the first century Jew as was his or her membership of the covenant community.

Judaism could, then, be described as *semi-Pelagian*, in that the Jew believed that salvation was the result of God's gracious election, supplemented by the human effort of obedience to God's law. The Roman Catholic church of Luther's time was not materially different from Judaism in its semi-Pelagianism. It too believed that humans and God were co-operators in salvation, that human effort could complement and supplement God's grace.¹³⁶ If this is true, then much of Sanders' critique of the traditional (Reformation) reading of Paul must be said to be based on the fallacy of the 'straw man'. Sanders averred that Luther read Romans with 'Reformation spectacles', through which Luther projected his own conception of late medieval Roman Catholicism onto the Judaism with which Paul is interacting. Sanders' understanding of Luther was that he was fighting against crippling legalism, a legalism which Luther then projected onto the Judaism of Paul's time, and inferred that Paul was contending with exactly the same legalism. But when it is shown, maintains Sanders and his followers, that the 'covenantal nomism' of Second Temple Judaism was anything but a religion of legalism, then the whole Reformation reading of Paul is demonstrated to be based on a false premise.

However, I would asseverate here that the New Perspective's description both of the late medieval Roman church and the contours of Second Temple Judaism reduce the true picture to something of a caricature. The Catholicism of Luther's time was not purely legalistic; the Judaism of Paul's day was not understood to be founded purely on God's gracious election. Rather, both faiths were semi-Pelagian, in that both viewed salvation as being a co-operation between God's grace and human obedience. And the gospel of God reveals that neither position goes far enough in its analysis of the human problem. ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ: no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law (3:20).

Relevance of Sanders to our thesis

The crucial point here is that although the Jewish person believed obedience to

¹³⁶ 'Luther and the Church of Rome agreed that salvation was by faith. The difference was that Luther said it was by faith *alone*. We are not participants with God, we are not co-creators with him, we are not in any kind of relationship that involves mutuality or co-dependence. Salvation is a one-way street! The *sola fide* is the thing.' Zahl, P 'Mistakes of the New Perspective on Paul' *Themelios* Vol 27 No 1, Autumn 2001, p7

the Torah was necessary for salvation, *this did not lead to uncertainty regarding their destiny*. Their plight was that they were unaware of their plight. Due to complacency concerning their election and their obedience, they were not aware of their sinful status and condition before God. The true problem was not (only) that they needed to realise that God now had a different criterion for the constitution of the elect people of God: their true problem was that neither being 'called a Jew' (Rom 2:17), nor 'observing the Law' (3:20) placed the Jew in right standing with God, because, as their own law revealed, 'there is no one righteous, not even one' (3:10).

All of this is Paul's reflection on the law *after* his revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. For this great Pharisee (Phil 3:5) from Tarsus, his eyes were only opened to his own sin after his encounter with the risen Lord (Acts 9:3-19).¹³⁷

The Jew – and the Gentile – needed, by means of the gospel, to be made aware that they had sinned, and had fallen well 'short of the glory of God' (3:23). This, as we have been arguing in our thesis, is the necessary prerequisite to receiving the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ Jesus. Any view of the gospel which de-emphasizes or obfuscates this awareness – as does Sanders' teaching – must be regarded as working against the 'revelation of the righteousness of God being the power of God for the salvation of those who believe.' I cannot do better than reiterate, as my response to the thesis of Sanders, the words of Anselm, "*Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis peccatum sit*: You have not yet considered the weight of sin."

4.2.2 James Dunn

James Dunn was a persuasive and influential interpreter of Paul's theology from the viewpoint of this 'New Perspective'. Dunn's great thesis, following from Sanders, is that Paul is exhorting the Jews to see that God, through Christ, has extended the covenant community to include Gentiles – indeed all believers in Christ Jesus – within the people of God.¹³⁸ For Dunn τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ meant not legalistic obedience to the law's commands, but the 'badges of Jewish

¹³⁷ Don Carson imagines Paul's thoughts as his eyes are being opened on that Damascus Road and afterwards, 'If Jesus is has been resurrected, then he cannot have been a sinner. If he himself was not a sinner, then for whose sin was he crucified?' 'Great Turning Points In Salvation History': lectures delivered at Carey College winter 2001.

¹³⁸ In asking, 'What was at issue between Paul and "those of the circumcision"?' ('The Theology of Paul the Apostle' p340), Dunn seeks to rescue Pauline theology of justification from its traditional understanding, which, he asserts, has had the invidious effect of 'denigrating historic Judaism': 'Post-Holocaust theology could no longer stomach the denigration of historic Judaism which had been the dark-side-of-the-moon corollary to the Christian doctrine of justification.' *ibid* p338. If the traditional understanding of justification has had this unfortunate effect, however, it need not mean that we must therefore abandon it. *Abusus non tollit usum*: 'the abuse of a thing is no argument against the use of it'.

identity' which marked their distinctiveness from the rest of the world.¹³⁹ Thus, the 'works of the Law' for the Jew meant, not law *qua lex* (categorical commandments to be obeyed), but law *qua* boundary markers, marking off their own particular identity as a people called and saved by God.¹⁴⁰ The three 'boundary markers' which Dunn notes most clearly illustrated this understanding of 'the works of the law' were circumcision, the food laws, and Sabbath Day observance.¹⁴¹

With this understanding of 'the works of the law', Dunn believed that Paul was not combating legalism, but nationalism. Paul was, through his gospel, endeavouring to liberate 'both promise and law for a wider range of recipients, freed from the ethnic constraints which he saw to be narrowing the grace of God and diverting the saving purpose of God out of its main channel – Christ'.¹⁴²

Dunn, moreover, understands δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ to mean 'covenant faithfulness'. When God set Christ forth as a sacrifice of atonement, he was demonstrating his righteousness by providing a sacrifice which fulfilled the terms laid down in his covenant with Israel. 'God is just, not because he acts in accordance with some abstract ideal of justice, but because he has acted in fulfillment of the obligation he took upon himself as covenant God of Israel. Jesus' death was God's effective way of dealing with his people's sin (had God simply disregarded it, he would not have acted in accord with the covenant and would not have been just).'¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Dunn does not seem to have the weight of evidence on his side for his rather specialized definition of τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ. BDAG provides the definition, 'of the deeds of humans, exhibiting a consistent moral character, referred to collectively as τὰ ἔργα. BDAG goes on to cite a large number of references of τὰ ἔργα which have this meaning, such as Ps 105:35; Job 11:11; Jon 3:10; Jn 3:20; 7:7; Js 3:13; 1Jn 3:12; Rv 2:2,19; 3:1,8,15 etc. 'A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament' p390.

¹⁴⁰ Dunn offers insights into the reason for Jewish pride in their identity: 'The assertion that the universally desirable Wisdom immanent within creation, but hidden from human eyes, was embodied within 'the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law which Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob' (Sirach 24:23) meant that both Philo and Josephus speak with understandable if exaggerated pride of the widespread desire among Greek and Barbarian to adopt Jewish customs and law.' ('Commentary on Romans' p lxx). He also notes that 'the factionalism which was a feature of Judaism in the period from the Maccabees to the emergence of rabbinic Judaism' (ibid pp lxix – lxx) would have intensified the desire of Israel to be marked off from the 'lawless sinner', those Gentiles who were by definition ἄνομος – without the law (that is, outside the area (Israel) coterminous with the law, and marked out by the law).

¹⁴¹ (This sociological perspective) helps us to see how the conviction of privileged election and the practice of covenantal nomism almost inevitably comes to expression in focal points of distinctiveness, particularly laws, and especially ritual practices which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from the other nations. In this case three of Israel's laws gained particular prominence as being especially distinctive – circumcision, food laws and Sabbath.' Dunn 'Commentary on Romans' p lxx.

¹⁴² Ibid pp lxxi-lxxii

¹⁴³ Ibid p175

Response to Dunn

As with Sanders, I see value in Dunn's recovery of the emphasis on Israel's pride in her election,¹⁴⁴ but would aver that, like Sanders, Dunn has failed to recognise the emphasis which Israel did place on obedience to the Torah for salvation. Dunn's thesis of 'pride in possession of the Torah' is corroborated in part by Romans 2:17 and 3:1, but severely challenged by the whole import of what Paul is saying in chapters 2 and 3. It is precisely because they have the Law but do not obey it, that they are to face the judgment of God. 'For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.' (2:13). Furthermore, there is little evidence of τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ referring to the 'boundary markers' which form such a central part of Dunn's understanding.¹⁴⁵ Rather, Paul accuses his Jewish readers of constantly failing to live up to their own law in that they themselves 'steal' (2:21), 'commit adultery', and are 'idolators' (2:22).¹⁴⁶

From what I have been saying in chapters 1-3 of my thesis regarding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ the reader will not be surprised to learn that as well as taking issue with Dunn's reading of τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ, I differ markedly from his understanding of 'the righteousness of God'. To interpret δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ *only* as 'covenant faithfulness' does justice neither to the Old Testament witness of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ nor to the gospel in the epistle to the Romans.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴Referring to the 'New Perspective' Carson has a wise comment, '.. some of its central stances are not defensible, or, more moderately, that the new perspective sometimes elevates to a place of central importance themes which in Paul's *Hauptbriefe* are better judged to occupy, at most, the background. In that case, of course, it is the foreground that is being lost, and must be recovered.' 'Justification and Variegated Nomism' Vol 2 pVI

¹⁴⁵Zahl succinctly expresses Dunn's position on τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νόμου: 'Paul is not worried about the Law in some idealogical or *meta*-sense, but only about the surface aspects of it that are worrisome to Gentiles.' Zahl then goes on to react to Dunn: 'I do not believe that this is true. It is a sort of 'Christianity-Lite' view of the Pauline letters. Common sense sweeps right in and asks, 'Is that all that it's about? How could Paul have become so worked up and written in such exalted and large theological language about boundary markers?' That would be like saying that the problems of young people today are a matter of tattoos and body-piercing. Would Paul have crossed and criss-crossed the Roman world, would he have agonised and *hurt* as he did, for a mess of pottage such as diet, seventh-day customs, and an act of ... body-piercing? Again, this cannot possibly be true, for it fails to convince in the forum of a broad understanding of life and human motives. It simply fails to make sense that it all could have been about boundary markers.' Zahl, P 'Mistakes of the New Perspective on Paul' *Themelios* Vol. 27 No. 1, Autumn 2001, p9

¹⁴⁶The whole thrust of Paul's argument from 1:18 to 3:20 seems to me to preclude this novel and specialised interpretation of 'the works of the law'. Paul's gospel may be 'to the Jew first' (1:16), but it is also for the Gentile, and addresses the universal human condition. The Gentiles too 'show that what the law requires is written on their hearts' (2:15 NRSV), so that the Jews, along with the Gentiles, comprise the 'all' who 'fall short of the glory of God' (3:23 NRSV).

¹⁴⁷Dunn himself seems to acknowledge more than one way of understanding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ when he writes in a footnote, 'The implication of 3:25-26 is that Jesus' sacrificial death demonstrates both God's justice, in that he deals with sin (in the destruction of the sin-embodying life of the sacrifice), and also his (saving) righteousness, in that he justifies the sinner...' Dunn, J 'The Theology of Paul the Apostle' p343, footnote 35. In this comment, it is only the second instance of 'God's righteousness' which conforms to Dunn's understanding of 'saving righteousness'. The first instance, on Dunn's own showing, seems more to embody

Dunn's soteriology of the New Perspective seems to consist simply in a shifting of boundary markers so as to make room for all Gentiles who believe in Christ. But the salvation that comes from experiencing the revelation of God's righteousness will produce a new person, a spiritual person (8:5), a 'child of God' (8:14-17), one who, from being made aware of the sin within him/her, has placed his/her faith in Christ, and so participated in his death and resurrection (6:2-6). And the community of saved persons that results is not simply a community that has been extended so as to be more inclusive, but a *new entity altogether*. Paul illuminates this new entity in the twelfth chapter of his epistle: 'Just as each one of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.' (12:4).

Conclusion of response to Dunn

Our analysis of how the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe' implies a necessary critique of Dunn's understanding of the gospel. It is through an awareness of sin, from one's inability to obey the Law of God which reveals God's perfect righteousness, that one is rendered ready to receive the righteousness that comes from God, and be saved. A different understanding of τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ such as Dunn's insistence that it refers to Jewish 'badges of identity' that prevented the covenant community from being extended to include the Gentiles, will fail to bring the 'consciousness of sin' (3:20) that is the necessary prerequisite to receiving God's righteousness, and the gospel will not be 'the power of God for salvation'.

Moreover, in antithesis to Dunn's concern with the community at the expense of the individual, I would urge that the true community of God, the body of Christ (12:4), is formed of those who, as individual sinners, were – each one – faced with the righteousness of God that led to his or her salvation.¹⁴⁸

4.2.3 N.T Wright

In his popular book, 'The New Testament and the People of God', Tom Wright's primary thesis is that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ brought the real end to the Babylonian exile of Israel. Before the salvation wrought by Christ, the Jews of the Second Temple thought that the exile of Israel continued into their time. Due to their guilt *as a nation* the promised forgiveness of sins

the traditional understanding of 'retributive justice'.

¹⁴⁸Moo writes, 'Interpreting Paul's gospel in social terms (e.g. as having primary focus on the inclusion of the Gentiles along with the Jews in the people of God) is correspondingly very attractive. But for all Paul's very vital interest in the unity of the people of God, he is even more vitally concerned about the relationship of the individual Jew or Gentile to the Lord of history.' 'The Epistle to the Romans' p243

and restoration from the exile was yet to come. Christ is the locus of the true Israel, and, as her representative and embodiment, effectively ends the curse of the exile for God's people by taking it upon himself. Wright says it this way: 'My proposal, then, as the way of making sense of all the data before me, is that Jesus believed it was his god (sic)-given vocation to identify with the rebel cause, the kingdom-cause, when at last that identification could not be misunderstood as endorsement. Israel was in exile, suffering at the hands of the pagans; the Roman cross was the bitterest symbol of that ongoing exilic state. He would go ahead of his people, to take upon himself both the fate that they had suffered one way or another for half a millennium at the hands of pagan empires and the fate that his contemporaries were apparently hell-bent upon pulling down on their own heads once for all. The martyr-tradition suggested that this was the way in which Israel would at last be brought through suffering to vindication. Jesus' riddles, binding the fate of the nation to his own fate, suggested strongly that he intended to evoke and enact this tradition. The 'messianic woes' tradition indicated that this suffering and vindication would be climactic, unique, the one-off moment when Israel's history and world history would turn their great corner at last, when YHWH's kingdom would come and his will be done on earth as it was in heaven. The central symbolic act by which Jesus gave meaning to his approaching death suggests strongly that he believed that this moment had come. This would be the new exodus, the renewal of the covenant, the forgiveness of sins, the end of exile. It would do for Israel what Israel could not do for herself. It would thereby fulfill Israel's vocation, that she should be the servant people, the light of the world.'¹⁴⁹

His consequent death and triumphant resurrection then serves to incorporate others into the believing community, membership into which has as its criterion faith in Jesus Christ.

Response to Wright

Again, there is much in Wright's thesis that is attractive. Many scholars agree that Jesus is the true locus of the people of God,¹⁵⁰ but to Wright's thesis that by

¹⁴⁹ Wright, N T 'Jesus And The Victory Of God' pp596-7.

¹⁵⁰ In contrast to the Israel of Isaiah 5: 'I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: *My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside... He looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit... The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel...*' (Isa 5:1ff) – in contrast to the failed vine of Isaiah 5, Jesus' words of John 15 ring forth, '*I am the true vine!*' It has been well noted that Jesus' life paralleled, yet fulfilled where Israel had failed, the history of God's people. 'Out of Egypt I called my son' (Matt 2:15) was said first of Israel (Hos 11:1), an utterance which Matthew saw to be referring, prophetically, to the Jesus. It was to Israel that the words were spoken, 'But you, o Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, "You are my servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you"'. (Isa 41:8,9). But to Israel was also said, 'Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the Lord?' (Isa 42:19). Israel, having failed in her mission as the

taking the curse of the exile upon himself and by dying and rising again, he ended that curse, some words of qualification are necessary. Firstly, it is not clear that there were many in Israel at the time of Christ who *were* fraught with the sense that the exile had not ended and that God had still to 'set things right'. Dunn, above, observed that there were many who were attracted to Judaism: many became proselytes. Moreover, much early Jewish material present the exile as having, in some sense, ended.¹⁵¹

But to this 'historical' objection, I would add the much more serious Scriptural evidence that the cross is shown, in Romans 3:21-26, to be the answer to the problem laid down by Paul in 1:18-3:20, of *universal* guilt and powerlessness to stand justified in the presence of a holy God. It is true that the Jews are included in the whole of humanity, but the meaning of the cross could hardly be exhausted by 'the end of the exile' when by far the majority of the human race had never been threatened with, nor experienced, this particular punishment.¹⁵² No, 'the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against *all* the godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth by their wickedness' (1:18), '*all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (3:22) because 'there is *no one* righteous, not even one.' (3:10).

It is true that Christ did take the curse upon himself, as Paul writes in another of his epistles (Gal 3:13; cf Rev 22:3), but even the meaning of 'the curse' cannot be exhausted by the exile. The curse is surely, in the end, the enduring displeasure of God which must end in eternal death (Rom 6:21). It has universal reference, for it is 'first for the Jew *and then for the Gentile*' (2:9). And the removal of the curse also has universal reference, for *all*¹⁵³ are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (3:24).

Here is the difficulty with Wright's thesis. The justification, which will lead to all the good things promised by God through the gospel as explicated by the apostle, including the ending of all curses, and which may be comprehended in 'the gift of God which is eternal life' (6:23) – comes through *faith* in Christ (3:25, 27-31). And faith in Christ is the very thing which the nation of Israel,

servant of the Lord, had her mission and destiny fulfilled in the true Servant of the Lord, the one to whom was spoken 'Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.' (Isa 42:1).

151 See, for example, Judith 4:1-5; 5:17-19 and Baruch 4:36; 5:5-9; Tobit 14:1-9 (cited by Siefrid in 'The New Perspective on Paul' and its Problems' *Themelios* Vol 25 No 2 February 2000) p10

152 It is true that Wright argues that the end of the exile *for Israel* means that salvation for the Gentiles becomes available, but Paul's beginning with the plight of the whole human race (before focusing on the situation of the Jew) means that the problem, as well as the solution, must be more universal than can be explained in terms of Israel's specific situation.

153'... with the caveat that "all", in its connection with "being justified" indicates, not universality ("everybody") but lack of particularity ("anybody").' Moo, p227

with a remnant of exceptions, does not have. The consequence of lack of faith in Christ *is* a spiritual exile, as Paul shows in Romans 9:28, where he quotes Isaiah 28:16, 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.' Indeed, Paul applies the very words which threaten the exile, from Deuteronomy 32:21, to Israel in the nineteenth verse of Romans 10: I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding'. And the reason for this spiritual exile is her lack of faith in her Messiah (10:3; 11:7-9 etc).¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, then, the death and resurrection of Christ, because of Israel's lack of faith in her Messiah, not only did not 'end the exile', it actually, in the truest sense of the word, precipitated it.

4.3 Conclusion to response to Wright, and the New Perspective

One of the critiques of the New Perspective that does, I think, have validity, is that, while it has valuable insights to bring in our understanding of Second Temple Judaism, with implications for the theology of Paul, it can elevate certain themes which have, in themselves, less importance, to having an all-eclipsing significance that obscures more essential truths. Sanders, with his covenantal nomism, Dunn with his lack of exclusivity of Israel, and Wright with his 'end of exile' hermeneutic, for all the benefit that their contribution to the scholarship of New Testament studies has made, have all alike served to obscure the most essential truth of all, without which there can be no salvation: conviction of sin comes through the awareness of the individual man or woman, Jew or Gentile, that he or she is unable to fulfill the just requirements of God's holy and perfect law, and that he or she is, therefore, in the most urgent need of receiving the righteousness that comes from God alone.

¹⁵⁴ It is true that Paul does not assert, in so many words, that Israel has 'gone into exile', but her ultimate 'covenant unfaithfulness' was to reject the very person of God himself, in Christ (hence 9:33), which occasioned, as its consequence, the ultimate punishment (of which the physical exile in Babylon was surely the geographical concomitant) of being 'rejected' by God (11:15).

SECTION TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD CONTINUES TO BE THE POWER OF GOD FOR THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE.

Introduction: Salvation as a continuous reality

Section one of my thesis has been a discussion of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and how it is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. Thus far I have sought to show how the revelation of God's righteousness effects salvation into the state of being justified. Being confronted, in the gospel, with 'the righteous requirements of the law' (8:4) through the exposure to God's holiness as revealed through his law (2:15; 17-27; 3:9-20), one is brought to the realization that one has fallen short of God's δικαιοσύνη (possessive genitive: 3:10a, 26a) and with inexpressible gratitude receives the δικαιοσύνη (genitive of origin: 3:21-22) that is offered freely through faith in Christ. One is thus justified, and therefore, saved.

The salvation described hitherto has been of a single tense only. There is more to be said.¹⁵⁵ Paul's great epistle does not end with chapter 4. Having been brought into the status of being justified, the saved person is not translated, as was Enoch, directly into the presence of God. The night may be 'far spent' (13:12 [KJV]), but the day is not yet here. He or she must continue to live on this earth, enjoying his or her status of being justified and working out its implications. The righteousness that comes from faith is ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, and the justified person still has to live by faith (ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται 1:17).

There is thus more than one tense to salvation. Justification is an event, and is rightly described as having a punctiliar tense. Δικαιούμενοι (3:24) is a present passive participle, but ἐδικαίωσεν (8:30) is aorist. Thus it is fully effected, completed and secured. And of course, it is a fact that the next action in the 'golden chain' of verbs whose agent is God in 8:30 is also in the aorist tense: ἐδόξασεν: *he glorified*.¹⁵⁶ The glorification of those who have been justified is

¹⁵⁵ Dunn notes, 'It took place in two stages. It had a beginning, but it was also a continuing process. This is mirrored in the two tenses of Paul's Greek – the aorist, denoting a decisive event in the past, and the present, denoting an ongoing process.' Dunn, J 'The Theology of Paul the Apostle', p319.

¹⁵⁶ Of the aorist tense, Wallace writes, 'The aorist tense "presents an occurrence in summary, viewed as a

as securely accomplished as their justification – but this will become pertinent later in our discussion. The point I would make here is that, although ἔδοξασεν is in the aorist, and is therefore as securely a *fait accompli* as anything which God has accomplished, we are still living in the world of time. From the present standpoint, then, there is still a 'not yet' dimension in our salvation. Its completion is certain, but inasmuch as it is still future, its consummation is a hoped-for, rather than an experienced, reality (8:23-25).¹⁵⁷

It is this 'on-going' dimension to salvation which will be the context of my second section. My thesis is that the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. In the first chapter I have sought to show how the revelation of God's righteousness brings about salvation understood in the aorist sense. But inasmuch as we are living in the 'not yet' dimension of salvation, in that its full consummation is a hoped-for, rather than an experienced reality, I must try to show how the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ *continues* to be the power of God for the salvation of those who believe.

The Spirit's application of the words of the gospel

We shall have more to say about the role of the Holy Spirit under this continuous aspect of salvation below. It is going to be of crucial importance to my thesis that the Holy Spirit is a power who dominates the sphere into which the believer has been transferred. I intend to discuss the significance of the fact that the Holy Spirit is the agency which bridges the gap between the present and the future. I intend also to discuss the significance of the fact that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of *holiness*. And combining these two aspects of the Spirit of God will mean that Romans 14:17 is of central significance to my thesis: 'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'. I hope to develop these points below, but

whole from the outside, without regard for the internal make-up of the occurrence.'" Wallace, D 'Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics', p554. To define the aorist tense more specifically in Rom 8:30 we may say that it is an example of 'Proleptic (Futuristic) Aorist', which is used to 'describe an event that is not yet past as though it were already completed.' *ibid* p563. Wallace actually cites Rom 8:30 as exemplifying this kind of aorist, and writes, 'The glorification of those who have been declared righteous is as good as done from Paul's perspective.' *ibid* p564. Jewett writes, 'Paul elsewhere refers to the gift of heavenly glory at the parousia, so many scholars regard the aorist verb at this point as anticipatory...' Jewett, R 'Romans', p530. While not positively disagreeing with this understanding, Jewett goes on to speak of the *present* significance of ἔδοξασεν: 'The point of of the climactic series is to confirm the status of believers, reassuring them that despite present suffering, and in the face of their vulnerability as house and tenement church members in Rome, their status of being called, set right, and glorified is already visible.' *ibid*. Jewett says in a footnote to this comment, that '... the past tense verb in 8:30 clearly alludes to the present process of glorification: "and we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another ... (2 Cor 3:18).' *ibid*, footnote 240, p530. I cannot see that the former meaning need preclude the latter. Regarding the aorist from the 'anticipatory' perspective provides assurance; reading it from a present perspective provides encouragement from the present evidence of salvation.

