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‘PAUL AND THE LAW’
IN
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

By
Rev. Themistocles Hadjioannou

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ABSTRACT

During the last few decades, as has been pointed out by many scholars, although the question of Paul and the Law has been discussed in great detail, and an enormous literature has been produced, scholars have thus far reached no consensus, but have produced a wide variety of divergent opinions. Even the evaluation of the results from recent research varies considerably: some speak of ‘a paradigm shift’ and others of ‘unsatisfactory answers.’ I think that it is not true that there is no progress at all but that there is not sufficient progress, which points to the conclusion that the question of Paul and the Law is not completely exhausted. Before dealing, with this issue once again it becomes essential to look for a new direction in order to find more convincing answers. This study aspires to undertake this task.

Starting with the hypothesis that the situation in first-century Galatia was not an isolated event, I have proposed to find a similar situation and study it, a task which might throw some light upon Paul’s position towards the Law. In particular, I have proposed to study the situation in fourth-century Antioch. I have investigated the situation in Galatia in Paul’s times, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in general and the situation in Antioch in John Chrysostom’s times. All the evidence cited in my introductory chapter points to the conclusion that the situation in fourth-century Antioch is very similar to that in first-century Galatia.

This study, in part two, deals with early Christian exegesis and its methods of exegesis. It appears that early Christianity took over the existing methods of exegesis which were in use in Hellenism and Judaism adapting them to meet its own needs to confront Arianism, Nestorianism and Monophysitism in the fourth century. A special reference was made to Chrysostom outlining his education, his philosophical and spiritual

formation, his use of scripture. I have also dealt with Chrysostom's use of typology and allegory, the main methods of exegesis espoused by the schools of Antioch and of Alexandria, and his system of exegesis of Paul's letters.

Having given Chrysostom's position within early Christian exegesis, I have proceeded, in part three, to examine Chrysostom's understanding of Paul's statements about the Law, comparing it with that of modern scholarship.

For Chrysostom νόμος and ἔργα νόμου, especially in statements where Paul attacks the Law, refer to the Law of Moses as a whole and the deeds demanded by it, and not to a part of this Law or anything else. Paul rejects the Law because it is weak and unable to justify and not because it is evil by nature, as the Manicheans suggested. Christ's crucifixion is a plain proof of the Law's inability to justify. As Chrysostom points out, according to Lev.18:5 and Rom.10:5, for both Paul and Judaism the Law was indeed a path to salvation and the Law's intention was to lead to salvation regardless of the final results. The Law does not provide the life it promises because of human transgressions. For Chrysostom the entire letter to the Galatians is written to support Paul's thesis that justification is not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ.

The Law's divine origin is beyond any question for Chrysostom, who in agreement with his contemporaries attacks the view that the Law originated with another God, as Marcion and the Gnostics suggested. He attributes to the Law clearly a 'positive' purpose, arguing that if the Law was not given, then there would have been no Jews to listen to Christ. However, the Law actually brings not the life it promises but a curse, because of human transgressions. Christ, Chrysostom suggests, released people from the curse of the Law by exchanging the curse of transgression (Deut.27:26) for the curse of Deut.21:23. Although the purpose of the Law is a positive one, its mission comes to an end by the advent of Christ, stressing thus the temporal nature of the Law.

In chapter 6, I have investigated the question of anti-Semitism in Paul and Chrysostom. Paul is opposed, as has been pointed out, to a distortion of Judaism, and his negative statements on the Law are nothing other than a new adaptation of the Jewish Law, and thus, there is no shadow of anti-Semitism in Paul.

Although in all Chrysostom's eight discourses against Judaizing Christians there is a bitterness against the Jews, which easily could be mistaken as anti-Semitic, he changes his tone considerably in the course of the series and most of them end up with a plea to help and correct those who erred among his congregation. Nevertheless, he never actually tells his people to do any violence to the Jews or their synagogues. His aggressive language, which is a reaction to the real danger of the Judaizing movement in Antioch, makes Chrysostom anti-Jewish but not anti-Semitic.

The similarities between the situation in first - century Galatia and the situation in fourth - century Antioch, are not the only reason for taking Chrysostom's understanding of Paul seriously. Chrysostom's ability to analyse Paul's rhetorical strategies, his extensive knowledge of scripture and his constant interest in searching for the literal historical meaning of scripture, make him also a good reader of Paul. Finally, and more importantly, Chrysostom's approach to the question of Paul and the Law provides a coherent line of thought and makes sense of Paul's views as a whole.

Thus, Chrysostom might have a better understanding of Paul, and for these reasons his views should be taken seriously by modern scholarship in their effort to re-evaluate and even to revise their views in order to attain a consensus on the question of Paul and the Law.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- PG *Patrologia Graeca* of J. P. Migne (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Paris, 1844-)
- E. II. E. *John Chrysostom's writings* (Original text with modern Greek translation, Greek Fathers of the Church; Thessaloniki: Patristic Publications Gregory Palamas, 1979).