¹⁵⁷Always our salvation, while definitely secured for us at our conversion, has had an element of incompleteness, in which the forward look is necessary'. Moo, p522

before doing so, I would like to suggest that the most *immediate* way in which salvation continues to be realised is through the Spirit's *direct application of the words of the gospel itself*.

If the revelation of the righteousness of God is the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe', then the primary and most immediate revelation of the righteousness of God is the very words of the gospel itself. Paul tells us in 10:17a, 'faith comes through hearing the message'. As the 'word of Christ' (10:17b) is heard, the Spirit commends the words of the gospel as being true, (to those who believe), the person is confronted with his/her unrighteousness in the face of God's righteousness, is convicted of the need for salvation, and gratefully receives the offer of God's righteousness which is freely offered through faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice. Thus, the person has been saved with the finality of a completed action (using the aorist tense as in 8:30), and transferred into the new realm of 'the grace in which he or she stands' (5:2). 'Faith has come by hearing' as the Spirit has applied the words of the gospel to the person's understanding mind, and salvation has been effected.

But the theme of this second section is how the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ *continues* to be the power of God for the salvation of those who believe, and again, it is the work of the Spirit of God, who continues immediately to apply the truth of the words of the gospel, which enables the believer to continue in his/her salvation. The one who has been justified by faith continues to live by faith (1:17), as he/she continues closely to attend to the very words of the epistle. Martin Luther advocated memorizing the entire epistle in the original Greek, and I would applaud this advice as being one practical way in which one might have one's mind 'set on what the Spirit desires' (8:5), and continue to enjoy the 'life and peace' (8:6) that is an essential part of the revelation of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ understood as subjective genitive ie the righteousness of God that is manifested visibly in the life of the believer.¹⁵⁸

5.1 Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and the continuation of the believer's salvation

The revelation of the righteousness of God understood as possessive genitive is the necessary and sufficient condition that *continues* to effect the salvation of the believer. We have seen in our first chapter that the revelation of God's righteousness is instrumental in bringing the believer into salvation in the first

¹⁵⁸ With regards to the theme of 'continuing to be saved' by attending to the very words of the gospel itself, it is interesting to note that the Pauline passages in Colossians 3:16-23 and Ephesians 5:18-6:9, which have substantial agreement in their content, are each introduced in slightly different ways. Eph 5:18 exhorts the reader to remain under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and Colossians 3:16 enjoins us to 'let the word of Christ dwell within us richly'. In other words, in the mind of Paul, to dwell continuously on the very words of the gospel is tantamount to being under the direct influence of the Spirit of God.

place. My thesis for this second chapter is that the believer, inasmuch as his/her salvation has still the 'not yet' element to it, and must 'continue to work out his/her salvation' (cf Philippians 2:12), may not relinquish his/her revelation of the righteousness of God as possessive genitive. One must never lose sight of the holiness of God as revealed in his law (2:1-16), and as revealed pre-eminently in the cross of Christ (3:26) where the 'righteous requirements of the law' are fulfilled (8:4).

A consistent awareness of the righteousness of God (his holiness, ie δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive) is essential for imparting a consistent awareness of the sin from whose power and penalty God has saved the believer. This, in turn is essential if the believer is to continue to display God's righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive) in his/her life.

By δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ understood as subjective genitive, I mean the transformation that is usually referred to as sanctification, in which the saved person becomes increasingly 'conformed to the likeness of God's Son' (8:29). We saw above that Käsemann insists that the righteousness of God must have its sphere of radiance, and I averred in the first chapter that the primary understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is God's acting for his own glory. Once the believer has been justified (5:1), and transferred into the 'grace in which he/she now stands' (5:2), he/she now begins to display the righteousness of God in his/her character, which is the sphere of manifestation to which Käsemann refers, and the glory of God which is the great *telos* of salvation (9:23; 11:36).

The portal into the 'grace in which the believer stands' was being given a righteous standing which conformed wholly with the perfect standard implied in 'the glory of God' (3:23), and if this righteousness is the portal into the sphere in which the believer has been transferred, it remains as the essential basis for all the life and works of the believer's new existence.¹⁵⁹

5.2 The revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as both the necessary and sufficient conditions for the continuation of salvation.

My discussion of the relationship between δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ conceived as

¹⁵⁹ The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (14:17). If the righteousness of God, manifested through the cross of Christ, and graciously bestowed upon the believer, is the gateway onto the path on which the believer now walks, it is also the very foundation and atmosphere of that path. We have seen that Paul sees the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel as a righteousness 'to which the law and the prophets testify'. And among other revelations of God's righteousness in the prophets, Paul must intend the 'highway of holiness' of Isaiah, where 'the unclean will not journey on it, wicked fools will not about on it, and it will be for those who walk in that Way' (Isa 35:8).

objective genitive and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ conceived as subjective genitive, and how the former leads to the latter, can best be organised around the concept of *necessary and sufficient conditions*. A condition is a *necessary condition* for a result if that result cannot obtain without the condition. A condition is a *sufficient condition* for a result if the result will certainly follow if the condition obtains.¹⁶⁰

5.2.1 The revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ conceived as possessive genitive, is a necessary condition for the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ conceived as subjective genitive.

When I use the phrase 'subjective genitive', I mean the 'sphere of radiance' of God's righteousness to which Käsemann refers. It is the visible manifestation of God's character, as pre-eminently revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, and encompasses all that is meant by 'the fruits of the Spirit'. It is 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' which describes the kingdom of God in Romans 14:17. It is the 'rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God' (5:2), the 'grace reigning through righteousness to bring eternal life' (5:21), and all that ensues when we 'offer the parts of our body in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness' (6:19). It is the 'fruit being born to God' as a result of 'belonging to another' (7:4), 'the riches of his glory being made known to the objects of his mercy' (9:23), and the manifestation of the grace of God through the exercising of the spiritual gifts he has bestowed upon us (12:6).

This δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive is the salvation of God prophesied by Isaiah: 'Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed' (Isa 56:2).¹⁶¹ This righteousness, then, is being manifested through the lives of those whom God has saved, but never stops being, from the beginning to the end, the very righteousness of God.¹⁶²

My thesis is that the revelation of the righteousness of God (possessive genitive) is a necessary condition for the revelation of the righteousness of God (subjective genitive). Unless one has been confronted with the holiness of God

¹⁶⁰This can be expressed more concisely, as presented in a textbook for logic, 'If F , then W . (F is a sufficient condition for W). If W , then F (F is a necessary condition for W)' 'Fundamentals of Logic', Carney, J and Scheer, R, p72.

¹⁶¹ Six chapters later Isaiah prophesies, 'For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory' (Isa 62:1,2). The righteousness said to belong to Zion (Isa 62:1) is nothing less than the righteousness of God (Isa 56:2), a righteousness which is now shining through the church 'like the dawn, and like a blazing torch'.

¹⁶² It is all that is meant by Jesus' words to his disciples when he said to them, 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom' (Luke 12:32). And the revelation of this righteousness is the visible manifestation of the glory of God.

through the law (the beginning of the gospel) and the cross, seen one's own want of holiness, and need of righteousness, and then received this righteousness of God (genitive of origin) as a gift, then one cannot be justified. And if one is not justified, then one cannot have peace with God (5:1), and the righteousness of God (subjective genitive) will not begin to be revealed.

But the revelation of the righteousness of God (possessive genitive) *continues* to be the necessary condition for the revelation of the righteousness of God (subjective genitive). It is only insofar as one *continues* to live by faith, and continues, by the Spirit, to 'put to death the misdeeds of the body' that one will live (8:13). It is only as we see, by faith, ὁ θεος ... κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτιαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί (8:3) that τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῆ (8:4). And it is only as the righteous requirements of the law are fully met in us (8:4) that we are enabled to περιπατοῦσιν κατὰ πνεῦμα (8:4). 'Through the Spirit, our spirits are alive *on account of righteousness* (8:10-11).'¹⁶³

5.2.1.1 The reason for this from the God-ward side of the relationship

The above assertions may be explained firstly, by referring to the nature of God. God is holy, and this holiness is the basis for his glory. All humankind has sinned, has therefore fallen short of God's holiness (3:23), and is rightly deserving of God's punishment (3:26). This punishment must be the eternal death spoken of in 6:23. No human being can expect, therefore, to be 'at one' with God on the basis of his or her own righteousness. A person may only be 'at one' with God once he or she has been declared justly to be righteous. With this declaration, the person has been given 'right standing' with God, expressed in 5:2 as 'peace with God'. Thus the original etymology of 'atone' is realised, as the justified – the atoned for – person, is now *at one* with God.¹⁶⁴

But the visible manifestation of God's righteousness, radiating from the life of the justified person, will follow only if this 'at-onement', or peace with God, continues to be an experienced reality. And it will only continue to be an experienced reality as long as one is living by faith (1:17), by the Spirit putting to death the misdeeds of the body (8:13), so that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us (8:4). Then and only then will the cry of our hearts be 'thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord' (7:25) rather than, 'wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?' (7:24).

¹⁶³ One Volume 'Theological Dictionary of the New Testament' (Eerdmans, Michigan) p174 (italics mine).

¹⁶⁴ The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary provides the etymology of 'atone' as: 'from *at one*, after medieval Latin *adunamentum*, from *adunare* unite, and earlier ONEMENT.' Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Vol 1, p 143.

We may regard the new standing of the justified person as being the result of a 'realm transfer', in which he/she has been rescued from one realm over which were presiding certain powers viz the law (6:14;7:6), sin (6:2,6,7,12-14,18,23;8:2 etc) and death (6:3,4; 7:24; 8:2 etc), and transferred into another, over which is presiding the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is the agent who brings to us the power by which we can obey the righteous requirements of God, which lead to life (6:13,16,18; 7:4; 8:6). And the righteousness which results from obedience to God (6:16) is the very righteousness of God which is now being revealed through the saved person. This is what I intend by referring to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive. God's very righteousness is refracted through the life of those he has saved, for his glory (8:17; 9:23; 11:33-36).

But the life (6:4), the peace (14:17), the joy (5:2,3 etc) the exercising of the gifts of the Spirit (12:6-8), in short, the manifestation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive), will obtain only in the new realm, the kingdom of God, whose presiding power is the Spirit of *holiness*. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the *Holy Spirit*, and one may only enjoy this righteousness (subjective genitive), this peace and this joy when one has been made holy through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ (3:24). But having been made holy, one has the Spirit of holiness within oneself, and has access to all the treasures that are promised which belong to the kingdom of God, and are conveyed to the believer by the Spirit of holiness. If one has not been made holy through faith in Christ, one will not have the Spirit of Christ, will not belong to Christ (8:9), will not have experienced this 'realm transfer', and will neither enjoy nor reveal the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive).

The Righteousness of God (subjective genitive) and the Holy Spirit

In saying that the believer comes to display δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ I refer of course to that vital consequence of justification, namely sanctification. As I have stated that the power presiding over this new realm into which the believer has been translated is the Holy Spirit, it is relevant here to mention the different *evidences* by which the Spirit of holiness testifies to his presence in the believer's life, the fruits of δικαιοσύνη: The Holy Spirit enables us to understand (empirically and intellectually) God's love for the believer (5:5). He exerts his restraint over the believer and frees him/her from the tyranny of sin (8:2,4,9). The Holy Spirit frees the believer to be a 'child of God' (NRSV) and, moreover, to know him/herself to be such (8:16). He intercedes for us, and helps us in our weakness (8:26), and bears to us the priceless gifts of love (15:30), joy (16:17), hope (8:17) and peace (8:6).

And 'the hope of the glory of God' in which the believer rejoices (5:2) finds its

glorious object in the future when we experience the 'redemption of our bodies' (8:23), the completion of the freedom from 'the law of death' (8:2), which is wrought for the believer by the Holy Spirit.

These being some of the evidences of the presence of the Spirit of God in the life of the believer, it is the purpose of this second section to show, through considering the juxtaposition of the differing understandings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, the actual *means* by which the Holy Spirit produces his blessed fruit.

This revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is testified to by the Law and the Prophets (3:21).

The Law

Moses promised that 'those who live their lives in obedience to God's law will live' (Deut 6:2; 8:1,3; 32:47; Lev 18:5 (cf Rom 10:5)). He also promised that those who did not live in perfect obedience would be cursed (Deut 27:26), and, by implication, not enjoy the life promised to obedience. Paul, in our epistle, confronts the reader with δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) in τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου (8:4) and demonstrates that οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἰς (3:10). The curse for disobedience threatened in Deut 27:26 can be seen to be the death that is the wages of sin (Rom 6:23), and it is precisely through the law that one becomes conscious of this sin. But faith in Christ transfers the believer into the realm of life promised to those who lived in perfect obedience to the law (10:6), the righteous requirements of the law begin to be met (8:4), and God's righteousness (subjective genitive) begins to be revealed through the life of the believer. The gospel, then, fulfills the words of Jeremiah, 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.' (Jer 31:33).¹⁶⁵

The revelation of God's righteousness (objective genitive) through the law has brought about salvation into the realm in which God's righteousness (subjective genitive) is revealed. The law has been the παιδαγωγὸς that has led the saved one to Christ (Gal 3:24) in the first place, and it is only as the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled that one is living by the Spirit, under whose reign life is enjoyed and the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) is revealed.

The prophets

To express this in the language of Isaiah, one might say that only the redeemed,

¹⁶⁵ Andrew Shead combines the thought of Jer 31:33 and Ez 36:26 ('I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh') with this comment, 'In the new covenant God will not inscribe a tablet; he will produce a palimpsest, over-writing with his words an original sinful text. This writing, moreover, is not on the hearts of scattered individuals: the law is written not only inwardly, but universally.' Shead, A, 'The New Covenant and Pauline Hermeneutics' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Mission' ed Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson) p17

the ransomed of the Lord (Isa 35:9,10) may enjoy access to the 'water that will gush forth in the desert' (35:6), may experience the opening of the blind eyes and blocked ears (35:5), be overtaken by gladness and joy (35:10), and see the glory of the Lord (35:2), because only the redeemed, having been made holy, may walk on the 'highway of holiness' (35:8) where the unclean may not journey (35:8).¹⁶⁶

5.2.1.2 The reason for this from the human side of the relationship

That the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (objective genitive) is a necessary condition for the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) needs also to be explained from the human side.

Unless one is living by faith in the gospel's revelation of God's means of salvation, one cannot enjoy 'the grace in which we now stand' (5:2). It is necessary to *continue to live by faith* in the righteousness (objective genitive) and salvation (the offer and acceptance of the righteousness of God (genitive of origin)) revealed at the cross of Christ, for God's righteousness (subjective genitive) to be revealed.

This is because two fruits of salvation ensue from the right apprehension of the gospel, both of which are themselves necessary conditions for the continued revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. These are *an awareness of the holiness of God*, and *assurance*.

An awareness of the holiness of God

It is almost a truism to state that the fruits of the Spirit of God, which I mean by the term δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ understood in the subjective genitive, will only obtain where there is the presence of the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God is the Spirit of holiness, and this holiness must be an experienced reality.¹⁶⁷ It is imperative to remember that the *telos* of salvation is the glory of God, in which

¹⁶⁶ It is true that Jesus healed blind people before they knew much about him. Thus, they had not been 'convicted of their sin, repented, placed their faith in Jesus as being the source of "the righteousness of God" they needed, and entered the kingdom of God under the fuller conditions explicated by the apostles after the resurrection. But surely Jesus' mission was to demonstrate that in him the kingdom of God had come, and wherever he went, there were the kingdom realities. Faith in him might precede healing, but did not always. Faith, and fuller understanding, would follow with Holy Spirit-taught (Jn 16:13) post-resurrection apostolic explication (Rom 10:17).

¹⁶⁷ This vital truth resonates elsewhere in the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews talks of the necessity of *experienced* fellowship with God being restored through the cleansing of the conscience, a cleansing which can only come from the awareness that the 'righteous requirements of the law have been fulfilled.' Only then will the worshiper be able to 'serve the living God' (Heb 9:12-14). John, in his first epistle, writes that it is only once 'the blood of Jesus has purified us from all sin' that we are enabled to walk in the light, enjoy fellowship with one another, obey Christ's commands, and have God's love made complete in us.' (1 John 1:17; 2:4,5).

God is worshipped. As an expression of worship the saved person will, in obedience, continuously 'offer his/her body as a living sacrifice' (12:1), which will entail the fruits that are God's righteousness being displayed in the blessed person's life. Thus he/she will be zealous, serving the Lord, joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, sharing with the needy and practising hospitality (12:11-13). But all of this righteousness will only ensue if the *holiness* of God's presence is an experienced reality.¹⁶⁸ Concomitant with the experience of God's holiness is an awareness always that 'the righteous requirements of the law have been fulfilled' (8:4).¹⁶⁹

Further critique of the New Perspective on Paul

According to Sanders, Paul moved, not from plight to solution, but from solution to plight. It was only after realising that salvation lay in Christ alone that he saw the problem with the law as being an obsolete boundary marker.

But this assertion of Sanders does not seem to correspond to the gospel as revealed in the epistle to the Romans. While Paul may not appear to have experienced existential anguish from being confronted with the holiness of God in the law in his famous declaration, 'in regard to the law, a Pharisee . . . as for righteousness according to the law, faultless' (Phil 3:5,6), the Spirit of holiness, that 'made him a slave to fear' (Rom 8:15), caused him to voice the anguish engendered by the law in Romans 7:14, 'We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.' Then, ten verses later, 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?' (7:24).¹⁷⁰

168 This insight implies a critique of 'Kingdom theology' which avers that God, through his gospel, is actually reclaiming creation for himself, and bringing it back under his sovereign domain. Käsemann is surely one of Romans' commentators whose ideas generated much of this thinking. Käsemann rightly saw that by being given a righteous status before God one was *empowered* by God to manifest God's righteousness. This power is in effect (according to Käsemann), God working to reclaim his very creation. My thesis is, however, that it is only human beings who can be given this status, as only human beings may be convicted of sin, the necessary prerequisite to being saved. Thus, the righteousness of God may only be manifested through human beings, and has no bearing on the creation itself, which will continue to 'groan' (8:22) until the 'sons of God are revealed' (8:19).

169 It is instructive to consider one particular result of Jesus' being the ἱλαστήριον (3:25) set forth by God. We have seen that the righteousness of God is a 'righteousness to which the law and the prophets testify' (3:21) and one of the several offerings required by Mosaic law in the worship of the tabernacle was the sin offering, better translated as 'purification offering' (Lev 4:1-5:13). Jesus is clearly the fulfillment of the atonement typified by the various sacrifices prescribed in the tabernacle worship but each of the sacrifices has a different effect in this atonement. The effect of the purification offering was to purify the altar, as a holy God cannot dwell amid uncleanness. As Wenham comments, 'The purification offering purifies the place of worship, so that God may be present among his people.' 'The Book of Leviticus' Wenham, G p89.

170 The identity of 'εγω' in 7:24 has long been debated, as to whether he is a Christian or a pre-Christian. Moo opts for the latter, but comments wisely, 'While this cry is uttered by a Jew under the law, it is written by a Jew who in Christ has discovered just how "wretched" his past condition really was; and this Christian insight undoubtedly colours the narrative.' Moo, pp 465-466.

The seriousness of this cry is central to my thesis – that 'it is through the law that we become conscious of sin' (3:20) and, I would aver, antithetical to the thesis of the New Perspective which sees the law being problematical only insofar as it constitutes an obsolete boundary marker. This seriousness is well encapsulated by Moo, 'Here, in the personal plea that brings to a climax the narrative of Rom 3: 7-23, the condition from which deliverance is sought can be nothing but the condition Paul has depicted in these verses: the status of the person under the sentence of spiritual death, condemned, bound for hell.'¹⁷¹

This is Paul's plight, brought about from awareness of sin, through the holy righteousness of God (possessive genitive) as revealed in the law. And it is a blessed plight, for it is the prerequisite to the solution. And the solution? 'Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!' (7:25). Paul has moved from plight to solution. He has been saved through the revelation of the righteousness of God.

But this critique of the New Perspective continues to apply to the 'continuation of salvation', for not only can the New Perspective's teaching militate against salvation in the first place (if the only problem with 'the law' was that it was an inappropriate boundary marker, then one will not become, through the law, conscious of sin, will not cry out, 'wretched person that I am!' and will not see the need to receive the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ), it can seriously compromise the ongoing process of sanctification of the believer. To view the law's only problem as one of obsolescence, is to risk losing sight of the essential holiness of God as revealed in the law. And to lose sight of the holiness of God may result in the saved person losing his/her fear of God (cf 3:18), which will in turn compromise their obedience, diminishing the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) in the person's life. To lose sight of the holiness of God as revealed in the law will, in short, severely compromise the extent to which one will 'work out one's salvation in fear and trembling' (Phil 2:12).¹⁷²

Thus, an on-going awareness of the holiness of God, as revealed in the

¹⁷¹ Moo, p466

¹⁷²It may be argued that Paul's exhortation here is for the whole church, in light of the teaching on Christian harmony preceding this section, to work towards wholeness and unity, and all the more carefully (hence the warning to 'fear') since Paul is no longer present with them ('but much more in my absence...'). But the 'fear' of disobeying Christ because of the damage it may bring to the unity of the church is still, ultimately, traceable to the fear of the God who commands the unity. It may be argued that all Christian exhortation has as one of its ends, Christian unity. Thus, fear of spoiling Christian unity is one of the ways in which the saved person can fear God. But the fear must be traced back to its real source, which is the holy God who enjoins this unity. 'Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.' (Rom 11:20).

δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) of the cross, is necessary for an on-going revelation of the *display* of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive). God's holiness is the basis of his glory. The kingdom of God is the country of righteousness (2 Pet 3:13 cf Rom 14:17) whose soil is God's holiness, and whose atmosphere is God's glory.

Assurance

That the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) is a necessary condition for the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) in a continuous outworking of salvation may be seen in another important way: without an awareness of the *justice* revealed in the cross of Christ, the believer may not have the *assurance* necessary for a fruitful, righteousness-bearing life.

To use the language of Romans 3:26, it is only by seeing that in the atoning death of Jesus Christ God's justice is satisfied, that the believer can know that he/she has been declared righteous. It is only by seeing that the righteous demands of God's holy law (8:4) are fully met by sin's wages being paid in the death of Christ (6:23), that the believer can have the assurance that his/her justification is *justly* declared. It is the *justice* of the believer's justification that is the basis for his/her assurance. The believer can rest assured that the judicial requirements of God's condemnation of sin have been met in Christ's substitution of himself for the believer.¹⁷³ One's very forgiveness is grounded in the justice of God.¹⁷⁴

The Centrality of Assurance

That this assurance is necessary for the believer to enjoy, so that he/she may continue to manifest God's righteousness from the unshakable resting point of certainty (always through faith), may be seen from the very centrality of the theme of assurance to the entire epistle. Paul has devoted the first four chapters to demonstrating from the law and the prophets, that the believer in Christ is given a righteous standing before God. He begins the fifth chapter with the all-important *therefore*. *Therefore*, on the basis of all that has gone before, all that has demonstrated our justification, we now have the unshakable certainty of

¹⁷³ Moo's reference to other Pauline epistles serves to substantiate this assertion. 'As our substitute, Christ 'was made sin for us' (2 Cor 5:21) and suffered the wrath of God, the judgment of God upon sin (cf ἵλασθηριον in Rom. 3:25; Gal. 3:13). Moo, p 481

¹⁷⁴ I would not claim that the perception of the justice of one's forgiveness is the only basis for assurance afforded by the cross. Other bases for assurance are presented by Paul. Of these, some are commended to us from the apostle's argumentation, such as the increased patience forming within us leading us to the inference that God is committed to our sanctification, which in turn builds our hope (Rom 5:3-5). Then there is the immediate perception within us of our adoption, with its concomitant assurance, a perception wrought directly upon our spirit, by the Holy Spirit who 'testifies with our spirit that we are God's children' (8:16).

being 'right with God' – εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν.¹⁷⁵ And because, for Paul, it is so imperative that the believer *continues* to stand in this new sphere of grace (5:2) into which he/she has been translated, in the face of inevitable attempts to deceive the believer into falling from this assurance (16:17,20), he devotes the next seven chapters to building upon this assurance.

The reader's assurance is ineluctably fortified with the apostle's teaching from the beginning of the fifth chapter to the doxology at the end of the eleventh. We are told that even suffering establishes the certainty of our salvation, from the character it produces (5:3-5). We have the subjective evidence of the love given by the Holy Spirit which assures us that our hope will not be disappointed (5:5). Our confidence is strengthened yet more by the *a fortiori* arguments in 5:6 – 11, in which the apostle demonstrates the certainty of God's being for us *now*. If he acted to save us when we were in open rebellion against him, how much more surely will he be *for us* now that we have been reconciled to him?

The assurance of salvation that comes from 5:10 is revealed on two levels: the immediate sense of this verse is the *a fortiori* argument that the harder of the tasks, that of reconciling believers to God through Christ's death, has been demonstrably accomplished already, therefore, *a fortiori*, the easier task, that of having one's salvation completed through Christ's life, must of necessity, be completed.¹⁷⁶ But the deeper source of assurance which 5:12 imparts is the demonstration that if one has been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, ie justified by faith (3:22), one must of necessity be *in Christ*.¹⁷⁷ The great

175 There is a strong case to be made for preferring the hortatory subjunctive ἔχωμεν 'let us have peace with God' instead of the indicative ἔχομεν 'we have peace with God', as the external evidence for the former is greater than that for the latter. But because the context of 5:1 seems to be an assertion of *what we have* rather than an exhortation to *enjoy* what we have, most modern commentators are informed by this internal evidence of the context, and prefer the translation of the indicative. Moo points out the likelihood of the variant reading being due to an itacism, 'in which early scribes, hearing the text read, confused similar-sounding vowels'. 'Since the itacism involved makes a very early change from one to the other so easy (Leitzman, indeed, suggests that Tertius, Paul's scribe, may have written ἔχωμεν instead of ἔχομεν), preference should probably be given to internal considerations. We accept, therefore, and assume in the exposition, the indicative.' Moo, p296

176 On the *a fortiori* force of 5:12, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment thus: 'If that part of the Saviour's work which cost Him His blood, and which had to be wrought for persons incapable of the least sympathy either with His love or His labors on their behalf – even our "justification", our "reconciliation" – is already completed; how much more, will He do all that remains to be done, since He has it to do, not by His death agonies any more, but in untroubled "life", and no longer for enemies, but for friends – from whom, at every stage of it, He receives the grateful response of redeemed and adoring souls?' Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, p1149

177Romans 5:10b has καταλλαγέντες σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ: ...having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life. Moo discusses the question of whether ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ is to be understood as participationist language. That is, is the Apostle saying that our salvation is 'in the sphere' of Christ, or his life, or does he intend something else? Moo concludes that because Paul never uses 'in Christ' language with another noun intervening between the preposition and "Christ", he probably means that 'the new life won by Christ and in which believers share is the means by which they will be saved in the judgment.' (Moo, p313).

grounds of assurance are, ultimately, that the believer participates in the life of Christ – that he/she is *in Christ*. And the empirical verification of this all-important fact, is that one can know that he/she has been justified by faith. If one can be sure that one is *in Christ* then one can be sure that all else follows: one has been foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified (8:29,30).¹⁷⁸ And knowing that one is in Christ, one can have one's assurance confirmed yet more by the Apostle's further argumentation that compares Adam with Christ (5:12-21).¹⁷⁹

Significant assurance issues from the fact that 'the gift is not like the trespass' (5:15). Jesus, being not only 'one man' (5:15) is also 'Jesus Christ our Lord' (5:21). His actions thus have infinitely more powerful consequences than those of Adam's. This is one fact upon which Paul hinges his *a fortiori* argument from the consequences of Adam's sin (5:15-19) to the consequences of Jesus' act of obedience. Exactly the same verses may be cited, as Paul contrasts Adam with Jesus in each single verse, mounting contrast upon contrast till he reaches his triumphant conclusion that 'through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous' (5:19).

The other great fact that grounds Paul's *a fortiori* argument in this passage is the greater glory of God's grace than his justice. We have seen that the primary and most useful understanding of God's righteousness is God's acting in such a way that he will be glorified. The salvation Paul is expounding in these verses is truly, as the apostle writes elsewhere, 'to the praise of his glorious grace' (Eph 1:6). God's justice was absolute: 'the judgment followed the one sin and brought condemnation'. This was promised in Eden (2:17), and 'God's judgments are based on truth' (4:2). Thus the human race sinned, and died, in Adam. But God's grace and mercy are more than absolute: they are a source of limitless bounty (5:17) that redounds to God's glory (11:32-36). His gracious justification of sinners opened the gate for him to pour his limitless and abundant provision of grace upon those he justified. His justice ensured that death followed from sin. This death always was – and is now – a certainty. How much more certainly, then, argues Paul, will those who have received God's gift of righteousness,

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that participationist language is at least hinted at, and the whole burden of Paul's argument in 5:12-21 necessitates the division of the human race into those who are 'in Adam' and those who are 'in Christ' (cf 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 5:21).

178 Being *in Christ* temporally precedes being justified, for God chose us 'in him' before creation. Eph 1:4 says, 'For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight'. We were chosen in eternity, but the evidence for, and the ratification of, our being chosen in eternity, is our being justified in this life in the world of time. Ultimately, the ground of our assurance is that we have been chosen in Christ in eternity past. But epistemologically, our knowledge of this election can only be through our awareness that we have believed the gospel, and seen Christ as our ἰλαστήριον.

179 Paul's argumentation in 5:12-21 may be regarded as an exposition of his famous statement of 1 Cor 15:22, 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.'

enjoy limitless grace bestowed upon them. And this grace necessarily includes the assurance of final salvation: a final salvation that, like the love in Song of Solomon, is stronger than the certainty of death (Song of Solomon 8:6).

This assurance then becomes the basis for further revelation of God's righteousness, manifesting itself through the believer's life.

One's assurance is enhanced when one reflects that the very power of sin has been broken in its condemnation, and it has therefore had its ability to 'dictate terms'¹⁸⁰ removed by God.

Assurance, then, is a consequence of the revelation of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) in the cross of Christ. This assurance, as I have tried to show, is itself a necessary condition for the ongoing revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive).

5.2.2 The revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) at the cross of Christ is a *sufficient condition* for the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive)

When the believer perceives that on the cross of Christ God 'fulfilled all righteousness' (cf Lk 3:15), he/she is fully enabled to live a life that displays the righteousness of God, a life which Paul describes elsewhere as 'faith expressing itself through love' (Gal 5:6). Here the sufficiency of the death of Christ is to be understood on two levels. The death of Christ on the cross was an action of God that sufficed to bring the believer into righteous standing with God forever. Christ's death (in the stead of the believer) fulfilled God's righteous demand that sin be punished with death (6:23a). And Christ's obedience (in the stead of the believer) in fulfilling God's righteous demand that he be loved and obeyed (5:19) with all his/her heart was sufficient to enable God justly to regard us righteous now and forever. This is the first level for understanding the sufficiency of the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ at the cross of Christ.

The second level is that having, by faith, *perceived* this sufficiency, the believer is enabled to live for God's glory, displaying in his/her life a character and deeds that are nothing less than God's character shining through the redeemed sinner for his glory. As John Piper writes, '... the function of our own obedience flowing from faith (that is, our own good works produced as the fruit of the Holy Spirit) is to make visible the worth of Christ and the worth of his work as our substitute-punishment and substitute-righteousness.'¹⁸¹ The assurance that

¹⁸⁰ Moo's phrase, p 481

¹⁸¹ Piper, J 'The Future of Justification' p185. Piper continues, in line with our thesis that the primary

ensues from perceiving the sufficiency of God's salvation in the cross of Christ enables the believer to enjoy what is promised by Isaiah τὸ σωτηριόν μου παραγίνεσθαι (Isa 56:1c).¹⁸² The resulting transformation fulfills Isaiah's vision: 'They will be called oaks of righteousness' (Isa 61:3e), truly 'for the display of the Lord's splendour' (Isa 61:3f).

There is, moreover, a self-propagating property with the righteousness of God, which works in this way: as the believer, motivated by love and gratitude, as well as from a holy desire to 'live in conformity to God's will' (cf Rom 12:2), obeys the apostle's exhortations (found largely in the last five chapters of our epistle), he or she comes to apprehend with increasing immediacy God's will and presence (again, 12:2).¹⁸³ And the growing awareness of God's will and presence will increase the motivation for living in a way that reflects the righteousness of God. Thus, awareness of God's righteousness begets the display of God's righteousness, which in turn augments the awareness of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in a self-propagating virtuous spiral.¹⁸⁴

5.2.2.1 Δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive and subjective genitive and its implications for the relationship between faith and good works:

We have seen above that the realization (seen by faith) in the believer's life that his/her justification is based on justice, will result in a life of love for God and others. This faith-produced realization is so much a sufficient condition for producing a life that manifests God's righteousness that one may even say that there is a necessary connection between the two. The faith that justifies necessarily produces good works.¹⁸⁵

understanding of righteousness is 'God's acting in such a way as to show forth his glory', 'God's purpose in the universe is not only to *be* infinitely worthy, but to be *displayed* as infinitely worthy. Our works of love, flowing from faith, are the way Christ-embracing faith shows the value of what it has embraced. The sacrifices of love for the good of others show the all-satisfying worth of Christ as the one whose blood and righteousness establish the fact that God is for us forever.' *ibid*

¹⁸² 'My salvation is close at hand.'

¹⁸³ The apostle John asserts the same truth: 'We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commandments.' (1 John 2:3).

¹⁸⁴ Ryle makes the same observation by denying its negation: 'A believer may as soon expect to feel the sun's rays upon a dark and cloudy day as to feel strong consolation in Christ while he does not follow Him fully. When the disciples forsook the Lord and fled, they escaped danger, but they were miserable and sad. When, shortly after, they confessed Him boldly before men, they were cast into prison and beaten; but we are told they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41)' Ryle, J.C. 'Holiness' pp 52-3.

¹⁸⁵ This great truth is enshrined in all the great Reformed Confessions. The *Westminster Confession* states (Chapter XI): 'Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone (sic) instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accomplished with all other saving graces, and is not dead faith, but worketh by love.' Schaff, P, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977, p 626. Other confessions aver the same truth. The *Augsburg Confession* writes, 'Because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, our hearts are now renewed, and so put on new affections, so that they are able to bring forth good works. For thus saith Ambrose: "Faith is the begetter of a good will and of good actions." ... Hereby every man may see that this doctrine of justification alone is not to be accused as

So complete is the sufficiency of the salvation wrought by Christ on the cross to produce the transformed life, and so necessary is the connection between the faith that justifies and the faith that produces the good works, that the Scriptures even declare that these works will be seen as necessary evidence of the believer's faith at the final judgment. 'God will give to each person according to what he has done.' (Rom 2:6). 'If you live according to the sinful nature you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.' (Rom 8:13).¹⁸⁶

It is imperative, however, as we mark this necessary connection between justification and moral transformation, to aver that the transformation is the *necessary evidence* of the faith that unites us to Christ, not the *basis* for one's justification.

5.3 The Revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) at the cross of Christ, the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) in the believer's life, and the New Perspective as explained by N T Wright

It is here that it again becomes pertinent to engage with the New Perspective on Paul, as propounded by N T Wright. Wright asserts that, contrary to traditional Protestant soteriology, 'I must stress again that the doctrine of justification by faith is not what Paul means by 'the gospel'. It is implied by the gospel; when the gospel is proclaimed, people come to faith and so are regarded by God as

forbidding good works; but rather is much to be commended, because it showeth after what sort we must do good works. For without faith the nature of man can by no means perform the works of the First or Second Table. Without faith, it cannot call upon God, hope in God, bear the cross; but seeketh help from man, and trusteth in man's help. So it cometh to pass that lusts and human counsels bear sway in the heart so long as faith and trust in God are absent.' *ibid* pp24-25. Article XIV in the *Swiss Confession* reads, 'This same faith is a certain, firm, yes, undoubting ground, and a grasping of all things that one hopes from God. From it love grows as a fruit, and, by this love, come all kinds of virtues and good works. And, although the pious and believing practice such fruit of faith, we do not ascribe their piety or their attained salvation to such works, but to the grace of God. This faith comforts itself with the mercy of God, and not its works, even though it performs innumerable good works. This faith is true service which pleases God. *Ibid* p 218. The *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* express the same truth: 'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort...Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.' *ibid* p494.

¹⁸⁶ The New Testament witnesses to this in the following passages: 'If you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' (Matt 6:15). 'Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming when all who are in their tombs shall hear his voice and come out, those who have done good works to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.' (John 5:28,29). 'Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14). 'Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.' (Jas 2:17). 'Whoever says, "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' (1Jn 2:4). 'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.' (1Jn 3:14).

members of his people. But 'the gospel' is not an account of how people get saved."¹⁸⁷

Instead, says Wright, justification in the present is a recognition of covenant membership rather than an act by which we are reckoned righteous. He writes, "Those who hear the gospel and respond to it in faith are then declared by God to be his people... They are given the status *dikaios*, 'righteous' 'within the covenant'"¹⁸⁸ Elsewhere, he writes, "'Justification' in the first century was not about how someone might establish a relationship with God. It was about God's eschatological definition, both future and present, of who was, in fact, a member of his people."¹⁸⁹

If what we have been averring above is true, Wright's analysis of 'justification by faith' should be found to be wanting in several crucial areas. If it is as a result of perceiving the *justice* of God's offering justification to the believer (Rom 3:26), so that the believer has been placed in right standing with God in a way that upholds and reveals God's holiness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive) – and this is done to reveal God's glorious grace towards the believer – then the believer's motive must necessarily be gratitude and the passion to show forth the infinite worth of the God who has done this for him/her in this way. Conversely, if this revelation is not perceived, then the motive for living the godly life ie the demonstration of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) will be absent. And Wright's insistence that "the doctrine of justification by faith is not what Paul means by 'the gospel'" seems to deny the very basis for the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which is the power of God for salvation for those who believe (1:16). Thus Wright's thesis presents an *insufficient* revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, and the result will be that assurance will not follow, nor will understanding of the *basis* of the reception of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (genitive of origin), nor will gratitude – as the gratitude must follow upon understanding.

To substantiate what I mean by Wright's thesis providing an insufficient understanding of the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ let me cite one of his statements: 'We are not justified by faith by believing in justification by faith. We are justified by faith by believing in the gospel itself – in other words, that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead.'¹⁹⁰ But there is a vagueness here that leaves a telling gap in our understanding. Wright does not tell us what we are believing in Jesus' death and resurrection *for*. Why should this be good news, and how does Jesus' death and resurrection put us in right

¹⁸⁷ *What Saint Paul Really Said* pp 132-133.

¹⁸⁸ Wright, N T *Paul in Fresh Perspective* p122

¹⁸⁹ Wright, N T *What Saint Paul Really Said* p 119

¹⁹⁰ Wright, 'New Perspectives on Paul' p261

standing with God? The bare announcement that Jesus has died and risen again has insufficient content.¹⁹¹

This thesis of Wright's, that “*dikaïos* means to be 'declared to be within the covenant'” is challenged in another way, namely that such an understanding can hardly be applied to God himself. Yet God is declared to be δικαιοῦνς (proved right) (Rom 3:4),¹⁹² while Christ, in 1 Tim 3:16 is said to have been ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι (vindicated by the Spirit).

Perhaps the most telling critique of Wright's thesis that 'justification is not how someone becomes a Christian' is the lack of assurance of salvation which must result from such an understanding. The gospel in the first four chapters of Romans has been an explication of justification by faith, that the believer has been placed forever in a right relationship with God through his/her understanding faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is why Paul, having made his explanation, begins chapter 5 with Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυριοῦ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 'Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (5:1). The assurance of our peace with God is grounded in the justification by faith which the apostle has carefully elucidated in the first four chapters of his epistle. That this assurance results from the understanding of God's justification of the believer, is seen in the *therefore* that begins the fifth chapter. The believing reader will understand that God has declared eschatologically, in the basis of his/her justification, in his/her favour, that he/she is in a right standing with God. This understanding imparts such an assurance that the justification is final and complete, that the believer is enabled actually to rejoice at the prospect of the Day of judgment (2:5; 5:9; 13:12), knowing that his/her justification will be consummated when his/her 'mortal body' is raised at the resurrection (8:11), and he/she will appear in wonderful participation with the Lord Jesus' glory (8:18) when 'the day' (13:12) arrives.

This assurance could never obtain if the reader of Romans believed Wright's teaching that 'present justification declares on the basis of faith, what future justification will affirm publicly on the basis of the entire life'.¹⁹³ To believe that one's final, eschatological justification depends on how one has lived one's life would remove all assurance¹⁹⁴, all subjective peace, all gratitude and

¹⁹¹ Piper critiques Wright here: 'In Wright's passion to liberate the gospel from mere individualism and to make it historical and global, he leaves it vague for individual sinners.' Piper, 'The Future of Justification' p86.

¹⁹² The full phrase reads, 'So that you may be proved right (δικαιοῦνς) when you speak and prevail when you judge' (Rom 3:4b)

¹⁹³ Wright, 'What Saint Paul Really Said' p129

¹⁹⁴ 'If justification is, even in some secondary sense, 'on the basis of the entire life' then we cannot know

adoration, and all joy, and would destroy at its source the wellspring that would produce the righteous living (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive) which redounds to the glory of God. 195

This becomes even clearer when we evaluate Wright's assessment of the gospel in the light of the human condition before God. His thesis is that the gospel is not 'a doctrine about how to get saved',¹⁹⁶ but is rather the proclamation 'that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead; that he was thereby proved to be Israel's Messiah; that he was thereby installed as Lord of the world.'¹⁹⁷ But as Piper points out, the announcement that Jesus is the Messiah, the imperial Lord of the universe, 'is not good news, but is an absolutely terrifying message to a sinner who has spent all his life ignoring or blaspheming the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and is therefore guilty of treason and liable to execution.'¹⁹⁸ In light of human beings' 'massive unremitting sense of answerability to their Maker',¹⁹⁹ why should it be good news for someone who has heard neither how to be 'put right' with God, nor even of the possibility of being so justified? As Piper avers, 'If the gospel has no answer for this sinner, the mere facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus are *not* good news. But if the gospel has an answer, it would have to be a message about how the rebel against God can *be saved* – indeed, how he can be right with God and become part of the covenant people.'²⁰⁰ Piper sums this up pithily by entitling a passage on this theme, 'No good news till I hear the terms of the

complete assurance.' Chester, 'Justification, Ecclesiology and the New Perspective', *Themelios*, Vol 30, Issue 2, 2005, p17

195 These paragraphs were written before reading N T Wright's most recent book, 'Justification' (published in 2009). To be sure, this latest book of Tom Wright's goes a long way towards clarifying his position on 'final justification'. As stated above, Wright asserted, 'Present justification declares on the basis of faith, what future justification will affirm publicly on the basis of the entire life.' (from 'What Saint Paul Really Said'). To obviate the concern (such as that expressed in the paragraphs above) about the lack of assurance that his assertion could possibly lead to, Wright explains that the future verdict is not *based* on the righteousness of the believer's entire life, but is *necessitated* as a consequence of living in the Spirit (which is itself a necessary consequence of being justified in the present): 'In a nutshell: 1. The judgment of which Paul speaks in Romans 2:1-16 is of course the *future* judgment, that which will take place on the last day. When, on that day, God issues through the Messiah the positive verdict spoken of in Romans 2:7,10 and 13, it corresponds to the *present* verdict which, in Romans 3:21-31, is issued simply and solely on the basis of faith. 2. How do these two verdicts correspond? The answer has to do with the Spirit. When Paul returns triumphantly to the future verdict in 8:1 ("There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in the Messiah, Jesus"), he at once explains this with a long discourse about the work of the Spirit (Romans 8:22-27). What Paul says about Christians could be said about the doctrine of justification itself: if you don't have the Spirit, you're not on the map (Romans 8:9).' Wright, N T 'Justification' p190.

196 'What Saint Paul Really Said' p90

197 'What Saint Paul Really Said', p46

198 Piper, 'The Future of Justification' p86. Wright's belief that justification is the response to hearing that Jesus has died and risen again, and that this response constitutes the proof that the hearer is included in God's covenant people seems to lack sufficient explication of *how* the hearer is justified ie the very explication that is found in Romans 3:21-26.

199 Westerholm, "The New Perspective at Twenty-Five," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism* vol II, p38

200 Piper, 'The Future of Justification' p89.

amnesty'.²⁰¹ The good news for Paul was the offering of salvation, not the announcement that Jesus had died and was now alive. There is almost a 'category mistake' in Wright's analysis of the gospel. It is as if, for Wright, the gospel is *epistemological* rather than *soteriological*. He writes as if the primary effect of the blinding light on the Damascus Road is to furnish Saul with a new world view, rather than confronting him with an experience which, existentially (as with Isaiah in the Temple) must have faced him with the terror of annihilation.²⁰²

The Value of N.T. Wright

In my responses to N.T. Wright I am constrained to quote C.S. Lewis' words in his own response to the great English romantic poet William Blake: 'Blake wrote of the Marriage of Heaven and Hell. If I have written of their Divorce, this is not because I think myself a fit antagonist for so great a genius, nor even because I feel at all sure that I know what he meant.'²⁰³ If I have identified in Wright that which is not conducive to 'the revelation of the righteousness of God being the salvation of those who believe', it is due, not to positive error on Wright's part, but rather to a de-emphasizing of the very aspects of the gospel which I believe to be essential.

Sometimes differences between theologians (such as Wright and Piper) and diverse schools of thought are not so much due to logically antithetical propositions, as to differing areas of emphasis. Wright himself disarmingly acknowledges that there is a place for the 'old perspective' as well as the 'new perspective' when he says, 'God's plan, God's single plan, always was to put the world to rights, to set it right, to undo Genesis 3 and Genesis 11, sin *and* the fracturing of human society which results from that sin and shows it up in its full colours (*we might almost say Genesis 3 needs the old perspective, and*

²⁰¹ *ibid* p88.

²⁰² Piper quotes Wright: '*Saul's vision on the road to Damascus thus equipped him with an entirely new perspective, though one which kept its roots firm and deep within his previous covenantal theology. Israel's destiny had been summed up and achieved in Jesus the Messiah. The Age to Come had been inaugurated. Saul himself was summoned to be its agent. He was to declare to the pagan world that YHWH, the God of Israel, was the one true God of the whole world, and that in Jesus of Nazareth he had overcome evil and was creating a new world in which justice and peace should reign supreme. Saul of Tarsus, in other words, had found a new vocation. It would demand all the energy, all the zeal, that he had devoted to his former way of life. He was now to be a herald of the king.*' (from 'What Saint Paul Really Said, p37) Piper then comments, 'This is not false, but by itself it is unrealistically intellectualistic. It is mainly conceptual and minimally experiential. No doubt Wright is aware of what Stephen Westerholm calls human beings' "massive, unremitting sense of answerability to their Maker." But does he take it sufficiently into account? I do not think it would be a wild speculation to suggest that when Saul, who had hated Jesus and his followers, fell to the ground under the absolute, sovereign authority of the irresistible brightness of the living Jesus, his first thoughts would not be about his concepts, but about his survival.' Piper, 'The Future of Justification', p87

²⁰³ Lewis, C S 'The Great Divorce' p7

Genesis 11 needs the new!) (italics mine): to bring about the new creation, through Abraham/Israel and, as the fulfillment of the Abraham/Israel-shaped plan, through the Messiah, Jesus.²⁰⁴

My thesis has emphasized very much individual salvation and sanctification, and I would continue to aver that this is indeed an appropriate emphasis. But in doing this I have de-emphasized the 'large-scale controlling narrative'²⁰⁵ that is the centre of Wright's vision.²⁰⁶

Wright's assertion that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is 'the covenant faithfulness of God' (that is, God's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham) is, with qualifications, true. My qualification would be, as this very thesis states, that no one, single understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is sufficient to account for the varying nuances, according to the contexts, that we find in Paul's epistle to the Romans. But I have already asserted above that God's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham is assuredly a very helpful way of understanding 'the righteousness of God'. It provides the clearest understanding of Romans chapter 3:1-8, with its theme of 'Israel's faithlessness to God's commission'. Israel had, to use the words of Wright, 'let the side down, had let God down'²⁰⁷ and had not offered the obedience needed for God's covenant plan to succeed. It also provides the context for understanding Romans chapter 4.²⁰⁸

Nevertheless, I must part company with Wright' thesis that the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe' can be located in a *narrative and its explanation*, no matter how over-arching or massive.²⁰⁹ There can be no doubt

²⁰⁴ Wright, N.T. 'Justification' p99

²⁰⁵ 'No, Scripture was seen, in its many-sided and multifarious characteristics and modes, as at least this: a large-scale controlling narrative *whose ending had not yet arrived.*' (italics his). Wright, N.T. 'Justification', p59.

²⁰⁶ 'Piper (and Wright's other critics) want to protect the traditional Protestant view that salvation consists of personal forgiveness. Wright emphasizes that salvation is just as much (or more so) becoming part of the church.' Comment on website www.deepbiblestudy.net (visited 15 12 09). Also, from the mouth of Piper himself, that the difference is more of emphasis than of substance, I found this comment: 'Wright's view is a shift in emphasis. He believes in the death of Christ; he believes in the substitutionary atonement; he believes in penal substitution. But he is always backgrounding these things so that the universal lordship of Christ is foregrounded. It's the negations he makes that are so troubling, not his affirmations. Found on website www.desiringgod.org

²⁰⁷ Wright, N.T. 'Justification' p105.

²⁰⁸ Wright very astutely says of this chapter, 'Paul has announced that in Romans 3:21 that God has been faithful to the covenant; Romans 4, so far from being an "illustration" or "example" of this (as though Abraham could be detached from his historical moorings and float around like a lost helium balloon wherever the winds of ahistorical hermeneutics might take him), is the full explanation of what Paul had in mind. The exegetical contortions, distortions, omissions and confusions which litter the field of anti-covenantal Pauline exegesis are the direct result of dismembering the sacred texts to which, piously, the exegetes still appeal.' 'Justification', p99.

²⁰⁹ 'My justification is that this massive, many-sided and multiple explanatory narrative is rooted, by Paul himself, in classic covenantal passages such as Genesis 15, Deuteronomy 27-30, and Daniel 9.' *ibid* p67.

that Wright's thesis provides us with a coherent theology into which the text of Romans fits, apparently without remainder. But the primary purpose of the gospel is not to provide us with a satisfying narrative theology which accounts for all the biblical data, useful though this might be. The primary purpose of the gospel, surely, is to *save* (Rom 1:16). Another way of putting this could be to say that theology cannot be separated from anthropology.²¹⁰ Thus, when Wright writes (in one sense, truthfully), 'Any preaching of justification which focuses solely or even mainly on Jesus' death and its results is only doing half the job. Justification is not just about how I get my sins forgiven. It is about how God creates, in the Messiah Jesus and in the power of his Spirit, a single family, celebrating their once-for-all forgiveness and their assured 'no condemnation' in Christ, through whom his purposes can now be extended into the wider world',²¹¹ my immediate response is that by de-emphasizing the forgiveness of sins, Wright is moving away from the real purpose of the Scriptures (which is to bring personal salvation),²¹² towards celebrating an (albeit true) over-arching narrative theology. The result may be intellectually satisfying, but the gospel begins to lose its power.

As with Sanders, Dunn and other New Perspective writers, we are enormously indebted to Wright for casting so much light on the 'first century mindset'. He has indeed ingeniously presented a narrative that has plausibility in its explanation of Jesus' messianic self-understanding in going to the cross. But when he writes, 'only if we follow the first-century evidence where it leads, after all, can we be justified in referring to 'Jesus' at all, whether in history or in theology',²¹³ I question whether I concur with this great scholar's emphasis. Studying the culture and beliefs of the first century may indeed enrich our understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is not a *necessary* condition for comprehending the New Testament, as ultimately it is the inspired apostolic explication of Jesus, his life and cross-work, which finally remains authoritative. Wright avers, 'Jesus' personal reading of Isaiah belongs not so much in the history of ideas, as in the history of vocation, agenda, action and ultimately passion.'²¹⁴ But again, the greatest light is not yielded on Jesus by

210 An interesting comment I found posted on a website was this one: 'Nice articles, but I think you're missing the point—or rather the Bishop's point. He is not just saying that Piper et al are looking at the Doctrine of Justification through 16th century eyes, but that they are basically yanking it out of Paul's overall argument in his epistles. The Bishop is saying, first, look at the Doctrine through 1st century eyes—Paul's—but ALSO in the larger context so we get: Piper—Doctrine of Justification—How I get saved—Anthropology Wright—Doctrine of Justification—Gods saving Purpose for the WORLD—Theology.' trevinwax.com

211 Wright, N.T. 'Justification' p248

212 I realize that I am assuming here that which would take more space than is available, that the purpose of the Scriptures is the same purpose as Paul's stated *raison d'être* of the gospel, viz the personal salvation of believers.

213 Wright, N.T. 'Jesus And The Victory Of God' pp578-9.

214ibid p604

seeing his actions as the fulfillment of a story in which he is necessarily the central protagonist. The greatest light on Jesus is yielded by seeing him (and therefore his self-understanding) as the sin-offering (Rom 8:3) who brings glory to his Father by fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law, on behalf of his people, those who would 'walk, not according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit' (8:4). His whole life of God-glorifying self-giving ('Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will, O God')²¹⁵ exemplified what the individuals whom he saved are saved *for* viz a life that finds its ultimate fulfillment in displaying God's glory by living in the presence of this glory. The *telos* of the gospel is the end of the gospel: 'So that all nations might believe and obey him – to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.' (16:27).

Piper vs Wright.

As I write these words there is a very interesting 'debate' proceeding between John Piper and N T Wright. The former's position is aligned with the traditional Reformed understanding of the gospel, which holds that justification is the term given to the forgiveness, and imputed righteousness, through the atoning work of Christ, of elect individuals. The latter's thesis is that the gospel is the royal announcement that the crucified and risen Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures, has been enthroned as the true Lord of the world. He has done this as the ultimate revelation of the righteousness of God, which is God's faithfulness to his plan to bring restoration to his creation, a plan which he first made known through his promise to Abraham: 'Paul's view of God's purpose is that God, the creator, called Abraham so that through his family he, God, could rescue the world from its plight.'²¹⁶

I believe that the difference between these two scholars can best be summarized in the different vision each has of the *summum bonnum* – the supreme good, and ultimate *telos* of the gospel, and of all things. For Wright, this is a vision of the fulfillment of God's ultimate purpose, which is to 'put the world to rights'.²¹⁷ For Piper, the *summum bonnum* and ultimate *telos* of the gospel, is God being enjoyed and glorified by the blessed saints whom he has saved. Wright might say that this is an unfair dichotomy, as God's generously giving the new, restored creation to his rescued creatures to enjoy *does* reflect his glory,²¹⁸ but I believe the difference persists. The ultimate good for Wright is the enjoyment

²¹⁵ Hebrews 10:7

²¹⁶ *ibid* p94

²¹⁷ *ibid* p99

²¹⁸ 'The great story of Scripture.... is God's concern, if you like, for the flourishing and well-being of *everything else*. Of course, this too will redound to God's glory because God, as the Creator, is glorified when creation is flourishing and able to praise him gladly and freely.' Wright, N T 'Justification' p70.

of God's restored creation (albeit acknowledging its Creator in this enjoyment) while the supreme vision for Piper is to be caught up in the ecstatic experience of being in God's direct presence, enjoying his glory and reflecting back to God the praises that are his due to his glorious grace and his gracious glory. This ultimate good is experienced proleptically by the saved person, who, in the Spirit (8:4), becomes increasingly aware of God's will (12:2), which is that he/she 'offer the parts of his/her body to God as instruments of righteousness' (6:13). All the while the Christian is 'rejoicing in the hope of the glory of *God*' (5:2) (rather than rejoicing in the hope of the restored creation),²¹⁹ filled with gratitude from an increasing awareness of what he/she has been saved *from* and what he/she has been saved *for*, and ever-increasingly filled with the joy that comes from the present enjoyment of God's presence (6:11), and the prospect of the completion of his/her salvation (8:18-21), of which the present experience is a foretaste. This anticipation of the supreme good – the *summum bonnum* – is surely confirmed in the doxology of Romans 11:36: 'For from him and through him and *to him* are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.'

The distinction persists between the anticipation of a grateful enjoyment of a renewed creation, and the anticipation of the enjoyment of God himself. It is a most significant distinction, and one which, I believe, accounts for the disparity in the consequent soteriologies of these enormously influential evangelicals, Piper and Wright.

Conclusion

In Section 2 I have sought to show how the right understanding of the 'revelation of the righteousness of God' *continues* to be the power of God for the salvation of those who believe'. We saw that salvation, as well as being an unrepeatable *event* in the believer's life, one that is expressed in the Greek by the aorist tense, is also a process, wherein the believer continuously 'offers the parts of his/her body to God' (6:13), 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit and so living' (8:13), progressively manifesting a transformation (12:2) into the likeness of Christ (8:29; 13:14), and thereby *continues* to reveal, with 'ever-increasing glory' (cf 2 Cor 3:18) the very righteousness of God himself (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive).

I endeavoured to show that it is only from an on-going awareness of the righteousness of God (possessive genitive, ie God's holiness) that one will continue to manifest the righteousness of God (subjective genitive) in one's life. That is, the on-going apprehension of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive,

²¹⁹ The text of Romans indicates that, rather than the saints rejoicing in the hope of the restored creation, it is the creation that is yearning with anticipation for the salvation, and ultimate glorification of the saints (8:21).

is a necessary condition for the on-going revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive. This is, firstly, because God has extended a means of being placed in right relationship with himself which not only has upheld his holiness (3:26,31; 8:4), but is a portal into his very presence, the kingdom of God, wherein the very atmosphere is holiness (14:17), and where, if one is to live in 'transformity' (rather than 'conformity to this world' (12:2)), one must 'put to death' (8:13) the sin for which there is no place in God's holy kingdom. His holiness is the basis for his glory. And secondly, the apprehension of the justice upon which the believer's justification is grounded engenders an assurance which is itself a necessary condition for the continuing revelation of God's righteousness in the believer's life. Without this assurance that one's right standing with God is ensured eschatologically, for the day in which 'God's righteous judgment will be revealed' (2:5), one would not be able even to begin to evince the freedom, the peace, the joy and the gratitude from which the believer lives for the glory of God.

This understanding of the relationship between δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as possessive genitive, genitive of origin, and subjective genitive respectively, and their combined interactions serving as the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (1:16), furnishes us with a critique of what is known as the 'New Perspective' on Paul. Dunn's thesis is that 'the works of the law' mean 'the boundary markers that circumscribe those who may consider themselves as belonging to the people of God' rather than the righteous requirements of the law demanded by God's holy character understood in a moral sense (8:4). This understanding of the function of God's law is not one which will allow the law its soteriological function of bringing awareness of sin (3:20), and without awareness of sin, there will be no awareness of the need for justification. Thus Dunn's inadequate representation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) means that the necessary condition for salvation, and thus the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive), is not fulfilled. Wright's thesis is that the gospel is 'not about how people get saved', but simply 'the proclamation that Jesus has died, is now risen, and is Lord'. Again, as with Dunn, Wright's analysis fails to comprehend the absolute centrality of the revelation of the righteousness of God (possessive genitive), and the imperative that is implied of being put in right standing with this righteousness. Thus, Wright's thesis also fails to meet the necessary condition for the revelation of God's righteousness (subjective genitive). This is why I believe that Wright's assertion that one's final justification is based on the life one has led²²⁰ may serve to remove the assurance which is the necessary condition for further revelation of God's righteousness shining through the life of the believer.

²²⁰ Wright, 'What Saint Paul Really Said' p129

SECTION THREE
CHAPTER SIX
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, WORSHIP,
SANCTIFICATION AND MISSION

INTRODUCTION

Romans 1:16 and 17 has been the subject of this thesis. I have tried to show that 'the gospel' is the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe', *because* it is the 'revelation of the righteousness of God' (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ). I have endeavoured to show that in the complex and various dynamics of salvation, the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ should be seen as bearing a number of different senses, and that to understand *how* the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe, all of these senses become relevant at different stages of the believer's salvation. Thus, salvation, which itself reveals God's righteousness, is effected through the interplay of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ understood as possessive genitive, genitive of origin, and subjective genitive.

In this third and final section of my thesis, I intend to show how the gospel continues to be the power of God through the revelation of God's righteousness, and I intend to show this with reference to the three great activities of worship, sanctification, and mission.

I shall organize the thesis of this third section around the question of Paul's motivation in writing the paraenetic section of Romans, that is, chapters 12 through to 16.²²¹ The desire that provided the motivation for all of Paul's work was for God to be glorified. It is as a result of considering God's glorious grace and wisdom in the salvation he has wrought that he pens the climactic paean of praise that forms the end of the doctrinal section of his letter (11:33-36). In the apostle's words, ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.²²² must be seen the supreme *telos* of the gospel and indeed of all things. And in the glory of God we see the ultimate revelation of the righteousness of God. Our first definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ considered as possessive genitive, was 'God's unswerving commitment to act

²²¹Moises D. Silva, in relation to the different moods of Paul's epistle to the Romans, writes, 'On the basis of the *historical* truth that Jesus died and was raised from the dead, and the *theological* truth that this happened for the forgiveness of our sins, Paul proclaimed the *paraenetic* truth that God commands everyone everywhere to repent.' Silva, M 'The Truth of the Gospel: Paul's Mission According to the Galatians' in 'The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission' (ed Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson; Apollos Intersity Press, Downer's Grove, Ill, 2000), p58

²²²'For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.' (11:36).

always for his own glory.' In these verses at the end of chapter 11 Paul allows us a glimpse of the fulfillment and end of all of God's creative and redeeming work: namely, the glory of God. And human beings who are engaged in worshipping God are acting in complete conformity with the righteousness of God, as the 'first and greatest commandment' (cf Mat 22:38) is to 'love the Lord your God', which is so to value God as to orientate one's whole being in the direction of his glory. Furthermore, if the root of unrighteousness was the failure, or refusal to give God glory (1:18-21), the converse follows that the supreme expression of righteousness *is* to glorify God.

Paul desired God to be glorified by worship (12:1), by sanctification in believers (12:2), and by the salvation of those 'called to belong to Jesus Christ' (1:6; 15:16). In worship the righteousness of God is directed and revealed in a God-ward direction (all things are *to* him); in the sanctification of believers ('they will be called oaks of righteousness for the display of his splendour' (Isa 61:3)) the righteousness of God is revealed in the world, or in a 'people-ward' direction (all things are *from* him and *through* him). The salvation of those called to be God's people will result in God's righteousness being revealed both in a God-ward direction and in a people-ward direction, which is the fulfillment of God's law in both its vertical and horizontal dimensions. Paul, in Romans 12:1, by urging total dedication in worship, practically reiterates the command of God to 'love the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their mind' (Deut 6:5). Romans 13:8, by urging complete commitment to the love of τὸν ἕτερον, practically reiterates the command of God to 'love their neighbour as themselves' (Lev 19:18). Thus, the righteousness that is produced through the gospel is not only a righteousness to which the law testifies (3:21), but is a righteousness which is the very *telos* and splendour of the law's purpose (3:31; 13:10).

And, as my thesis avers, this righteousness which the gospel has produced then becomes itself the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. The believer, in offering him/herself as a living sacrifice, in worship, which results increasingly in being transformed 'according to the renewing of his/her mind' - into the very likeness of Christ – comes increasingly to know and do God's will, which is that his glory be revealed through the salvation he has wrought in Christ. Thus, in living for God's glory, the believer's motive for existence is transformed into one of desire for God to be glorified through his/her gospel-centred and gospel-proclaiming life (16:25-27), leading to the salvation of all whom God has called (9:1-3; 1:6).

In this third section I shall discuss the interacting dynamics of worship,

sanctification and mission in terms of the righteousness of God, and Paul's motive in writing the paraenetic chapters of Romans. In his desire for God to be glorified through worship, and through the radiant display of God's righteousness in the church in the world, Paul presents us with a gospel that has a self-propagating power, which truly results in the salvation of those who believe, for God's glory.

In obedience to his own exhortation, Paul is presenting himself as a living sacrifice (12:1) in his priestly mission to present others, not only as saved, but as mature saints, to God (15:16). Thus God's righteousness is being revealed through Paul's own self-offering. But this δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is magnified and refracted through the blessed ones who have been saved through hearing the gospel, so that they in turn become worshiping communities who reveal and enjoy God's glory.

But the orientation of the believers' beings in a God-ward direction is inseparable from their relation to the world around them. In 'presenting themselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God', they will necessarily be transformed through the renewing of their minds, which will bring an awareness of, and the desire and enabling to do, the perfect will of God (12:2). And the will of God is that they be sanctified (cf 1Thes 4:3) by being conformed to the likeness of his Son (8:29). Through this gospel-empowered transformation, God's righteousness (subjective genitive) is displayed through individual Christians (8:29) and the believing community (15:5-13), fulfilling the words of Isaiah, 'her righteousness will shine out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch' (Isa 62:1).

In this section of my thesis I shall show how the community of believers, being the body of Christ, is the embodiment, exemplar and mouthpiece of the gospel, which is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. I intend, by arguing that sanctification happens in the context of living in, rather than seclusion from, the world, to show the inseparable connection between sanctification and mission.

Thus, an important part of my thesis in this third section will be that it is as believers seek to live in obedience to the implicit command to make Jesus known, they will themselves grow in sanctification, which will have the effect of increasing their knowledge of the will of God and their zeal to do it, so that a kind of 'virtuous spiral' of sanctification obtains, in which the believer comes increasingly to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus, and increasingly to make him known by revealing and proclaiming the righteousness of God.

In being the body of Christ in the world, the body of believers *is* the very revelation of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) we were discussing in Section 2, which is the 'sphere of radiance' (Käsemann) of the righteousness of God. I intend in this section to describe *how* the body of Christ radiates the righteousness of God.

I shall argue, moreover, that the suffering which is implied in the notion of θυσίαν ζῶσαν²²³ comes not only from 'mortifying the flesh' (to use an archaic expression), by 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body' (8:13) in obedience to the apostle's injunctions, but from witnessing to Christ in a potentially hostile world (15:31). I shall argue that while the exhortation to be active in the actual proclamation of the gospel is not explicit, it is at least implicit.

6.1 Paul's motive in writing Romans is to disclose the righteousness of God both as God's glory revealed, and as the human response of worship.

6.1.1 The ultimate expression of the righteousness of God is the cross of Jesus Christ and the righteous response to the cross of Jesus Christ is worship.

In the cross of Christ God is supremely glorified (cf Jn 12:28). On the cross of Christ is manifested the quintessence of God's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham (4:16), to Moses (3:21), to Paul (11:26,27), the supreme demonstration of his justice (3:25,26), and the ultimate revelation of his mercy (5:2). Thus, the Cross of Christ may be seen to be the ultimate answer to Moses' request to God, 'Show me your glory' (Ex. 33:18), to which the Lord's *immediate* response was to pass in front of Moses, describing himself as, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...' (Ex 34:6), but to which God's *ultimate* response was the Cross.

Paul, in Romans 12:1, tells his readers that the only fitting response to God's mercy (for on the cross mercy has triumphed over judgment (3:26; 11:32)) is to live for God's glory by presenting oneself as a 'living sacrifice'. The Apostle here uses the language of the *cultus* with the verb λατρεύειν (worship). In the Septuagint this word occurs over 90 times, almost always translating '*abad*' (Exod. 23:24 etc). But now is revealed the fulfillment of that to which the Old Testament *cultus* pointed, namely the true worship of God in response to the glorious reality typified by the *cultus* with its physical temple, fallible priests and animal sacrifices. Now, worship is 'de-institutionalized, de-localized, de-

²²³ 'living sacrifices' (12:1)

externalized'²²⁴, being the offering of one's bodily existence to God in a world which has 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator who is forever praised. Amen.' (1:25).²²⁵

It is here, where believers are worshiping God by presenting themselves as 'living sacrifices' whilst living in the world, that is the meeting place of the revelation of the righteousness of God in a vertical, or God-ward direction – through service of God – and the revelation of the righteousness of God radiating outward in a horizontal, people-ward direction, for the language of the *cultus* reminds us that we are the living Temple, where God has his being and reveals himself. Therefore it is in worshiping God that we are making God known.

6.1.2 Paul himself was a primary exemplar of worshiping God in response to his salvation through the gospel

Paul practised what he preached, exemplifying more than anyone else (cf 2 Cor 11:23) what it was to be a 'living sacrifice', by performing the 'priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.' (15:16). Thus, as sacrifice and priest, in his worship of God, Paul 'fills up in his flesh what is still lacking in regards to Christ's afflictions' (Col 1:24), 'sharing in the sufferings' (Rom 8:17) of him who was the supreme Living Sacrifice and greatest High Priest. But the apostle's 'priestly service', which necessarily entails worshiping God as a living sacrifice himself, involves his presenting *others* as offerings to God. In Romans 15:16 these 'acceptable offerings' are cited as Gentile converts, but we may extend this to include all who, hearing the preaching of the gospel, respond to God's call to 'the obedience of faith' (1:5) and so become 'sanctified by the Holy Spirit' (15:16).²²⁶

I shall be arguing that Paul's worship of God is exemplary and prescriptive for

²²⁴ Piper, J 'Brothers, We Are Not Professionals' p232

²²⁵ Moo notes the contrast between λογικῆν (acceptable or reasonable) worship (12:1) which is able to δοκιμάζειν (approve) the will of God, and so offer worship that honours him, with ἀδόκιμον (depraved) minds that, being under the power of sin, are unable and unwilling to offer acceptable worship to God. Moo, p752.

²²⁶ Cranfield is careful to distinguish between the 'Levitical' and the 'priestly' duties in his comment on this verse, attributing the apostle's labours to those of the Levitical role, reserving the higher, priestly role for the Lord Jesus Christ himself. 'His gracious commission to Paul to be Christ's λειτουργός with regard to the Gentiles by the service of the gospel, was that the sacrifice consisting of the Gentiles might be acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. As the purpose of the due fulfillment by the Levites of their subordinate and auxiliary role in the cultus was that the sacrifices offered by the priests might be acceptable to God, so Paul's preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles is a service subordinate and auxiliary to Christ's priestly service of offering them to God as a sacrifice, and the preaching of the gospel is a necessary service if that sacrifice is to be truly well-pleasing to God, including in itself the willing and intelligent response of their gratitude for all that God has done in Christ.' Cranfield, p756

all believers. While the Apostle is unique in that he was entrusted with the mystery (11:25) that his gospel elucidates, his sacrificial, priestly service, suffering for making known what God has done in Christ, is implicitly and explicitly enjoined to all believers in the epistle to the Romans. 'Paul's apostolic ministry of missionary suffering and his gospel theology were an inseparable unity.'²²⁷

The revelation of the righteousness of God manifested by Paul in a God-ward direction – that is, his worship of God – *resulted in* the revelation of the righteousness of God in a people-ward direction, as through his person, work, and proclamation, in obedience to God's command, (1:1,14), he gave his life to making God known in Christ. 'Paul's endurance of faith in the midst of suffering is ... a mediation of the reality and significance of the death (cross) and life (resurrection) of Jesus. Paul stands between the glory of God and the life of his congregation as an instrument in the hand of God to mediate the life of faith among God's people.'²²⁸ This is true of the Apostle, and the exhortation to 'do likewise' is applied no less to all believers.

6.1.3 Paul's converts in turn become worshipers of God 'in view of God's mercy'

The revelation of the righteousness of God is increased as the gospel continues to do its work (cf Col 1:6), creating more of those 'loved by God and called to be saints' (1:7), who enjoy the present blessings (14:17), and rejoice in the hope of the future blessings (5:2) of believers. The revelation of God's glory (15:9-12) increases as God's kingdom grows, as, not only 'from Jerusalem all the way round to Illyricum' (15:19), but all over the world (16:26), the gospel is proclaimed and responded to by those who begin to worship and enjoy God in Christ.²²⁹

We saw in the second part of this thesis that as the gospel saves, it *continues* to save, so that sanctification no less than justification may be considered as the result of the saving power of the gospel. God, through the gospel, saves the believer not only from sin's penalty (8:1) but from its power (8:2,13; 6:4,11-14). Paul wants not only to present the Gentiles as an offering to God, but as an *acceptable* offering, so his paraenetic teaching is to this end, that their lives may be informed by 'the obedience of faith' (1:6; 16:26), and so transformed into the

²²⁷Scott Hafemann, 'Because of Weakness (Gal 4:13): the role of suffering in the mission of Paul' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission' p140.

²²⁸ *ibid*

²²⁹ The worship of God by obeying his will to make him known by living and proclaiming the gospel will result in the realization of what the Westminster Shorter Catechism denotes as the 'chief end of man'. 'What is the chief end of man?' 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.' 'Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, Shorter Catechism, Directory of Public Worship, Presbyterian Church Government', p115

likeness of Christ (8:29).²³⁰ Paul's intention of ministering the gospel to the Christians at Rome is anticipated in the writing of his letter to them. Romans itself is an example of how Paul would lead believers to maturity in Christ.²³¹

Thus Paul writes his paraenetic section for the glory of God, to reveal the righteousness of God in a God-ward direction by producing Christians who, growing in maturity, are growing in their ability to know and do (12:2) God's will, which is to give him thanks and praise (15:9-12), and make him known in the world (1:14,15).²³² Under the following headings I shall show how the effect of Paul's teaching in his paraenetic section of the epistle is to effect the revelation of the righteousness of God in a people-ward direction ('for the display of his splendour' (Isa 61:3); 'the nations will see your righteousness; and all kings your glory' (Isa 62:2)).

6.2 The revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) in a visible, human-ward direction.

The second effect of the gospel is to bring a revelation of the righteousness of God in a visible, human-ward direction, engendering, in the words of Käsemann, the 'sphere of radiance' of God's righteousness. In the following paragraphs I shall show in what ways the result of the gospel reveal the righteousness of God.

In a word, the 'result of the gospel' is the church, and the community of

²³⁰ On the sanctifying power of the gospel, O'Brien writes, 'The Christian life is certainly created through the gospel (1Cor 4:15; Col 1:5-6), but it is also lived in the sphere of this dynamic and authoritative message (cf Phil 1:27). It needs therefore to be preached to those who have already received it and have become Christians. Believers do not leave the gospel behind and progress beyond it as they grow and mature in their faith. They stand fast in this kerygma and are being saved through it if they hold firmly to it (1 Cor 15:1-2), for it is in this authoritative announcement that true hope is held out to them (Col 1:5,23). O'Brien P, 'Gospel and Mission In The Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis' p63

²³¹ Peterson, D 'Maturity: The Goal of Mission' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') p189. Peterson adds, 'The teaching in this letter is conditioned by Paul's own missionary situation and to some extent by the needs of the Christians in Rome. Yet believers throughout the ages have discerned here an understanding of God's purposes that brings assurance of salvation, motivation for godly living, a sense of responsibility to other Christians and an awareness of being part of God's rescue plan for the whole world. In other words, the study and application can promote a maturity in Christ that is holistic and God-focused, enabling believers to enjoy by way of anticipation the eschatological blessings secured for them in Christ, as they await the consummation of God's purposes.' *ibid* p190.

²³² Although to be sanctified means to be 'set apart', our understanding of being set apart needs qualification. Elsewhere in the New Testament, to be separated from the world means to be separated from the *sin* of the world (Jas 1:27; 2 Cor 6:17-18). But to become an exclusivistic 'holy huddle', having nothing more to do with the world, is a misreading of the Scriptures injunction as well. Jesus commanded his followers to be 'salt and light' (Matt. 5:13-16), a command impossible to obey if one has entirely removed oneself from the world. 'We are to make our influence felt in a world that needs the tempering effect of Christianity. To be involved in the structures of society while still maintaining our distinctiveness, our quality as salt and light, requires a delicate balance; each Christian will need to determine prayerfully just how he or she can best achieve it.' Erickson, M 'Christian Theology' p979-980.

believers demonstrates the 'sphere of radiance' of God's righteousness by being the body of Christ on earth (12:5). The body of Christ reveals the righteousness of God by its (a) unity in diversity, (b) grace (joy, hope and hospitality), and (c) wisdom in how it relates to the world (the Christian's relationship to the State). Under my heading 3.3, below, I shall argue that this revelation of the righteousness of God cannot be a silent witness, that life needs a commentary, that one's actions are unintelligible without one's words, and that the acme of the revelation of the righteousness of God radiating forth from the body of Christ must be the proclamation of the gospel.

6.2.1 The righteousness of God (subjective genitive) radiating in a human-ward direction is the revelation of the inaugurated reign of the kingdom of God on earth.

Since the formation of the nation of Israel, God's people were intended by God to be a kingdom which would reveal his righteousness (Ex 19:6). Perfect obedience to the commands of God, ie perfect righteousness on Israel's part, would have realized the realities promised to that obedience (Deut 28:1-13). However, Israel's disobedience to the Lord's commands meant suffering the curses promised in Deut 28:16-68), culminating in the 'uprooting and scattering' (Deut 28:63-64) of the exile to Babylon (2 Chron 36:15-20). But the God who reveals his glory to Moses as the Lord who 'abounds in love and faithfulness' (Ex 34:6) has promised to Abraham that 'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' (Gen 12:3), and promised to David that his 'offspring', in building 'a house for God's Name', will have the 'throne of his kingdom established forever' (2 Sam 7:13). Speaking of a time *after* the exile, one of God's prophets witnessed to the gospel (cf Rom 1:2;3:21), reassuring the post-exilic Israel that she was still the recipient of God's promise to David (Isa 55:3), and that the promised kingdom of righteousness would be established by the one to whom he had earlier named 'Mighty God', (Isa 9:6) as he sat upon the throne of David.

Now, writes Paul (Rom 3:21), this descendant of David (1:3) is known to be the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (1:4), and it is through him that the promised reign of the righteousness of God will come.

The apostle then expounds, as we have seen, how this righteousness is available as a possession to all who place their faith in Jesus Christ (3:23). By receiving this righteousness, the believer is incorporated 'into Christ' (6:3;8:1) (or his/her incorporation into Christ is visibly ratified) and enters the 'kingdom of God' (14:17).²³³

²³³ Believers, then, are able, by faith, to live in and experience all the realities promised by the 'prophets in the Holy Scriptures' (I:2) when they described the coming kingdom of God. The mutual indwelling of the

Thus, through the gospel, God's salvation which was 'close at hand', and his righteousness, which was 'soon to be revealed' (Isa 56:1), have *now* (Rom 3:21) arrived. I argued, in my first section, that through the cross, God acted to reveal and establish his righteousness. The aorist tense *πεφανερώται* ('has been disclosed' (NRSV)) indicates the decisiveness of God's action in the event of Calvary.²³⁴ Now, as we talk of the righteousness of God *continuing* to be revealed through the inaugurated reality of the kingdom of God in believers, we understand why the tense of the verb in 1:17 is continuous. Just as the wrath of God is continuously revealed from heaven (1:18), so the righteousness of God *is being* revealed (*ἀποκαλύπτεται* (1:17)) in its eschatological reality, as the power of the gospel not only effects, but radiates forth the salvation of all who believe.²³⁵

It is important to note here, though, that it is the proclamation of the words of the gospel that is 'the power of God for the salvation for those who believe', and thereby the portal of entry into the kingdom of God. Observing, or being surrounded by, the righteousness of God as it is radiated outwards from believers may draw people to within the sound of the words of the gospel, but will not, of themselves, save anyone. It is only when a person 'repents and believes the gospel' (Mk 1:15) that for him/her, the kingdom comes to be within (Lk 17:21; Jn 3:3; Rom 3:22; cf Eph 1:13; Gal 3:2).

6.2.2 The unity and diversity of the body of Christ reveals the righteousness of God

In a world where humanity, as a result of its willful refusal to give God the glory that is his due, has been handed over to every manifestation of *ἀδικία* (unrighteousness) (1:24-32), resulting in the *πονηρία πλεονεξία κακία* (evil, greed, wickedness) (1:29) whose inevitable end is the fragmentation and disunity of humanity outside of Christ, the body of Christ stands in marked contrast as a radically different organization of humanity. In contrast to a humanity which has a terrible uniformity ('all have turned away, they have

believer and the kingdom means that the realities of the promised are internalized in the believer, for not only has the believer entered the kingdom (14:17), but the kingdom has entered the believer through the indwelling Spirit of Christ (8:9-11) who said, when he entered his public ministry, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near' (Mat 3:2; Mk 1:15). Thus for the believer whose 'spirit is alive because of righteousness' (Rom 8:10), the promises of the Messianic kingdom are realized inwardly. He has his spiritual eyes opened, his spiritual ears unstopped (Isa 35:3); spiritually his erstwhile 'lame' spirit will now 'leap like a deer' and his spiritual tongue, which before was mute, will now 'shout for joy'. The garden of his spiritual heart will 'rejoice and blossom, and like the crocus, will burst into bloom' (Isa 35:1).

²³⁴ Moo, p70.

²³⁵ Millard Erickson writes, 'The church is a manifestation of the kingdom or reign of God. It is the form which that reign takes on earth in our time. It is the concrete manifestation of God's sovereign rule in our hearts. Under the old covenant the form of expression which the kingdom took was Israel. The kingdom can be found wherever God rules in human hearts.' Erickson, M 'Christian Theology' p1042

together become worthless' (3:12); 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (3:23)), but whose unrighteousness precludes all possibility of unity (cf Isa 53:6b: 'each has turned his *own way*'), the community of believers, described by Paul as a *body*, reveals to a watching world an alternative organization of humanity which demonstrates unity without uniformity ('we have different gifts according to the grace given us' (12:6)), and diversity without segregation ('we who are many form one body' (12:5)).

Obedience to Paul's exhortations enjoining humility (12:3) and love (13:8) must be seen in the light of his primary injunction to be transformed by living self-sacrificial lives (12:1,2), and will have the result of enhancing the visible glory of the unity of the body of Christ (13:14). Paul desires this so that God may be glorified through united and concerted praise (15:6), and – which is the point under this heading – God's righteousness may be displayed through the unity of the Christian community. Paul desires this for the sake of the attracting power of the church. Paul's exhortation towards unity by 'accepting one another' (15:7) is for the sake of the conversion of the 'Gentiles', in the same way that Christ's mission was to this end. The λέγω γὰρ beginning 15:8 indicates the continuity of logical thought between 15:7 and 15:8. Christ's saving mission, bringing the truth to the Jews and demonstrating God's faithfulness, resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles: 'so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy' (15:9). In the same way, believers accepting one another (just as Christ accepted them (15:7), will further their own salvation, and through the witness of the resulting unity in the community, will play its part in bringing about the salvation of those who see it.

6.2.2.1. How Paul's paraenetic instructions engender unity in the body of Christ.

Having received the mercy of God, believers are now instructed how they are to live in the light of the grace they have received. Living in obedience to Paul's exhortation to present themselves as 'living sacrifices' entails obedience to all his subsequent exhortations, which may be summarized under the injunctions to live lives of humility (12:3) and love (13:8).

6.2.2.2 Why it is important that the unity consequent upon Paul's exhortations be attractive to those outside the church

Paul writes in 14:18, 'The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval' (NRSV) (δόκιμοις τοῖς ἀνθρώποις). It is true that the primary referent of τοῖς ἀνθρώποις is 'the weak', as the approval is clearly a contrast to the βλασφημείσθω of 14:16, so that if the 'strong' 'please' the 'weak' by placing their considerations before their own, they will not have that which they consider good 'bad-mouthed' by the weak, but approved. This may even

have the benefit of moving the weak towards the position of the strong by enhancing their liberation from obsolete ritual restrictions.

But I want to argue that τοῖς ἀνθρώποις (14:18) must have a broader referent than its immediate one.²³⁶ 'The revelation of the righteousness of God which is the power to save those who believe' (1:16) is primarily that revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive) that we explicated in our first section. The person confronted with the righteousness (holiness) of God as revealed first in the law, and then in the cross, is convicted of falling short (3:23) of this righteousness, and thankfully accepts the offer of God's righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as genitive of origin), which saves him/her by placing him/her in right standing with God. But if we are right in arguing that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is also God's own righteousness (subjective genitive) that is displayed and revealed through the community of believers, as the 'sphere of radiance' of that righteousness, then this amplifies our understanding of Paul's assertion that, 'the revelation of the righteousness of God is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe'. While simply witnessing the love, joy, holiness, purity and unity of the body of Christ may not be sufficient to save someone, its value will be in its power to attract 'those who are called by God' (1:6) into the orbit of the church where, firstly, they will be more likely to hear the saving words of the gospel, and secondly, by its demonstration of life in the kingdom of God, the church will lend credibility to the gospel's proclamation.

A second reason for obedience to the command to 'live in harmony with one another' (12:16)(τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονούντες: 'be of the same mind' (KJV); 'think the same thing toward one another' (Moo's translation) – is for the very practical reason that if time and energy is being spent on arguing over issues with the intention of 'winning the day', with dogmatic insistence on the rightness of a certain view, this time and energy is not being spent on the church's main mission of proclaiming the gospel and glorifying God.

Thus, a solid commitment to the essentials of the gospel and a gracious provision for differences in the 'non-essentials' must characterize the saints in community. Or to express it more succinctly, we cannot do better than the

²³⁶ Paul does not specify who is meant by ἀνθρώποι ('persons, people'), used here in the generic sense of men and women generally, but it would definitely include those involved on various sides of the boundary of discredited freedom mentioned in 14:16. The formulation also includes society at large, as the expression δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις implies.' Jewett, R 'Romans', p864. 'δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. The contrast to βλασφημείσθω of ver.16. Consideration for others is a mark of the Christian character which will recommend a man to his fellow-men. Sanday and Headlam, 'Romans', p392. *'Anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and esteemed among human beings.* See 2 Cor 5:9; 10:18; Heb 12:28b. Service of Christ in uprightness, peace and joy is the basis of acceptance by God and recognition by other human beings.' Fitzmeyer, J 'Romans', p697.

famous dictum, 'In essentials unity, in non-essentials,²³⁷ liberty, in all things, charity'.²³⁸

The resultant unity will display the righteousness of God (subjective genitive) in a human-ward direction, to the glory of God, and will liberate the body of Christ from fruitless and sinful wastage of time and energy that compromises the church's efficiency in mission.

6.2.3 The grace of the Christian community reveals the righteousness of God

While many of the exhortations in the paraenetic section of the epistle to the Romans are concerning the conduct of Christians towards other Christians (for example, the 'one another' verses: 12:10,16; 13:8), it seems unlikely that all of Paul's directions are limited to this sphere. The church is a community of redeemed people living in a fallen world (8:19-22), and must necessarily be inter-relating with people who are not (yet) believers.²³⁹ My thesis is that the exhortations towards sanctification are not only for the growth of the believers, but are for the salvation of those 'looking on'.

While most believers have experienced 'persecution' in one sense or another from fellow-believers, it is impossible to restrict the command in 12:14 to mean 'blessing fellow (persecuting) Christians only'.²⁴⁰

Further exhortations in this section (viz 12:15-16) provide more opportunity for the believer to offer him/herself as a living sacrifice, acquire further transformation into the likeness of Christ, and 'display the Lord's splendour' (cf

237 'These non-essentials are often referred to as *adiaphora*, from the Greek meaning 'indifferent' or 'things neither commanded nor prohibited'. The description of *adiaphora* in Paul is generally tied to old and new covenant discontinuities (circumcision, special days, and foods)' Nick Duke, in an online publication: 'The Briefing', 1st April, 2008).

www.matthiasmedia.comwww.matthiasmedia.comwww.matthiasmedia.comwww.matthiasmedia.com 28/10/09)

238 The difficulty in ascribing with certainty the originator of this succinct piece of wisdom can be seen in the following observation of Mark Ross: 'Often attributed to great theologians such as Augustine, it comes from an otherwise undistinguished German Lutheran theologian of the early seventeenth century, Rupertus Meldenius. The phrase occurs in a tract on Christian unity written (c.1627) during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), a bloody time in European history in which religious tension played a significant role.' Ross, M 'Essentials in Unity, in Non-Essentials Liberty, in all things, Charity' in 'Awakenings' found in website, www.pietistblogspot.comwww.pietistblogspot.comwww.pietistblogspot.comwww.pietistblogspot.com (visited website 28/10/09)

239 'Paul undoubtedly follows Jesus (see the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37) in interpreting the 'neighbour' in the commandment to refer to other persons generally and not (as the original text of Lev. 19:18 might indicate) to the fellow Jew.' Moo, p816.

240 The command was first given by Jesus ('Pray for those who persecute you (Mat 5:44)), and as he was being crucified he practised what he preached with the prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' (Lk 23:24). Jesus was praying for forgiveness for 'Gentiles'. In the same way, the exhortation to bless those who persecute must extend to non-Christian persecutors as well. And in obeying this command, the saint will not only be acting for his/her own sanctification by 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body' (8:13), but will be revealing the grace (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive) of God in a way that winsomely lends to its credibility.

Isa 61:3). The command to 'rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep', when carried out among fellow Christians, are ways of experiencing the grace of God (5:2; 8:32) by proving that 'each member belongs to all the others' (12:5). But, as with 12:14, the sphere of obedience to the command cannot be restricted only to the believing community. To be with a non-Christian whom the believer loves and for whom he/she is praying is simultaneously a most effective crucible for his/her sanctification, and the means of revealing the righteousness of God in the world which does not know him. By being with those who are not (yet) believers, and sharing their lives with the intimacy this verse enjoins, the saint is both knowing Christ (by sharing in his sufferings (8:17)), and making him known.²⁴¹

Again, obedience to the command to 'be willing to associate with people of low position' (12:16) will both sanctify the believer and reach out to the non-believer.²⁴²

The prohibition of revenge, too, provides the opportunity for being a 'living sacrifice' (12:1) by refusing to 'offer the parts of the body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but offering the parts of our body to him as instruments of righteousness' (6:13). In 'refusing to repay evil for evil' (12:17), the righteousness of God is being revealed in the fallen world, the mission-field of the church, and the 'evil that is overcome with good' might, by God's grace, through the witness of the believer, result in the 'offering of Gentiles'²⁴³ (ie those who were not Christians), acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit' (15:16).²⁴⁴

Joy and hope

As well as the grace radiating from the community of believers in the form of supporting friendship (12:15,16), hospitality (12:13), and forgiveness (12:17-20), there is the powerful witness of hopeful joy (12:12 cf 5:2) and patience in affliction (12:13). These virtues powerfully reveal the righteousness of God by

241 'The Christian is to take his stand beside his fellow man (whoever he may be), to have time and room for him in those experiences in which he is most truly himself, in his real human joy and his real human sorrow, and to strive to be both with him and for him; altogether and without reserve, yet without compromising with his evil or sharing, or even pretending to share, the presuppositions of this age, which is passing away, even as God Himself is in Christ both 'with us' and 'for us' (8:31)all.' Cranfield p642.

242 'Paul is enjoining a friendly and unselfconscious association both with ordinary unimportant people and with the outcasts of society that is free from any suggestion of patronizing or condescension. Such an attitude comes naturally to those who are being transformed by the renewing of their mind.' *ibid* p644-5.

243 Paul quotes Prov 25:21,22 whose reference to 'burning coals' may mean 'burning contrition' that has the effect of winning the erstwhile enemy over as a friend. No less a witness than the Targum appears to have understood these Proverbs verses to have this meaning: '... and the Lord will deliver him to thee... and the Lord will make him thy friend.' (quoted in Cranfield, p648)

244 'By forgiving, you are sharing in the victory of the gospel over the world and setting up signs which point to the reality of God's love for sinners; you will be living as one who is being transformed by the renewing of his mind.' *ibid* p650.

conforming the Christian to the likeness of Christ who was himself the very incarnation of the righteousness of God (cf 1Cor 1:30). Jesus was the supreme embodiment of hopeful joy and patience in affliction (Heb 12:2).²⁴⁵

Hospitality

The injunction φιλοξενίαν διόκοντες²⁴⁶ vividly illustrates the outward orientation of the paraenetic section of the epistle. I have been arguing all along that the purpose of the 'imperative' chapters of the letter to the Romans is two-fold: to reveal the righteousness of God in a God-ward or vertical direction by engendering worship (12:1) (the ultimate revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ), and to reveal the righteousness of God in a human-ward, or horizontal direction, so that the world in which the church is planted is able to see the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) radiating forth from the life of the believing community – for the display of his splendour (Isa 61:3). I have been arguing that the revelation of the righteousness of God in this horizontal direction will be a concomitant condition for the salvation of those who believe as it will have the effect of attracting those whom God is calling (1:6) into the 'orbit' of the church where they will be able to hear the words of the gospel. Thus, obedience to the commands that tend towards sanctification will be missional in its outcome. I shall also argue that obedience to the missional commands will have the effect of enhancing sanctification, producing a powerful spiral in which the believer grows in his/her transformation into the likeness of Christ *by* orientating his/her life in the direction of the pre-believer.

It is in this light that we understand Paul's command to 'practise hospitality'. Here is one command which may be directing the Christian, not only to his/her fellow Christian, but to the non-believer also, for the Greek φιλοξενία (philoxenia) means 'love of strangers' (the opposite of xenophobia). This would entail, then, not only receiving strangers into the believer's home, but actively going out to find them²⁴⁷; not only ministering to their material needs, but ministering to their spiritual needs by turning them from strangers into guests, from guests into friends, and from friends (by God's grace) into fellow-believers.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Calvin comments on 12:12: 'Paul's meaning is that although believers are now pilgrims on earth, yet by their confidence surmount the heavens, so that they cherish their future inheritance in their bosoms with tranquility.' Romans and Thessalonians by John Calvin, David W Torrance, Ross McKenzie' (1995). An online book located at www.books.gwww.books.gwww.books.gwww.books.g_oogle.co
[Website visited 28/10/09](#)

²⁴⁶ 'Practise hospitality' 12:13

²⁴⁷ Cranfield, p639

²⁴⁸ Henri Nouwen, in his book 'Reaching Out': The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life' (Collins, 1980) speaks of hospitality as reaching out to strangers and so 'converting the *hostis* into a *hospes*, the enemy into a guest, creating the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and experienced.' (p63). Nouwen continues, 'In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture, and country,

Belonging before Believing

It can readily be believed that a community of believers who, empowered by the Spirit of God to live in obedience to Paul's exhortations, will manifest the righteousness of God in a visible way to a watching world. The radical unity of erstwhile immiscible peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles (11:32; 15:8,9 cf Eph 2:15-17), as well as disparate people (12:6), the grace, joy, patience and peace radiating forth from believers collectively and individually, culminating in the active 'seeking out in order to bring in' – ie hospitality – must result in an environment from which the glory of God blazes. In another epistle Paul writes, 'to him be glory in the church...' (Eph 3:21). And in the attractiveness of its existence, the church provides a human environment to which people will want to belong. It is within this environment that pre-Christians, attracted by the beauty of Jesus incarnated in his body, the Church (12:8) come within the sound of the words of the gospel, which are the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (1:16). Thus, although living within the orbit of the church is not a necessary condition for salvation, it is a means whereby God may attract people to 'within range' of the gospel and witness the demonstration of its glorious fruits.²⁴⁹

The Christian's relationship to the state (13:1-7)

Despite its being, 'only a slight exaggeration to say that the history of the interpretation of Rom. 13:1-7 is the history of attempts to avoid what seems to be its plain meaning',²⁵⁰ we may receive these instructions from Paul with clarity of understanding if we see that in obedience to them we are 'presenting ourselves as living sacrifices as our spiritual act of worship' (12:1), and revealing the righteousness of God in a human-ward direction so as to attract a

from their neighbours, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found. Although many, we might say most, strangers in this world become easily the victim of a fearful hostility, it is possible for men and women and obligatory for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings.' *ibid.*

²⁴⁹ It is true that the true body of Christ, consisting of 'those who have been given faith' (12:3), is a community made up of true believers, so that the *ordo salutis* must be 'believing before belonging'. But I am arguing here that while a pre-believer has not yet been 'baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ' (1 Cor 12:13), he/she may still be continuously enjoying the friendship of those who have, so that, from hearing the words of the gospel, he/she eventually responds so as to be saved. In this sense, 'belonging may precede believing'. Kevin Ward writes, 'It is crucial for the future of the Christian faith in the West that believing and belonging are reconnected. The fragmented and individualised, pick-and-mix consumer approach to religious faith that has become so prevalent in societies like New Zealand means that what people believe is becoming increasingly diffuse, heterodox and eclectic. The good news is that people seem to be turning away from the radical individualism of late modernity to new forms of belonging, in the spiritual as well as in other spheres. The challenge for Christianity is that those new forms of belonging, which Christianity must embrace if it is to survive in any significant way, seem to change the nature of the beliefs they hold.' Ward, K "No Longer Believing" - or - "Believing Without Belonging" in 'The Future of Christianity' (ed John Stenhouse, Brett Knowles) p71.

²⁵⁰ Moo, p806

watching world to within the sound of the gospel.

We submit to the ruling authorities as an act of worship to God, firstly because we hear his voice speaking through the apostolic authority of Paul (1:1;16:25), and, secondly because this apostolic voice informs us that the government is God's appointed authority (13:1,2). We have an added inducement to such obedience if we consider that part of 'leaving it to God to repay' (12:19) may mean that God's wrath on the evildoer is already carried out by the state (13:4). And we commend the gospel of God to a watching world by such obedience, by 'living in harmony with one another' (12:16), and 'as far as it depends on us, living at peace with everyone' (12:18). In this way, by the authorities' 'commending' of Christians (13:3) they show that, at the very least they are not repelled²⁵¹ by the gospel-living community, and may even be positively attracted by it.²⁵²

6.3 As an expression of worship (12:1), the body of Christ reveals the righteousness of God by the proclamation of the gospel.

Thus far we have seen that the righteousness of God is manifested in a visible, human-ward direction by the unity of the body of Christ, and the transformed lives of its members. But this witness is not limited to the realm of the ethical, and it is not silent. I would argue that a necessary consequence of obedience to the apostle's exhortations is the verbal proclamation of the gospel by believers.

Believers' proclamation and its discontinuity with the Old Testament mission

I related above (3.2.1) the continuity between the kingdom of God promised by the Old Testament prophets, and its arrival in Christ, so that all those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ now enjoy, in their spirit, the realities promised by the prophets that would obtain in the messianic kingdom. Thus is fulfilled Isaiah's words, 'my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed' (Isa 56:1b), and (speaking of 'Jerusalem') 'her righteousness will shine out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.' (Isa 62:1b).

There is a continuity and a discontinuity, however, between Israel's 'righteousness shining out like the dawn',²⁵³ and the church's revelation of the

²⁵¹ Moo provides a very plausible explanation for Romans 13:1-7 being a consistent part of Paul's epistle (as against those who believe that a redactor has added the passage to the original letter) when he comments, 'Paul's teaching about the transitory nature of this world might be precisely why he includes 13:1-7. His purpose may be to stifle the kind of extremism that would pervert his emphasis on the coming of a new era and on the 'new creation' into a rejection of every human and societal convention – including the government.' Moo, p791.

²⁵² This combination of humble submission to the governing authorities in all cases (except when such submission would entail disobedience to the laws of God), however unpopular with other citizenry, plus the bold refusal to submit to anti-biblical decrees, will be an attractive witness to the righteousness of God which found its ultimate expression in Jesus who said, 'Render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God what which is God's' (Mk 12:17).

²⁵³ The injunction to proclaim that 'salvation is found in Jahweh alone' is nowhere nearly as explicit in the

righteousness of God.²⁵⁴ I am arguing in this section that God's righteousness does indeed radiate forth from the believing community through their transformed lives, which will attract people towards them. In this sense, the mission of the church resembles that of the Israel of the Old Testament in its centripetality.²⁵⁵ But I want strenuously to assert that this centripetality is a means to an end, and that end is that those who are attracted to the believing community will hear the words of the gospel, which are God's power for saving those who believe.²⁵⁶ Not only this, but there is a discontinuity with the Old Testament mission in that the church's mission, while continuing to be centripetal (we still hope to attract people towards us), is now centrifugal as well.²⁵⁷ Believers must go forth, continuing to reveal God's righteousness

Hebrew Scriptures as it is in the New Testament. Thus: 'The blessing for the nations is a promise, not a command. Abraham does not receive an assignment to carry YHWH's blessing to the nations; rather, the nations are promised divine blessing if and when they see Abraham's faith in YHWH and if and when they establish contact with his descendants (cf. Gen 22:16-18).' Schnabel, E 'Early Christian Mission' p63.

254 From a detailed study of the verb ἐπέχοντες Phil 2:16 'λόγον ζωῆς ἐπεχοντες', Ware concludes that it means 'holding forth' rather than 'holding fast to': 'It is telling that the sense "hold" or "hold fast" for the verb ἐπέχω, so popular among New Testament specialists, is virtually unknown to classical scholarship. It can be stated categorically that the verb ἐπέχω does not bear the sense "hold" or "hold fast" in any ancient passage.' Ware, pp268-9. Ware continues, 'The clause λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες is thus an exhortation to spread the gospel.' *ibid* p270. Ware's main thesis is that the church, as the eschatological Israel, continues to shine as a light to the surrounding 'Gentiles', but with the difference that it is commanded by Paul actively to *hold forth* this word of life, by the proclamation of the gospel.

255 Although Israel's mission is understood largely to have been centripetal, we cannot infer a complete absence of the 'centrifugal'. Its missionary mandate may have been implicit, but something in the way of intentional missionary activity must have been in Israel's self-consciousness when we consider these facts noted by Craig Blomberg: '(In the Old Testament) 1. The nations are called on to praise, serve and fear the Lord. 2. The worship of Yahweh by the nations is expected in the present as well as promised for the future. 3. Israelites worship God among the nations. 4. The nations are said to belong to the Lord in the future. 6. Yahweh will one day judge all the peoples of the world.' Blomberg, C 'Mission in the Bible: Non-existent in the Old Testament but Ubiquitous in the New?' *Themelios*, Vol 32, Issue 2, January 2007, p65.

256 Thus the knowledge of the salvation anticipated in the Scriptures before the coming of Christ necessitated its verbal announcement when the promise, through Christ's work, had been fulfilled. This proclamation was therefore of necessity, and not simply as a result of any specific crisis which is said to have occasioned it. 'The popular view is unfounded that claims that Jesus' disciples and the Jerusalem church needed to be forced to engage in missionary outreach, which took place only after and as the result of the persecution that followed the death of Stephen.' Schnabel, E 'Early Christian Mission' p395.

257 Thus I would repudiate the understanding of mission that sees no discontinuity between the church and the Israel of the Old Testament. This view sees Paul's role as analogous to the Old Testament prophet in all its singularity, while the 'non-apostolic' congregation simply continue to act as Israel was charged to do, and draw outsiders in by their transformed and exemplary lifestyle. For this reason I would not concur with the great missiologist David Bosch who writes, 'Rather, Paul's whole argument is that the attractive lifestyle of the small Christian communities gives credibility to the missionary outreach in which he and his fellow-workers are involved. The primary responsibility of "ordinary" Christians is not to go out and preach, but to support the mission project through their appealing conduct and by making "outsiders" feel welcome in their midst.' Bosch, D 'Transforming Mission' p138. I also find myself at odds, therefore, with John Dickson, who, because he believes that 'Paul's notion of mission-commitment betrays a deep indebtedness to his Jewish heritage' ('Mission Commitment In Ancient Judaism And In The Pauline Communities' p313) he draws an unwarranted dichotomy between 'certain appointed evangelists' and the rest of the congregation: '... during the course of Paul's mission certain men and women among his converts were designated the task of local evangelization with or without a continued apostolic presence.' *ibid* p150

through their lives, but *proclaiming the gospel as they go*.²⁵⁸

The expectation of suffering entails the expectation of proclamation

We have seen that the notion of being a 'living sacrifice' must entail suffering, and that Paul's life itself exemplified this aspect of service. It is true that the very 'dying to self' by 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body' (8:13) implies the necessity of a certain kind of suffering.²⁵⁹ It is not always painless to 'be patient in affliction' or even to be 'faithful in prayer' (12:13). Practising hospitality (12:13) carries with it a cost, and who can say that it is easy to 'bless those who persecute us' (12:14), and to refrain from 'repaying evil for evil' (12:17)? Obedience to Paul's command not to 'take revenge' (12:19) is a clear opportunity for 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body'. Even 'submitting to the governing authorities' (13:1), in the face of the temptation to do otherwise, must entail a certain measure of mortification. All of these instances of obedient Christian conduct involve a measure of suffering and exemplify the 'offering of ourselves as living sacrifices', which is 'our spiritual act of worship' (12:1).²⁶⁰ And in this worship of God, believers are making him known, revealing his righteousness in such a way as to attract people to within the sound of the gospel, and demonstrating its authenticity.

But ethics alone is insufficient to provide the cause of the suffering that being a 'living sacrifice' entails, nor was ethics alone the cause of Paul's suffering. His desire to be 'rescued from the unbelievers in Judea' (15:31) implied an anticipation of a persecution directed, not against his being a silent embodiment of peace, patience, and joy, but against his proclamation of the gospel (15:19).

²⁵⁸ C K Barrett writes, 'A church is not apostolic if it is not apostolic – that is, if it does not enter into the mission that the Lord entrusts to his people. 'Are all apostles?' Paul asked, clearly expecting the answer No; that is, all are not wandering missionaries, who go from place to place to preach and found Christian societies. All are not apostles, but it is the church as a whole that has inherited the commission 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you' (Jn 20:21), and it is the church as a whole, with its infinite variety of personal gifts and equipment, that fulfills the commission.' Barrett, C K 'The Sign Of An Apostle: The Cato Lecture 1969' p91.

²⁵⁹ In a book arguing for the Pauline expectation that Christians will be active in their proclamation of the gospel, Mark Keown writes, 'If I am correct, the suffering meted out to the Philippians is not merely due to 'their purity of life and consciousness of high calling in Christ Jesus ([Phil] 3:14), which were a constant challenge and rebuke to their pagan neighbours, but also because they were active in proclamation of the gospel.' Keown, M 'Congregational Evangelism In Philippians' p122. It is true that Dr Keown refers to the evangelism of the Philippian congregation, but in the absence of any direct evidence that Paul's instructions to the Roman congregation was different, we may assume that what applied to the Philippians applied to the Romans.

²⁶⁰ Thus, worship knows no 'secular/sacred' distinction in the life of the believer him/herself. He/she is worshipping the Lord wherever the Lord is praised, and the believer is seeking living in obedience to God's word. Robbie Castleman writes, 'How do I help students understand that worship isn't confined to sanctuaries or chapels, but should be manifest in laboratories and classrooms? In the particularity of the incarnation, Jesus asserted his Lordship over all the created order. Farms, construction sites, and stores should be places of praise as much as mission fields, church buildings and homes. Castelman, R 'The Last Word: A Stone Hushin' Life' Themelios, Vol 31, Issue 2, January 2006, p72.

²⁶¹ Ware writes, 'The primitive Christian pattern of thought reflected in Philippians 1:18b-20 is strongly Jewish

In the same way, Paul's exhortation to his readers to 'bless those who persecute you' (12:14) referred to a persecution that must, in large part, have been because they were Christians, just as the Lord's instruction to his followers to 'pray for those who persecute you' (Mat 5:44) implied a persecution that would be directed against them *qua* Christians.²⁶²

If the readers of Paul's epistle were to expect persecution for being Christian, it has to be asked, 'how did people know they were Christian?' And the answer would have been, 'through their speech'. These believers were not mute, and if Paul was imparting, in his teaching, much of what had been passed down to him from the teaching of Jesus, he would have expected the readers of his epistles to be witnesses for Christ no less than Jesus himself would have expected this.²⁶³ I shall discuss *how* Paul would have proclaimed the gospel later in this section,

in character. As we saw in chapter three, the theme of the eschatological vindication of those who suffer in behalf of their God is widespread in second temple Jewish literature. In Paul's paradigmatic self-description in Philippians 1:18b-20, as in Jewish texts, this theme has a hortatory function, encouraging the readers to endure persecution and affliction patiently for the sake of their God. What is without parallel, however, in Jewish sources is the striking emphasis, in Philippians 1:19-20 and other early Christian exhortations to suffering, verbal proclamation, speech, and active mission (cf. Mt 10:18-20; Mk 8:35; 13:9-11; Lk 12:11-12; Acts 4:18-20, 29-31; 5:41-42; 2 Tim 1:18; 1 Pet 3:14-15).¹ Ware, pp 207-8. It is true the exhortation to proclaim is not explicit in Romans, as it is in Philippians, but, as Plummer points out, 'Paul is not prone to offer commands that are unrelated to the particular situations that occasioned his letters. In fact, it is striking how ethically "incomplete" any one of his letters is in isolation from the broader Pauline corpus and New Testament witness.... Indeed, even Paul's magisterial letter to the Romans fails to discuss in detail numerous topics we might expect from a more "general" letter (eg, eschatology, Christology, church order).... Given Paul's occasional approach to ethical instruction, we should be careful not to draw conclusions based on frequency of his instructions regarding certain matters.' Plummer, p71.

262 Some see a clear dichotomy (in the time of Jesus) between committed followers of Jesus, and the 'crowds', as the words of this preacher reveal: 'This sublime teaching was not addressed to the people, it was not for the multitudes at all.... And the reason why this part of Jesus' teaching is not for the crowds is quite simple, it is because it is totally beyond their attainment... Mahatma Gandhi was quite wrong in describing the Sermon on the Mount as the whole message of Christ. It is only the second part of His message. The first part is the new birth, through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. The new birth must come first. That is why, when the Apostles commenced preaching to the masses they did not say, 'receive the teaching of Jesus: blessed are the poor in spirit' etc. No. They declared, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'. It was only after they had been converted that they taught them the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount'. From a sermon by Rev Arthur Gunn, minister of St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Manurewa (1961-1979). In response to this view it may be replied that seeing such a dichotomy is unwarranted. In the time of the Incarnation, Christology was implicit, whereas the post-resurrection apostolic teaching was explicit in its Christology. It was the very teaching of Jesus himself about the Kingdom which had the effect of dichotomising his hearers between those who continued to follow him to the end, and those who were 'offended' by his words. Thus, there was not an a priori distinction in Jesus' audience between the 'saved' and the 'unsaved'. His very teaching itself effected this dichotomy.

263 'In his description of the Philippians as a community of priests, the Jewish underpinnings of Paul's thought in Philippians is once more very evident. Jewish texts in the second temple period reflect the tradition of Israel as a nation of priests and prophets for the gentiles in the time of eschatological fulfillment. Paul's description of the Philippians as priests thus continues Paul's portrayal of the church as the true Israel of God, an important theme throughout Philippians... Paul's use of this imagery thus depicts the Philippians as priests to the surrounding pagan world.... The Philippians function as priests "holding forth the word of life" (2:16) to the world.' Ware, p273. As noted above, in footnote 209, although these comments are pertaining to Paul's epistle to the Philippians, not his letter to the Romans, it is unlikely that a command as central to Paul's heart as this, which he directs towards a church in one area, would not, by implication, be directed to churches in all areas.

but for the moment let me assert that Paul would have been informed (and would therefore have informed others) by extant stories of Jesus' life and ministry.²⁶⁴

Thus, in the persecution he foresaw (12:14), we must hear the echo of Jesus' words, 'blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Mat 5:10). The persecution of the followers of Jesus would be as a result of 'letting their light shine before people' (Mat 5:16), and the same commandment is iterated by Paul when he tells readers, ἐνδυσώμεθα τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός' (put on the weapons of light (13:12)). The 'weapons of light', in contrast to the 'deeds of darkness', must have ethical implications: 'behaving decently, as in the daytime' (13:13), but for these weapons truly to defend and extend the light, the words of the gospel, which are the 'power of God for the salvation of those who believe' must be part of the whole armour (cf Eph 6:17b). And if to be 'clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ' (13:14) meant the initial public confession and baptism into the Lord's name, it was impossible that their Christianity be anything other than overt. And if overt, then their speech must have been part of their over-all witness. Life needs a commentary. Ethics are unintelligible without the accompanying speech to give it its rationale.

From these and the following considerations, I would argue that the verbal proclamation of the gospel necessarily characterizes the obedient believer.

6.3.1 The exhortation to proclaim the gospel is implicit, if not explicit, in the epistle to the Romans

'Strikingly, Paul nowhere in his letters overtly commands his congregations to spread the gospel, or exhorts his churches to engage in mission activity', writes Ware.²⁶⁵ Plummer, while not disagreeing with Ware, avers nevertheless, that

264 'The minimum content of saving faith, according to Paul, is recognition of Jesus as the risen Lord (Rom 10:9). This requires some understanding of what he meant by 'Lord', on the one hand, and on the other, sufficient information about Jesus to make it meaningful to affirm *him* as Lord, in contrast to anyone else.... The accounts of Paul's preaching found in Acts are *severely abbreviated*. In fact, much use was made of the Jesus story in his preaching. The apostolic preaching went side by side with the telling of the Jesus story.... Thus, when Paul proceeds in Romans 10 to ask how people are to 'believe in him of whom they have never heard' (verse 14) he surely indicates the availability of substantial information, within his missionary organization, about Jesus' life and work, as well as his messianic role. "The word of Christ" (*he rhema Christou* v.17) must have comprised both a doctrinal and a life component.... What would Paul have wished to impart to facilitate conversion? The answer is surely as much information about the earthly Jesus as was available. If Jesus is the image of the invisible God (2 Cor 4:4) such that God's glory becomes visible in him, a display of his words and work, as well as of his death and resurrection and ascension, is demanded. Is this not implied in Paul's reference to Jesus' face? If the glory of God was available to the Spirit-minded person 'in the face of Christ' (4:6), he would surely ask whether he might see that face, and the only sensible answer is in the extant stories of his earthly career.' Seccombe, D 'The Story of Jesus and the Missionary Strategy of Paul' ('The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission' ed Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson).

265 Ware, J 'The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism' p5.

'there can be no doubt that Paul approves of his churches actively proclaiming the gospel.'²⁶⁶

At the end of chapter 10 verse 15 Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7, *Ὡς ὠραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθὰ*²⁶⁷ This 'loveliness of feet' must be an integral part of 'putting on the armour of light' (13:12 cf 'with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace' (Eph 6:15)) and 'clothing the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ' (13:14). This passage clearly speaks of the necessity of believing Christians to be proclaiming the gospel. It is true that Paul has a special apostolic ministry for the proclaiming of this gospel (1:1; cf 15:15,16), as do other authorized messengers, such as Andronicus and Junias who were 'outstanding among the apostles' (16:7), but if the language of the *cultus* is now applied to all believers, who are now to 'present themselves as living sacrifices' (12:1), and so demonstrate the 'priesthood of all believers' (cf 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6), and if the gospel which *was* 'a mystery hidden for long ages past' (16:25) is now 'revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him' (16:26), the restriction of the 'preaching ministry' to a special apostolic office seems to have less of a rationale. God made known the mystery of the gospel to Paul and the other apostles, who, by their writing, have now made it known to us. And if the readers of Paul's epistle have now 'believed and obeyed' God (16:26), how can they not obey the call to preach the good news implicit in 10:14,15?²⁶⁸

For the same reason I would argue that Paul's 'obligation both to Greeks and to non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish' (1:14) is an obligation which all his readers, having heard, believed and obeyed the gospel, now share: an obligation to make known the gospel by deed and word.²⁶⁹

266 Plummer, R 'Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission' p96. He concludes this from a detailed study of, among others, passages such as Phil 1:12-18; Eph 6:15; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 7:12-16; 14:23-25. Plummer, pp72-96.

267 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' There are a number of ways in which Paul's words differ from the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, but the particular difference I would note is that Paul uses the plural *τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων*, showing his desire to 'make the text applicable to the multitude of Christian preachers'. (Moo, p663 footnote 12).

268 In the epistle to the Philippians, Paul writes, '...and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear' (NRSV) (Phil 1:14). Regarding this verse, and the surrounding passage, Plummer writes, 'It would seem that this text presents irrefutable evidence that the church from which Paul writes was proclaiming the gospel the same way that Paul did.... Paul not only states that the brothers have been emboldened to preach, but that *most of the brothers* (τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν) have been so encouraged.' Plummer, R 'Paul's Understanding Of The Church's Mission' p73.

269 Having heard and believed the gospel not only means that believers now have the obligation to make the same known: it means that, having received the Holy Spirit (8:9), they are now *empowered* to do so. Plummer explains the difference in mission activity between the Old and New Testaments in terms of the universal bestowal of the Spirit (that is, upon all believers): 'The nature of God's word (ie the gospel) and the presence of the Holy Spirit are the key to this puzzle (if God's people in the OT are passive witnesses, and

The command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (13:9) has universal implications. While the 'love' command preceding this, 'love one another' (13:8) is clearly a love that is to be shown to fellow-Christians, the use of τὸν ἕτερον 'the other' (NRSV)) (13:8) broadens the command from being restricted to fellow Christians only. We saw above that Paul would have been much informed by the life and teaching of Jesus, and the Lord's well-known parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37) taught that one's neighbour – τὸν ἕτερον – is anyone in the believer's environment who is in need.²⁷⁰ And who could be more in need than one who has not heard the words of the gospel, and what need could be greater than the salvation the gospel brings? Thus the command to 'love your neighbour' (13:9) must entail the implicit exhortation to ensure that he/she hears the words of the gospel.

Two further considerations suggest that the believer's 'presenting him/herself as a living sacrifice' is incomplete as a 'spiritual act of worship' if he/she is not verbally proclaiming the gospel to his/her neighbour. As hinted above, the 'suffering with Jesus' (8:17) might not be fully accounted for simply by the 'mortification of the sinful nature'. All believers are aware of the cost and pain of 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body' (8:13) by living in obedience to the imperatives of Romans 12-16. But suffering with Christ is sometimes more than the cost of getting the victory over the sinful nature, and 'overcoming evil with good' (12:21) by, for example, being 'patient in affliction' (12:12) or 'leaving room for God's wrath' (12:19). It is possible that the suffering is as a consequence of proclaiming the gospel.²⁷¹

The 'enemies' alluded to in 12:20, the 'unbelievers in Judea' (15:31) from whom Paul prays deliverance, the God-haters (1:30) who have been 'given over to depraved minds' (1:28), 'those who cause divisions and put obstacles in the way' (16:17) of the believers 'by smooth talk and flattery' (16:18) – all these are associated with the Satan whom 'the God of peace will soon crush under the

God's people in the NT are active, what accounts for this discontinuity?). While God's word and Spirit came to specific members of the elect community in the Old Testament (eg 1 Sam 10:10; Hos 1:1; Ezek. 2:2), a broader outpouring of the Spirit and word awaited eschatological fulfillment (Joel 2:28-32). The early church recognised in their experiences the fulfillment of prophetic texts which predicted a general outpouring of the Spirit and the self-diffusing word (Acts 2:16-21; 1 Cor 12:13). No longer did the Spirit and word come only to specific individuals for a limited duration. With the inauguration of the eschaton in Christ's death and resurrection, the Spirit and word came to stay (Acts 1:8). Because God's Spirit is a missionary spirit (ie revealing himself to humans and enabling their God-glorifying response) and God's word is dynamic and effective, the abiding presence of Spirit and word with the elect community guarantees its active missionary role. Plummer, R 'Paul' *Understanding Of The Church's Mission* p68.

²⁷⁰ I am not able to furnish evidence that Paul was conversant with the parable of the Good Samaritan, but his exhortation in 13:8 would seem to echo Jesus' conclusion to his Samaritan parable, 'love your neighbour as yourself.'

²⁷¹ While reiterating that the exhortation to proclaim the gospel is implicit only, I would continue to define proclamation as being the verbal utterance of the words of the gospel, as opposed to the ethical witness of the Christian character.

believers' feet (16:20). Unlike the believers, who 'no longer live according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit' (8:4), these people do live according to the sinful nature, do have their minds set on what that nature desires' (8:5), and are 'hostile to God' (8:7).

The implication is unavoidable: Christians are going to be, in some way, in conflict with the world around them. This conflict is inevitable, and the 'weapons of light' (13:12) are commanded to be donned. And this conflict, as we saw above, is going to arise from the very fact that they are Christians. And without the testimony of their speech to give intelligibility to their life and conduct, it is much less likely that believers will be known to be such. Therefore believers are enjoined (implicitly, if not explicitly) verbally to testify to their faith, and are exhorted to suffer for so doing. For this reason we may say that 'always being prepared to give an answer (ἀπολογία) to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have' (1 Pet 3:15), is a more costly apologetic than the Christian life which sees its ethics to be witness enough.²⁷²

6.3.1.1 The evangelistic preaching of Paul himself

I have argued, in the first section, that if the gospel is 'the power of God for the salvation of those who believe', and if the gospel is 'the revelation of the righteousness of God', then the hearing of the gospel is a necessary (if not a sufficient) condition for salvation (10:14). I have also argued that we must understand that an integral part of the believer's presenting him/herself as a 'living sacrifice', as his/her 'spiritual act of worship', in order to make known the fruit of righteousness²⁷³, must be the verbal proclamation of the gospel. Thus, for the salvation of others, and for the sanctification of the Christian, it is imperative that the believer be witnessing by means, not only of his/her life, but of his/her speech.

It is therefore essential to answer the question, 'what does the believer say in order to proclaim the gospel?' And to answer this question we must ask, 'what did the apostle Paul say?'

²⁷² Don Carson notes that Paul's appeal for the assistance of prayer for *his* conflict implies the same need for prayer on behalf of all obedient believers. '... it is not too much of a stretch to detect a reciprocal effect. If praying for Paul along these lines is part and parcel of their praying for all the saints (Gal 6:18) it is difficult not to perceive that part of what believers should be praying for when they do pray for all the saints is a certain holy boldness in their own witness. If even the apostle Paul, who insists that he is not ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16), discloses his need for God's help in declaring the mystery of God fearlessly, how much more do the rest of us need such help?' Carson, D 'Paul's Mission And Prayer' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission', p182

²⁷³ 'The fruit of righteousness' is a phrase not used in Romans, but is found in Phil 1:11. It is a phrase which aptly expresses 'the righteousness of God' understood as a subjective genitive, that is, the very righteousness of God himself expressing itself through the life of the believer.

If, as I have been urging in my thesis, the revelation of the righteousness of God is a necessary condition for the salvation of those who believe, and if Paul, in his preaching, was preaching for the salvation of his hearers (15:16), then it follows that Paul's preaching must necessarily have involved the preaching of the righteousness of God in the sense that the first part of my thesis describes. That is, Paul's preaching confronted his hearers with God's righteousness as revealed through the law – and then, supremely through the cross – in order to make them aware of the lack of their own righteousness, and the need, therefore, to appropriate God's righteousness, which is offered through the good news of the gospel.

I have therefore assumed that the exposition of the gospel according to Paul's epistle to the Romans is essentially the same as the contents of his proclamation when he evangelizes. I hope, by making the following points, to show that while Paul's *starting point* may have differed depending on his audience, the *essential content* of his message did not materially differ from the gospel he has explicated in his epistle to the Romans.

I have cited (above) the message Paul preached in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-39) as being a faithful representation of the gospel in our epistle, with its climax (Acts 13:39) being a summary of 'justification, not by observing the works of the law of Moses' (3:20), but 'through faith in Jesus Christ' (3:22). Although the speeches of Paul are in Luke's words, they faithfully reflect a Pauline emphasis. 274 We have seen above that Paul's preaching was much informed by his knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus himself,²⁷⁵ and it is fair to say that despite the differing starting points in Paul's preaching, it was an essential reiteration, amplification, and apostolic explication of Jesus' words to his

274 Even if Luke has differing emphases from those of Paul, they are complementary emphases of the same mission. '... Consequently, we can see that Paul and Luke do not so much differ on their missionary theology, as they emphasize different complementary elements of the same vision. Paul emphasizes the effective *message* communicated by the Holy Spirit. Luke, on the other hand, emphasizes the *person* of the Holy Spirit who makes the gospel effective in its hearers. Neither Paul nor Luke, however, completely neglects the missionary element that his counterpart emphasizes. Indeed, Paul and Luke are discussing the same reality – simply from two different angles. Ultimately, both Paul and Luke are God-centred because, for them, it is either God's *presence* or God's effective *word* which is the primary basis of the church's mission.' Plummer, R 'Paul's Understanding Of The Church's Mission' pp65-66.

275 'Arguably, the Great Commission is none other than Christ's verbal command sanctioning in human activity what is present in the self-diffusing word. ... A clear command to evangelise is part of the church's heritage, and Paul likely was familiar with the Great Commission (at least in the form of oral tradition). If so, we would expect him to have passed on this command to the churches (Acts 20:27). Yet, Paul also knew that divine requirements could never be met by those who walk according to the flesh, but only by those who walk according to the Spirit (Rom 8:4). Believers who have the indwelling Spirit of Christ, then, manifest the life and righteousness which God *gives* and *requires* of his children (Rom 8:11,14-17). Thus, scholars are correct to say that the Church inherits the Great Commission from the apostles – as long as they understand that two other sides of this reality (ie, the Spirit and word) must be present to have a complete understanding of the church's missionary motivation.' *ibid* p66.

disciples just before ascending to heaven, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations.' (Lk 24:46-47).²⁷⁶ Thus, although it is surely true that 'Luke suggests that Paul approached Jews evangelistically through the Old Testament and Gentiles through references to creation',²⁷⁷ the emphasis must be on the word 'approached' in this quote of Wenham's. The meeting place may differ, but his message must always be a restatement of 'repentance and forgiveness of sin in Jesus' name'.

This can be seen to be true when one traces the pathway taken by Paul from his differing starting places in his messages to the heart of his gospel.

Preaching to the Gentiles

1Thes 1:9-10 refers to the message Paul preached to the Thessalonians when he was with them. This succinct summary (by Paul) of his preaching reveals that he moved from their idolatry to the salvation to be found in Jesus who rescues from the 'wrath' that is the consequence of that idolatry. In this sermon it is probable that Paul (as in Athens (Acts 17:22-31)) began with God the Creator of the heavens and the earth as the basis of his exposure of these Gentiles' idolatry.
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The order of the two great causes of ὀργὴ θεοῦ: godlessness and wickedness (ἀσέβεια καὶ ἀδικία) is significant. Ἀδικία is the direct consequence of ἀσέβεια (1:26,28). In his preaching to the Gentiles, beginning with God the Creator, the perfection of the original creation and the consequences of humanity's first parents' turning from God, Paul would have spoken of its effect on creation, and on humankind.²⁷⁹ The allusion to the fall of Adam (1:21-25),

²⁷⁶ Paul's sermon in the Aeropagus is often said to be paradigmatic for evangelization of a Gentile audience, especially a well-educated one. Luke, it is said, includes three representative speeches – one before Jews, one before a Roman governor, and 'this exemplary meeting between Jerusalem and Athens'. Consequently, some regard the exclusion of Old Testament quotations, fulfilled prophecy, the cross and atonement as significant and normative for contemporary evangelism. Yet the veiled and cryptic nature of Paul's strategy challenges this view. We are on much firmer ground with the summary that is repeated by Luke often enough to imply a normative status.' Gibson, R 'Paul And The Evangelization Of The Stoics' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') p

²⁷⁷ David Wenham, 'From Jesus To Paul – via Luke' (The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission') p87

²⁷⁸ 'Genesis 1-2 seems to provide a normative model for Paul. In Romans 1:26-27, the point made is that sinful humanity ignores the generic order established by God.' Hill, M 'Theology And Ethics In The Letter To The Romans' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') p255

²⁷⁹ Paul, in the language of the time, may have reasoned along the following lines: 'The pristine shape of creation prior to the fall is the pattern (Paul) appeals to in making basic ethical judgments about behaviour. Looking backwards from and through fallen creation, this pristine pattern cannot be detected in its unity. Paul mentions two reasons for this fact. The first is epistemological. Human minds have been darkened and subjected to futility. They are unable to see how to worship God through maintaining his order in creation. The second is ontological. Both human nature and the subhuman creation have been damaged. The human body awaits redemption, and the inner nature, the thinking, willing, feeling, subject called the self, needs

which may be seen as a comment on the original Edenic disobedience)²⁸⁰ is taken up and developed in 5:12-21. It is thus unrealistic to see any fundamental difference between the gospel in the epistle to the Romans and the contents of Paul's proclamation to his Gentile listeners. It is true that this epistle is a logical exposition of the gospel from first principles rather than the verbatim account of every sermon he preached, but from the beginning of its exposition in the eighteenth verse of the first chapter its truth pertains to 'everyman', and is as relevant to the Gentile as it is to the Jew.²⁸¹

When Paul addresses the Corinthian church, a church consisting largely of Gentile Christians, he reminds them that when he had been with them he had 'known nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (1 Cor 2:2). This does not mean that when he preached he spoke of nothing other than the crucifixion.²⁸² It does mean, however, that whatever his *approach* may have been, whatever his starting point was, he led his hearers inevitably to the heart of the gospel, which finds its quintessential expression in the words, 'All have sinned and fall

renewal (12:2). The subhuman creation suffers from a sense of incompleteness and even frustration (8:20). The goals set by the will of God in the act of creating are not achievable in an unredeemed world.' Hill, M 'Theology And Ethics In The Letter To The Romans' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') p255.

280 The first tragic instance of 'worshiping and serving created things rather than the Creator' (Rom 1:25) is surely the original act of disobedience itself. 'The serpent's insinuation is the possibility of an extension of human existence beyond the limits set for it by God at creation, an increase of life not only in the sense of pure intellectual enrichment but also familiarity with and power over, mysteries that lie beyond man.' Von Rad 'Genesis' p89. But the result is catastrophic. Commenting on Gen 3:22, Hamilton writes, 'This verse is a deliberation. God dialogues with himself and observes that man has become *like one of us in knowing good and evil*. In one sense, but in only one sense, what the serpent said was true. Man has become like God. But one suspects that these words in the serpent's mouth convey one thing and the same words in God's mouth say another. The serpent held out to the couple the prospect that being like God would bring with it unlimited privileges, unheard-of acquisitions and gifts. Alas, rather than experiencing bliss, they encounter misery. Rather than sitting on a throne, they are expelled from the garden. Rather than new prerogatives, they experience only a reversal. The couple not only fail to gain something they do not presently have; the irony is that they lose what they currently possess: unsullied fellowship with God. They found nothing and lost everything.' Hamilton, V 'The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17', p208.

281 I am therefore not claiming that every time Paul preached to the Gentiles his message was identical to the content of his epistle to the Romans. He preached a great deal, and the record in Acts is necessarily brief. In beginning with Creation and the Fall, his preaching must have necessitated a critique of the Hellenic culture. Edwin Judge juxtaposes the theology of Paul with the philosophy of the culture to which he came as an apostle: 'In broad terms one may say that in the Hellenic tradition the problem of life centred upon keeping one's balance, and preserving the good one possessed. Education would train one successfully to do this.... It was Paul who dramatically shattered such self-assurance. Not only did he see the cosmos as itself corrupted from without ('sin entered', Rom 5:12, a notion unthinkable when the cosmos was by definition complete, perfect and unchanging), but the evil had enslaved even his own will (Rom 7:14-25). The drama is no longer adjustment to fate within a closed system. Its limits explode at the cosmic level, while a microcosm of conflict is exposed within one's own heart.... The distant source of this apocalypse is clear: the serpent in the garden and the demand of the *Shema* for total commitment of one's inmost being (Deut 6:5).' Judge, E 'The Impact Of Paul's Gospel On Ancient Society' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') pp298-9.

282 'Paul's rhetorical purpose in 1 Corinthians 1-2 is to affirm the centrality of the cross in Christian theology, not to suggest that a subject index of his sermons would have had only one entry.' Wenham, D 'From Jesus To Paul – via Luke' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') p87.

short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ' (Rom 3:23-24).

A secondary reason for believing that the content of the epistle to the Romans was essentially the content of his evangelistic preaching was his evident concern to ensure that that which was being preached, taught and believed by Christians with whom he had had nothing hitherto to do, was true and accurate. His prayer that God would give his readers a 'spirit of unity among themselves' (15:5), his reminder to them that he had 'written to them quite boldly on some points' (15:15), and, most pointedly of all, his instructions for the 'weak' and the 'strong' believers to accept each others' position (14:10), imply a concern on Paul's part that his readers live lives that reveal the righteousness of God. His exhortations to holy living are grounded in the truth of the gospel (15:3). His concern to ensure that they understand and live out the implications of the gospel (righteousness living) imply a concern that they understand the gospel itself. If he has a concern to ensure that they understand the gospel itself, then the gospel as explicated in his epistle must be essentially the self-same gospel that he proclaimed in his evangelism.²⁸³

Paul's preaching to the Jews

I suggested above that Paul 'approached Jews evangelistically through the Old Testament and Gentiles through references to creation'. From the beginning of his letter, Paul presents the link between the 'gospel of God' (1:1) and the Old Testament.²⁸⁴ His gospel is Christologically centred, for it is the gospel 'regarding God's Son' (1:2),²⁸⁵ and the Christology, in turn, is defined in terms of Jesus' Davidic ancestry (1:3). His resurrection from the dead demonstrated him to be the Son of God, and if the Son of God, then the true Israel.²⁸⁶ Moreover, the title 'Son of God' was referred to the king of Israel with Messianic significance (cf Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:14). By referring to Jesus as the Son of God, then, Paul prepares the way for presenting Christ not only as

²⁸³ 'Luke... has made Paul's arrival appear to be the 'real' arrival of the gospel in that city. But without making any suggestions that the existing church in Rome differed theologically from Paul, he may be implying that the advent of the Pauline gospel at Rome was a significant matter. The evidence of Romans suggests that at the time of the letter the church was not unanimous in its understanding of the gospel and its implications (cf the groups in 14-15) and that Paul was in fact concerned that the Roman Christians should have a clear understanding of the gospel.' Marshall, I H 'Luke's Portrait Of The Pauline Mission' ('The Gospel To The Nations: Perspectives On Paul's Mission') p100

²⁸⁴ '...his purpose is general and principal, to allay possible suspicion about "his" gospel as new and innovative by asserting its organic relationship to the OT.' Moo, p44

²⁸⁵ Moo notes that although the rabbis did not use 'Son' as a Messianic title, '4QFlor attests continuing messianic interest in these OT "Son" passages; cf, also 4Q246 2:1.' Moo, p45, footnote 27.

²⁸⁶ In Exodus 4:22,23, God refers to Israel as his 'firstborn son', an appellation denoting the nation's special relationship with him (cf Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1).

Israel's Messiah,²⁸⁷ but as being the locus of the true people of God (such that all those who are 'in Christ' are 'Abraham's true offspring' (4:16), and members of the 'real Israel' (9:6)). He also makes all the more understandable the fellowship between Christ and those who are 'God's sons' in him (Rom 1:9; 8:29; cf, 1 Cor 1:9; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:13).

From the beginning of the epistle itself, then, can be seen an indication of how Paul would have broached the gospel when preaching to 'his own race' (9:3).

Paul's preaching to both Gentiles and Jews

Paul, then, whether preaching to Jews or Gentiles, begins at the point of common understanding, and moves from there to the heart of the gospel, the cross of Christ, verifying his declaration to the believers in the Corinthian church that whenever he preached (whether he started with the Old Testament, or the creation of the cosmos) he 'knew nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (1 Cor 2:2).

6.3.1.2 The content of our proclamation follows that of Paul's

Obedience, 'in view of God's mercy' (12:1) to Paul's exhortation to 'present ourselves as living sacrifices', will result in lives which, in the power of the Holy Spirit (8:1-17) reveal and radiate righteousness. But for this righteousness to be known for what it is, viz, the righteousness *of God*, our lives 'need a commentary'. For our conduct to acquire intelligibility, we need to be articulate. There needs to be consistency between our lives and speech so that what we say provides the commentary for our conduct. In short, we need to be verbal in our witnessing.

For the content of our proclamation we may receive guidance from the apostle Paul himself. We saw above that Paul would begin at a 'point of contact', a place where his hearers could relate to his reasoning. We saw that with his Jewish hearers Paul would begin with the Old Testament, as does the epistle to the Romans. With his Gentile hearers he would commence with the cosmos and its creation. And with both groups he would lead from his initial point of contact to the cross of Christ, wherein is revealed the righteousness of God, the salvation of those who believe.

²⁸⁷ Paul's understanding of 'the Son of God' would have ultimately been informed by Jesus' own self understanding of his own unique relationship to the Father. Of the transition between the 'Son' in 1:3 and 'Son' in 1:4 Moo comments, 'By virtue of his obedience to the will of the Father (cf Phil 2:6-11) and because of the eschatological revelation of God's saving power in the gospel (1:1,16), the Son attains a new exalted status as "Lord" (cf. v. 4b). Son of God from eternity, he becomes Son of God "in power", "able [*dynatai*] for all time to save those who draw near to God through him" (Heb. 7:25, RSV).

By engaging with people in our environment, and, in the power of the Spirit of God, meeting with them at a point of contact where there is mutual understanding, and leading them from there to the crux of the gospel, we may steer between the Scylla²⁸⁸ of an 'evangelism' which never rises above friendship, and the Charybdis of proclaiming the crux of the gospel without first engaging their interest.

6.3.1.3 Prior difficulties in proclaiming the gospel in the 21st century

Paul lived in a world where the deep questions of the meaning of life were openly talked about in public places. In the Jewish environment, profiting from the interpretation of the Scriptures was the desideratum (Acts 13:15). In the non-Jewish environment, the driving interest was in 'new ideas' (Acts 17:21). In our present post-modern western world, the Christian is less likely to find him/herself in either of Paul's environments. The nature of truth itself has (or is believed to have) altered. Before the age of post-modernism, something considered to be true was held to have absolute, objective and universal verity. Now the truth is less likely to be something knowable from investigation, dialectic, or the appeal to authority. In this present age, the truth is not something that transcends culture and history, something over and above us to which we are accountable: it is what we make it to be and nothing more.²⁸⁹

This 'truth decay' has consequences for Christians who want to witness to the gospel. Unlike Paul, if it is rare to find a conversation where the God of the Scriptures is discussed for edification, it is even less likely (than in Paul's Athens) to encounter a conversation where 'new ideas' are eagerly discussed. For those who lived in the Athens of Paul, the truth was something to be arrived at through dialogue. Socratic dialectic, or Aristotelian logic was constantly employed to distinguish validity from invalidity, and truth from error. Since the Enlightenment, the 'Age of Reason', conversations in the western world were

²⁸⁸ The Oxford dictionary defines 'Scylla and Charybdis' as 'either of two dangers or pitfalls such that to avoid one increases the risk from the other'.

²⁸⁹ In what we could call the 'pre-postmodern' period, this 'truth decay' had already commenced, before it attained to the dignity, through the writing of such philosophers of Derrida and Foucault, of a stated worldview. As far back as 1941, when C S Lewis wrote his famous 'Screwtape Letters', the truth-preserving rigour of applied logic had greatly diminished in the average person. The first of the Screwtape letters contains these words, 'It sounds as if you supposed that *argument* was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's clutches. That might have been so if he had lived a few centuries earlier. At that time the humans still knew pretty well when a thing was proved and when it was not; and if it was proved they really believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as the result of a chain of reasoning. But what with the weekly press and other such weapons we have largely altered that. Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to have a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily "true" or "false", but as "academic" or "practical", "outworn" or "contemporary", "conventional" or "ruthless". Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church.' Lewis, C S 'The Screwtape Letters' p11.

the same. But the decaying of truth has made it less certain that there is any such truth to discover.²⁹⁰ Consequently, there has been a reduction of confidence even in the role of reason. 'If all interpretation is culturally conditioned, reason itself may be nothing more than a tool of domination.'²⁹¹

The result of this devaluing of reason has been a widespread adoption, unintentionally, and by default, of the belief that the truth is simply a function of how sincerely something is believed.²⁹² From this has issued an emasculation of philosophical dialogue itself. This has led, in turn, to the personalizing and 'privatizing' of truth. If there are now 'no right or wrong answers' what is the purpose of dialoguing about matters metaphysical? So the 'flight from reason' leads either to a lack of interest in absolute truth, so that one's only concern is with the exigencies of the material present, or to an interest in matters spiritual, without the verifying or falsifying role of reason in the transcendent sphere. The 'New Age' is now the predominating spirituality of the western world. ²⁹³

The over-all consequence is to produce an environment for the present-day believer which is, if anything, even more difficult than that of Paul's. For now, not only might the Christian encounter the same opposition to the gospel as that met by Paul (Rom 15:31), but he/she does not even meet a 'ready-made' arena for conversing about matters of absolute spiritual truth in the first place. Paul was never going to find it difficult at least to *broach* the subject. But the believer in the twenty-first century finds him/herself gagged before the conversation has even started.

The challenge, in the first place, for the twenty first century evangelist is to find a starting place for a conversation which purports to lead to matters concerning

290 In 'Escape From Reason' Francis Schaeffer ingeniously traces the devaluation of reason back to Thomas Aquinas who, although regarding the human will as fallen, continued to regard the reasoning faculty as autonomous. 'From this incomplete view of the biblical Fall flowed all the subsequent difficulties. Man's intellect became autonomous. In one realm man was now independent, autonomous.... From the basis of this autonomous principle, philosophy also became free, and was separated from revelation. Therefore philosophy began to take wings, as it were, and fly off wherever it wished, without relationship to the Scriptures.' 'Escape From Reason' pp 11-12.

291 Carson, D 'The Gagging Of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism', p20.

292 A month before the writing of this page, when told that his answer was not the one I was looking for, a teenager in our youth group replied, 'There are no right or wrong answers'.

293 'In essence the New Age is a form of post-modernity, and as such it is part of the questioning and redefining of the values and methods inherited from the European Enlightenment that has swept through all areas of intellectual reflection in the last twenty years or so. The New Age's answer to the dislocation and collapse now facing the world is that the only way forward will be through a massive transformational shift in consciousness of cosmic proportions. As with many critiques of modernity (including Christian ones), the New Age is itself a product of the same world-view with which it expresses dissatisfaction, though unlike other critiques it also unashamedly searches out solutions in what can only be described as a 'pre-modern' world-view, based on a pre-scientific, essentially mythological epistemology.' Drane, J 'Methods and Perspectives in Understanding the New Age' (Themelios Vol 23 No 2, February 1998, pp23,24.

absolute truth. Having acknowledged this difficulty, though, the need for emulating Paul's method of engaging his hearers at a point of common understanding remains.

6.3.1.4 Proclamation of the gospel in the 21st century

Our understanding of the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ being the power of God for the salvation of those who believe provides us with a necessary condition for evangelism in the 21st century. We shall discuss below how we may, in the present day, emulate Paul's method of engaging his hearers 'where they were at'. But however we conduct our engagement, if at some point in our conversation with the 'pre-believer' we do not present him/her with the crux of the gospel, which is the revelation of the righteousness of God, and the power of God for the salvation of those who believe, then we have failed sufficiently to evangelise that person.

Our understanding of (at least) two different dynamics of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ furnishes us with a helpful insight as to what constitutes biblically faithful evangelism today. The thesis in my first section was that the revelation of the righteousness of God (possessive genitive) confronted the hearer or reader with God's own, inherent holiness, before which all human beings fall short (3:23). The person being confronted with the gospel then learns of the availability of God's own righteousness as a gift (genitive of origin), freely available to whomever places his/her faith in Christ (3:22). This is the essential explanation of Romans 1:16, that the revelation of the righteousness of God is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe.

Then, in this third section, I have been arguing that the result of obedience to the imperatives in the paraenetic section of the epistle to the Romans (chapters 12-16) will again reveal the righteousness of God, this time δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as subjective genitive, that is, God's own righteousness radiating forth from the lives and speech of believers, individually and collectively (14:17).

These three different understandings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ have helpful implications for evangelism. I have argued that this third kind of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (subjective genitive) is the kind of righteousness that attracts the 'pre-Christian' into a place where he/she may hear the words of the gospel. This will parallel with Paul's way of 'meeting the person at a point of common understanding'. Then, once a 'door for our message' (Col 4:3) has been opened, the words of the gospel, with the essential truths revealed in 3:21-26 (ie the revelation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (possessive genitive leading to appropriation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as genitive or origin)) must be proclaimed, if the person is to

be faithfully evangelised. This will parallel with Paul's faithfulness to the essential crux of the gospel whenever he proclaimed.

Armed with this understanding, we are enabled to see the benefits and the limitations of contemporary views on present-day evangelism.

Relational evangelism paralleling Paul's 'being all things to all people so that by any means possible I might save some' (1 Cor 9:22) approach

In a reaction to what has been perceived as unwise and ungracious 'browbeating' with the gospel, much has been written about the necessity for being relational in evangelism. One of the foremost proponents of this view is Brian McLaren, who writes, 'On the street evangelism is equated with pressure. It means selling God as if God were vinyl siding, replacement windows, or a mortgage refinancing service. It means shoving your ideas down someone's throat, threatening him with hell if he does not capitulate to your logic or Scripture-quoting. It means excluding everyone from God's grace except those who agree with the evangelizer (a.k.a. known as the evangelist).'294 In reaction to this 'counterproductive' witnessing, McLaren writes that, 'Good evangelism is the process of being friendly without discrimination and influencing all of one's friends toward better living, through good deeds and good conversations.'295

While his first description is undoubtedly a caricature of much that is truly faithful evangelism, there is something in McLaren's solution that we may adopt, given our understanding of the necessity of revealing the righteousness of God through sanctified lives. Lives that reveal the character of Jesus will, through the love, joy and peace that is the fruit of being 'led by the Spirit of God' (8:13), attract towards, and lend credibility to the gospel itself.²⁹⁶ And being dialogical,²⁹⁷ they will resemble the method of the apostle Paul, who

294 McLaren, B 'More Ready Than You Realize' p12.

295 *ibid* p15

296 'Although evangelism is not advocacy of any social program, it does entail social responsibility for at least two reasons. First, the Gospel proclaims the kingship of the loving Creator who is committed to justice, human life and the welfare of his creation. So evangelism will need to be accompanied by obedience to God's command to work for the good of all in a way that is fitting for the children of the Father who makes His sun shine on the evil and the good and sends His rain on the righteous and the unrighteous alike. Second, when our evangelism is linked with concern to alleviate poverty, uphold justice, oppose abuses of secular and economic power, stand against racism, and advance responsible stewardship of the global environment, it reflects the compassion of Christ and may gain an acceptance it would not otherwise receive.' 'The

Amsterdam Declaration: A Charter for Evangelism in the 21st century' (The Mission of an Evangelist' p454).
 297 'The third skill – and this is where *Questioning Evangelism* fits in – is built upon the foundations of declaring and defending the gospel. That skill is called *dialoguing* the gospel. Often neglected, difficult to master, but absolutely essential, this skill of giving and taking – asking questions and bouncing ideas back and forth – might be just what our postmodern audience needs. We need all three skills if we're to be Christ's ambassadors in the twenty-first century.' Newman, R 'Questioning Evangelism' p15. (NB The first two skills to which the writer refers are *declaring* and *defending* the gospel.)

'reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there' (Acts 17:17).²⁹⁸ The believer's knowledge (which is itself a result of the hunger for God's truth manifested in creation and culture (1:20)) can be apologetic in purpose, as they embody the qualities of which McLaren approves: 'Good evangelists – the kind we will talk about in this book – are people who engage others in good conversation about important and profound topics such as faith, values, hope, meaning, purpose, goodness, beauty, truth, life after death, life before death, and God.'²⁹⁹ It will be necessary to ask questions as well as make statements.³⁰⁰

This much we must acknowledge that McLaren and his school of 'relational evangelism' has to contribute to faithful, biblical witnessing.

The sternness of God (11:22), and the 'stumbling stone' of the cross (9:32) place the relationality of believers' evangelism in a circumscribed context

Our understanding of the righteousness of God must, however, entail a critique of McLaren's thesis. I have argued above that radiating forth the righteousness of God (subjective genitive) with the Holy-Spirit-given peace and joy (14:17) must be complemented, for the believer obediently to witness to the gospel, by the proclamation of the words of the gospel.³⁰¹ And the words of the gospel refer to immensities that are infinite in their implication. The glory of God (5:2;8:8:18;11:33-36;15:9) entails great joy for those who are saved through the power of the gospel. But the glory of God, the radiation of his holiness, entails a correspondingly terrible outcome for those who are not saved.

The very depths to which the Lord Jesus Christ had to go, in becoming a ἱλαστήριον (sacrifice of atonement (3:24,25), yields but a hint of a glimpse of what we have been saved *from*: the wrath of God (2:6). If those who are not in

298 The verb translated 'argued' (NRSV; 'reasoned' (NIV)) is διελέγετο, from διαλέγομαι.

299 McLaren, B 'More Ready Than You Realize' p14.

300 'If you know anything about Jesus at all, you will probably know that he was an amazing conversationalist. Unlike the typical evangelist-caricature of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Jesus was short on sermons, long on conversations; short on answers, long on questions; short on abstractions and propositions, long on stories and parables; short on telling you what to think, long on challenging you to think for yourself; short on condemning the irreligious, long on confronting the religious.' *ibid* p15. This quotation from McLaren again reveals another caricature, this time of Jesus himself. He was not quite as 'short on condemning' or 'short on propositions' as McLaren would have us think, but the point he makes is still worth noting. Jesus certainly did dialogue with his hearers, and much of that dialoguing involved questioning.

301 'When Jesus said, "Go into the world and proclaim the gospel" (Mark 16:15) and "The gospel must first be preached in all the nations" (Mark 13:10), He was referring to the *words*. When Paul said, "Woe to you if you preach another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9) and "The gospel is the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16), He was referring to the *words*.' (*italics his*). Batchelor, J 'Evangelism: Strategies from Heaven in the War for Souls', pp 65-66.

Christ Jesus *are* under condemnation (the converse of 8:1), and if the sternness of God (11:22) means that even we who have been 'grafted in' are to 'be afraid' (11:20), there must be an urgency and solemnity to our mission. Saving people from the consequences of God's wrath is not the whole motivation for mission, but it is surely a necessary part of it.

It is the seriousness of our mission, in the light of the eternal immensities that are at stake, which imply the critique of McLaren's view of evangelism. My thesis is that the righteousness of God is, firstly, 'God's unswerving commitment always to act for his own glory'. The supreme *telos* of salvation, indeed of all things, is the glory of God (11:33-36; cf Eph 1:6 'to the praise of his glorious grace'). The *summum bonnum* – our glorious hope – is to appear with him in glory (8:17,18; 5:2). This is the end to which all else is the means. The very creation of this planet was to reveal the eternal power and divine nature of God (1:20), and its present subjection to 'frustration' (8:20) has as its purpose to reveal the glory of God when our salvation is consummated. Thus the 'conservation of the planet' cannot be the end for which Christians witness to the gospel. It is a false end, which can only have the result of lessening the urgency and seriousness of evangelism.

Nor is the end of evangelism 'influencing people towards better living', as if the hope of moral enhancement is what impels believers to witness to the gospel. Our second aspect of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ discussed as possessive genitive entails the definition of salvation itself. If the revelation of the righteousness of God, through the law, and through the cross, confronts a person with his/her own unrighteousness, so that he/she becomes aware of the need for a righteousness beyond him/herself, and then, through the gospel learns of, and gratefully receives, the righteousness of God (genitive of origin), that person becomes saved, and a child of God (8:14-17). Thus, salvation is an ontological reality before it is an ethical transformation, which means that the end towards which we strive in our evangelism, is salvation, rather than 'influencing towards better living'. 'Influencing others towards better living' is another false end, which, again, de-envigorates evangelism by distorting its *raison d'être*.

The sternness of God, then, and the infinitude of the immensities under which we labour, imply a severe critique of the view which sees evangelism as a 'dance'. McLaren writes, 'So the gospel comes to you not like a commercial on the radio or TV or a political slogan in a campaign or a scientific formula in a classroom, but like a song. It sneaks up on you, and then sneaks inside you. Somewhere in your journey through life, you begin to hear this song whose music captures your heart with its rhythm, melody, ambiance, and glory, and

you begin to move to its rhythm. Thus you enter the dance.'³⁰²

McLaren's understanding of the ultimate purpose of evangelism explains why he sees it as no more serious than a dance. 'This is why if you begin to feel the song and live by it, you desire to help others do the same for a number of reasons: For the sheer beauty, truth, and goodness of the song. Something this wonderful must be shared.' Here I fervently agree with McLaren, and intend to show below that it is this, as well as the severity of God, that motivates and informs our evangelizing. But McLaren continues, 'For the good of your friends, neighbours, planet-mates who share the human predicament with you. As individuals, their lives would be enriched if they heard the song and learned to move with it. For the sake of the whole human race and entire planet.'³⁰³

To proclaim, or to fail to proclaim, the gospel has as its consequence stakes that are greatly higher than the enrichment or impoverishment of humanity.³⁰⁴ It means the difference between salvation or condemnation. And, 'so that God's purpose in election might stand' (9:11), God's call is not for 'the whole human race' (9:13-14).³⁰⁵ 'The entire planet', moreover, cannot be a factor which informs our evangelism, as its liberation is eschatological (8:19), and depends entirely on God (8:20-23).

It is these realities, then, which motivated Paul, and by necessary implication, believers in the present day, to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which *may* make our witness, comparable not so much to a dance, as to martyrdom: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered' (8:36).

If the cross of Jesus, the crux of our proclamation, is the 'salvation for those who believe (1:16), it is a 'stumbling stone' (9:32) for those who do not. This fact too means a critique of the view that sees evangelism as something that is as light as a dance. I argued above that the verbal articulation of the gospel is a

³⁰² 'More Ready Than You Realize' p16.

³⁰³ *ibid* p17

³⁰⁴ 'When less than 5 percent of the urban population attends the Sunday services of the Christian churches, as is the case in post-Christian Europe, the church cannot merely reflect on its "attractiveness" and "openness", but rather must engage in robust evangelistic outreach among the agnostic and the apathetic, among atheists and neo-pagans, seeking to win them to faith in Jesus Christ, who alone liberates from guilt and sin and grants true and lasting meaning in life.' Schnabel, E 'Early Christian Mission' p1574.

³⁰⁵ We should also note that this powerful gospel is God's providential plan of predestining and saving certain persons. It is this electing activity of God that enables Paul to call the gospel "the power of God".... The gospel (or "the proclamation of Christ crucified") does not constitute God's saving power to all people, *but only to those who are "called"* (τοῖς κλητοῖς). As the effective power of God, the gospel accomplishes God's goal in saving all whom he calls – eliciting repentance and faith from hearts regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:29-30; 10:14-17).' Plummer, pp54-55 (my italics).

necessary condition for faithful biblical witnessing. If the person to whom we are witnessing never at any stage hears the explanation of the cross of Jesus, he/she has not been evangelised. But the fact remains that if the one evangelised does hear the gospel of the cross, he/she may encounter it as 'a stone that causes them to stumble, and a rock to make them fall' (9:33). The evangelist may then find that this person who has been warming to him/her through the enriching effects of the friendship, suddenly becomes someone who, through his/her 'hostility to God' (8:7) directs that hostility towards the evangelist.³⁰⁶

This was Paul's experience on many occasions³⁰⁷, and the testimony of all believers who seek faithfully to witness to the gospel of Christ. The experience of the evangelist at this point is more like a death (8:36) than a dance.

The vision of the glory of God motivates the believer to proclaim the gospel

When we consider the paean of praise that bursts from the pen of Paul (or Tertius (16:22)), in 11:33-36 we may see that the 'unceasing anguish' (9:2) of his desire that his fellow Jews not be cut off from the salvation of God is only part of his motivation for proclaiming the gospel. The complementary motivation is the vision he has of the glory of God.³⁰⁸

The love of Jesus (subjective genitive, ie, the believer's love of Jesus) motivates the Christian to proclaim the gospel.

An overt Christology may be conspicuous by its absence in the epistle to the Romans,³⁰⁹ but being motivated by the desire for God to be glorified is

³⁰⁶ This implies a limitation of the 'belonging before believing' thesis to which I referred above. The one being 'evangelised' may be enjoying being in the orbit of this δικαιοσύνη θεού, appreciating the joy, love and peace of the Christian community, and as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, 'tasting the powers of the coming age' (Heb 6:5). But he/she cannot really experience 'initiation into the kingdom of God' until he/she places his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as an atoning sacrifice for his/her sin. Because of this, I would cautiously differ from the view of William Abraham that someone can experience even the 'first phase' of initiation into the kingdom of God without being incorporated into Christ by believing (3:22). Abraham writes, 'This does not mean that we abandon the crucial significance of proclamation in evangelism, but it does mean that we enrich our conception of evangelism to include the vital first phase of initiation into the kingdom of God.' Abraham, W 'The Logic Of Evangelism' p69.

³⁰⁷ I do not mean that Paul engaged greatly in 'friendship evangelism'; I mean that his hearers listen to him with attention, and perhaps even sympathy, until he comes to the message of Christ crucified. It is at this point that some of his hearers viz those for whom the cross is a 'stumbling stone', become hostile (Acts 22:22; Rom 15:31).

³⁰⁸ The apostle's explanation of the 'grace in which we now stand' (5:2) was a reality which he himself experienced to an extraordinary degree. Paul himself was led by the Spirit of God, and therefore lived at the fountainhead of the love, joy, and peace which are the fruits of God's Spirit. Enjoying the subjective experience of life in the kingdom of God (14:17), possessing, and being possessed, by the understanding of the 'mystery hidden for long ages past', filled with wonder that the eschatological kingdom of irrupted into the present (8:11), and full of gratitude and adoration for the mercy of God that had triumphed over his judgment (11:32), one can see that 'out of the overflow of his heart' Paul's mouth would speak (cf Lk 6:45).

³⁰⁹ 'Indeed, even Paul's magisterial letter to the Romans fails to discuss in detail numerous topics we might expect from a more "general" letter (e.g., eschatology, Christology, church order)'. Plummer, p 71. Moo's

tantamount to being filled with wonder at the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Moo observes, '... while Christology is nowhere in Romans the expressed *topic*; it is everywhere the underlying point of departure.'³¹⁰ And if we are considering the motivation for proclaiming the gospel, we must include the yearning for others to know of the wonder of the One who was, 'concerning his human nature, a descendant of David', but who concerning his divine nature, was 'the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord' (1:3-4). Paul may not be overt in his Christology in the epistle under discussion, but we know from others of his letters that because he wanted 'to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering' (Phil 3:10), he would, for the same reason, have wanted his audience to know this Jesus, 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col 2:3).³¹¹

When the believer understands, moreover, that his delight in the creation can, in reality, be sourced in Jesus, whose eternal power and divine nature is its cause (1:20), he has added motivation for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus. He realizes that he is looking at creation through the window of his salvation, and his perception of the created world merges indissolubly into the awareness that he is enjoying it *because* he has the Spirit of its creator within him (8:9-11). Simultaneously, with this realization, comes the adoration of the Creator who has had the eternal power and divine nature to be able to create such a marvel. Thus the enjoyment of the created world becomes a devotional experience, such that even seeing a fantail flitting from branch to branch can leave the Christian observer lost in wonder, love and praise.³¹²

6.3.2 The proclamation of the gospel enhances the believer's sanctification

observations may appear to be at odds with that of Plummer's, when he says, 'Christology is the theological ground and starting point of the letter' (Moo, p25), but what Plummer means comes through in Moo's next sentence: '... no paragraph is devoted to Christology per se in the doctrinal portion of the letter...' *ibid*

310 *ibid*

311 Speaking on the motive for evangelism, evangelist Billy Kim says, 'Jesus is the verity of God's truth, the beauty of God's holiness, the purity of God's nature, the reality of God's love, the majesty of God's power, the ocean of God's matchless grace. That is why we must evangelise the world!' Kim, B 'The Motives For Evangelism' ('The Mission of an Evangelist: A Conference of Preaching Evangelists') p19.

312 Speaking of the loss of this sense of wonder which characterizes life outside of Christ, Ravi Zacharias writes, 'In short, philosophy questions the dream that life must experience enchantment while romantics dream away the question. Both disassemble the toy only to discover that the search is greater than the discovery and that they are destined to be resigned to the belief that enchantment is merely a subject to discuss, never a state to be attained. Thus, the arts play with our emotions and philosophy toys with our reason, while every fibre within our being cries out that this is not the way it was intended and that we may have robbed ourselves of the greatest of all treasures.' Zacharias, R 'Recapture The Wonder' p10. Speaking of the search for this treasure – Zacharias continues, 'In fact, Jesus... speaks of a merchant looking for a precious pearl, who, when he found the pearl of great price, sold it for all he had previously considered worthwhile in order to buy it. That pearl of great price, pragmatically speaking, is that search for the heart to find its complete fulfillment.' *ibid* p12. For those who have found the object of their heart's innermost longing in Christ, the inevitable consequence is to share their 'eureka!' with others, motivated by love and compassion for their fellow human beings, and for the desire for God in Christ to be glorified.

Obedience to the apostle's implicit injunction to proclaim the gospel of Christ must entail the believer's 'presenting him/herself as a living sacrifice' (12:1). The more he/she does this, the more he/she will be transformed by the renewing of his/her mind (12:2), and will perceive with ever increasing clarity of vision the 'depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God' (11:33).

And as the believer comes increasingly to know God's 'good, pleasing and perfect will' (12:2), which is that he be glorified through the knowledge of what he has done in the person of his Son, and experiences the realities of the kingdom, the more aware he will become of the plight of those still outside of Christ, and the more enraptured he will be by the glory of God. This will mean an ever augmenting desire to proclaim the gospel.

Thus the believer enters into a spiral of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, in which the more he/she obeys God's will that he be made known, the more he/she comes to know God. The believer is saved originally by the revelation of the righteousness of God (possessive genitive, leading to genitive of origin). He/she then, in view of God's mercy, lives in obedience to God's will which is to make God known. This the believer will do 'inadvertently' by radiating forth the righteousness of God (subjective genitive ie God's own righteousness refracting through the believer's life), and intentionally by proclaiming the gospel of the revelation of the righteousness of God.³¹³ Because of the inevitable opposition (15:31) to the gospel, this means the believer presenting him/herself as a 'living sacrifice' (12:1), (and learning through suffering (5:3-5)) which will result in him/her becoming increasingly transformed into the likeness of Christ. And the more he/she is transformed into the likeness of Christ, the more he/she will behold the glory of God, so that the final result will mean that 'out of the fullness of his/heart the mouth will speak (Lk 6:45), and he/she will be bound to say, with the apostle Paul, 'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!' (1 Cor 9:16).

Thus the revelation of the righteousness of God begets the revelation of the righteousness of God, so that there is a dynamic, self-propagating power in the gospel of the God.³¹⁴

³¹³ Of this distinction I have been making between 'passive' or 'inadvertent' witnessing through ethics, and 'active' witnessing through proclamation, Plummer writes, 'It should be noted that this modern distinction between "active" and "passive" witness would likely have seemed artificial to Paul; the apostles own understanding of Christian witness was more holistic -involving in one seamless fabric, the Christian's gospel-determined existence, behaviour and proclamation.' Plummer, p72. It is nevertheless a helpful distinction to maintain for this discussion, given the thesis against which I am arguing, that the average Christian is enjoined to maintain an ethical, but not a proclamatory witness.

³¹⁴ '... for Paul, both the church and the apostolic mission are characterized by the presence of the same dynamic gospel – God's effective, self-diffusing word.' Plummer, R 'Paul's Understanding Of The Church's Mission' p42. Plummer continues, 'In speaking of the apostle's understanding of "the dynamic nature of the gospel," I mean that Paul viewed the gospel (or "the word of God") as an "effective force" which inevitably

6.3.3. Mission enhances sanctification by increasing the unity of the church

There is another very important consequence of revealing the righteousness of God through transformed lives which obediently proclaim the gospel: it engenders an ever-increasing unity in the church. If those in the leadership of the church are aware that the church's purpose on earth is to reveal the righteousness of God by a proclamation of the gospel made credible by lives transformed by its power, the members of the body of Christ will come together in increasing unity. If its priority is that of Paul when he said, 'I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done...' (15:18), the result will tend towards the desideratum of 'glorifying the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ with *one heart and mouth*' (15:6).

If the leadership of the church so organizes the ministries and gifts of each of the body's members (12:4-8), that each person's ministry becomes a means to one purpose, namely the revelation of the righteousness of God both in the sense of transformed lives *and* the proclamation of the gospel, the church will find that its purpose will have a uniting effect on the body. This is a unity that will be realized at the organizational level, in that the criterion for the exercising of the ministries will be that they must concertedly aim for the common end of the gospel's proclamation to those not in the church.

The unity will obtain, moreover, in the spirits of the believers as their concerted striving towards the common end of witnessing to the glory of God in the gospel of Christ will eradicate potential causes of disunity. There is nothing that unites a group of disparate believers more than going forth together to proclaim the gospel of Christ. This is true within a single local congregation,³¹⁵ and it is true of churches across the denominational demarcations. Most of the great missionary organizations are trans-denominational, and even the great 'moves' within New Zealand that bring together the different churches are evangelistic in purpose.

Thus, the revelation of the righteousness of God through the proclamation of the gospel expedites the sanctification, not only of the individual believer, but of the church as a whole.

goes forth and accomplishes God's will. The same "word" that indwells apostles also indwells ordinary Christians in the church. In each case, the word cannot be contained. If God's word truly dwells in an individual or community, that individual or community will inevitably be characterized by the further spreading of that word.' *ibid* pp49-50

³¹⁵ I have repeatedly experienced the joy of engaging in a concerted proclamation of the gospel with a group of believers whose views on the non-essentials of the faith could not have been more diverse, but who were united in spirit during and after the concerted period of witnessing.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to explain how the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (Rom 1:16). I have placed much significance on the conjunction *for* (1:17). '...the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (1:16) *for* in the gospel a righteousness of God is revealed...' (1:17a). That is, my explanation of how the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe is that 'the revelation of the righteousness of God' is itself the power of God to save.

I have noted that there have been several interpretations of the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (the righteousness of God), and my thesis has very much depended on my assertion that rather than opting for one interpretation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ at the expense of the others, the most enriching understanding comes from seeing that it is the dynamic combination of the several meanings of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which best explains Paul's meaning. This approach accounts for other important truths that emerge from Paul's great epistle: namely that salvation is not only a decisive event, but an on-going process, so that the gospel continues to save the believer. It explains the continuity and discontinuity between the mission of the Israel of the Old Testament and the church of the New. And it sheds light on the relationship between sanctification and evangelism.

To summarize my thesis, then, I have argued that the gospel saves in the first place, as a decisive event, by revealing the righteousness of God (possessive genitive, ie, God's inherent righteousness as his high, awesome and unapproachable holiness) through the law, and then through the cross of Christ. The person hearing or reading the gospel is then, confronted in the first place with his/her own unrighteousness, and becomes aware of his/her need for a righteousness outside of him/herself. The good news then goes on to tell that this righteousness is indeed available, and that it is nothing less than the very righteousness of God which comes as a gift (genitive of origin) for those who place their trust in Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice on the cross.

Having believed, the blessed person is saved, but must *continue* to be saved through the process of sanctification, until he/she receives the resurrection of the body at the time of the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 'continuing to be saved' the believer is being transformed into the likeness of Christ. This is a process that will continue as the Christian, in the on-going activity of sacrificial service, radiates forth the righteousness of God, both

through his/her life witness, and through the proclamation of the gospel.

The righteousness of God (subjective genitive, ie, God's own character refracting through the life of the saved person) adds credibility to the believer's proclamation of the gospel, but is not, by itself, the righteousness whose revelation is the power to save. The revelation of the righteousness of God that *does* save comes through the *words* of the gospel. Faith comes by hearing. This fact limits and informs the validation of the relationality of evangelism. The role of the relationality is to attract the other person into within the sphere of hearing the words of the gospel, and to demonstrate the realities of the kingdom of God, eg, the holiness, the peace, the gentleness, grace, joy and wisdom of those who do inhabit this sphere. But it is the proclamation of the words of the gospel that is the power of God to save. Therefore, until the other person has heard the words of the gospel, he/she has not been evangelised. Thus, in situations where the possibility of developing relationality is limited, the gospel should still be proclaimed if at all possible,³¹⁶ and in situations where a relationality does obtain, the gospel should still be proclaimed as soon as possible, for it is this proclaimed gospel, and nothing else, which actualizes God's effectual call of the one who believes.

The result of obedient living will mean that the self-propagating power of the gospel draws the believer into a 'righteousness spiral' in which the righteousness of God is ever increasingly made known through the Christian's life and speech. This is because to obey God's command to make him known in a hostile world through witnessing means suffering which has the effect of sanctifying the believer, so that he/she comes to know God's will more and more clearly. And his will is that he be made known through the gospel.

But sanctification through suffering as a result of witnessing, is not the only force impelling the believer to make known the righteousness of God. Joy and gratitude for the grace received, fueling the desire for God to be glorified, is another great 'fruit of righteousness' that drives the Christian, in obedience, to make δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ known through his/her life and the proclamation of the gospel.

Thus sanctification leads necessarily to mission, and mission has the inevitable effect of expediting sanctification, in a mutually increasing dynamic that spirals into a radiation of God's righteousness. And when we include in this cycle the salvation of others that is occurring through the mission, so that God's call to

³¹⁶ Indeed, I have found repeatedly that the very proclamation of the gospel has the effect of *creating* this relationality, where none before existed.

those whom he has predestined to save is being made effectual, we rejoice in the growth of the knowledge of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ to the praise of his glory.

The gospel, then, effects salvation in the believer and then compels an obedience which not only transforms him/her into the likeness of Jesus, but propels him/her to make known ethically (through his life) and verbally (through proclamation) the righteousness of God. At the collective level, the church, created by the gospel, grows numerically and in unity by spreading the gospel that called it into being.

This gospel, then, is a dynamic entity which, like the Old Testament word of God that 'accomplished the purpose for which it was sent', has a power within itself to effect God's saving purposes. It is therefore, the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. My thesis has sought to show *how* the gospel achieves this end, for the glory of God.

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