‘PAUL AND THE LAW’
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PART 1

1 PAUL AND THE LAW: AN INTRODUCTION

1

PAUL AND THE LAW: AN INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Approaching ‘Paul and the Law’: The meaning of the Law undoubtedly has a central position in Paul’s theology and therefore its clarification is most important. The investigation of this subject, however, is very difficult even though we have available many of Paul’s statements about it. The difficulty of the subject could be partially explained by its importance, for it influences the understanding of Paul’s whole theology. ‘Paul and the Law’ is not simply a part of his theology, but it is closely linked with almost every other part of his theology.

This difficulty was correctly identified by many scholars: H. J. Schoeps, having perhaps in mind these difficulties, calls Paul’s theology about the Law ‘the most intricate doctrinal issue in his theology.’¹ Douglas Moo also suggests that ‘no matter how hard one may try, it is difficult, if not impossible, and perhaps not even desirable’ to deal with the subject, because it affects so many areas of Paul’s theology.² His phrase ‘perhaps is not even desirable’ expresses the difficulties which each scholar faces when discussing this crucial subject.

¹ Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the light of Jewish Religious History* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p.168.

² Douglas Moo, ‘Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years’ *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40 (1987), p.305.

E. P. Sanders likewise recognizes the difficulties that emerge from this issue. He makes clear, from the beginning of his work, that 'it is with more than a little hesitation that one picks up again the question of Paul and the Law.' For him the reason of the hesitation to pick up this subject again depends not only on the difficulties of it, but also on the fact that it has been discussed in great detail by many scholars. He suggests, however, that in spite of the fact that this subject has been discussed in great detail, 'a few clarifying proposals can be made, even if every exegetical problem cannot be solved.'³ This means that there are still some questions which need more convincing answers by contemporary scholars although they cannot solve every question which emerges from this issue.

Heikki Räisänen is in accord with E. P. Sanders' view that a few clarifying proposals must be made. He quotes McEleney's work 'Conversion' on the view that 'uncertainty remains concerning Paul's position vis-a-vis the Law, forcing interpreters to return to the question again and again in the hope that their new studies may shed some small light upon the texts by which their colleagues may see the problem in new perspective.' He stresses that this is also the purpose of his own work, although he does not accept that the problem is really new.⁴ The fact that something forces contemporary scholars to deal with Paul and the Law again and again, indicates that there are still some questions which need more convincing answers.

During the last few decades, as has been correctly pointed out by many scholars, the wide variety of divergent opinions which were available not only gave unsatisfactory answers, but produced greater confusion as well. Even the evaluation of the results from recent research varies considerably, intensifying this confusion.

³ Ed Parish Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p.3.

⁴ Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 2. Ed., 1987), p.1.

While for instance Douglas Moo supports the view that the research ‘on Paul and the Law in the last ten years has witnessed a paradigm shift,’⁵ on the other hand In-Gyu Hong argues that it would not surprise us at all that in spite of the ‘enormous volume of literature,’ which has appeared on Paul and the Law, ‘the scholars have thus far reached no consensus but have only succeeded in producing a wide variety of divergent opinions.’⁶ These divergent opinions of the contemporary scholars, as will be shown later, are not restricted only to the evaluation of the results of the recent survey, but extend to each aspect of the subject.

The views that we have already cited lead to the conclusion that the meaning of the Law in Paul is not examined enough and therefore at least some questions need more convincing answers. This does not mean, of course, that there is no progress in the recent survey, but there is not sufficient progress to consider that this subject is completely exhausted. Therefore it is very important to give a new direction to the investigations of this crucial issue of Paul’s theology, in order to find more convincing answers to the remaining questions.

1.2 My proposal: In order to give a ‘new direction’ to the question of ‘Paul and the Law,’ I would like to introduce my own proposal: We must look for other events within early Christian history, where the Church confronted similar circumstances. Particularly, I propose to study the situation that Chrysostom confronted in Antioch in the fourth century. To my mind, the situation in Antioch in the fourth century is very similar to that in Galatia in the first century. If this hypothesis is accurate, applying the data which emerges from the study of the situation in fourth- century Antioch to the

⁵ Moo, ‘Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years’, p.305.

⁶ In-Gyu Hong, *The Law in Galatians* (Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplement Series 81; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), p.11.

situation that Paul confronted in Galatia may throw some light upon Paul's position towards the Law.

Therefore, in order to substantiate my proposal, it is very important to investigate, in separate steps, 1) what was the situation in Galatia in Paul's time, 2) what was the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in general, and 3) what was the situation in Antioch in Chrysostom's time.

1.3 The Situation in Galatia: Investigating the substance of the problem which Paul confronted in Galatia, we realize that Paul's Letter to the Galatians is the only source of information which is available. Unfortunately, there is no other source to inform us about the situation in Galatia from the viewpoint of Paul's opponents. But the reliability of Galatians as a source to reconstruct the situation within the churches of Galatia has been questioned by some scholars.⁷

H. D. Betz, although acknowledging the problem of no primary evidence regarding 'the origin, thought and personalities' of Paul's opponents, argues that 'we must reconstruct the views of the opponents on the basis of Galatians alone.' For him, other documents (such as Pauline and deutero-Pauline Epistles, Acts of the Apostles and other Jewish Christian texts of the post-apostolic period) 'can only be supplementary.'⁸

Betz stresses, however, that we must use Galatians with 'methodological caution,' because 'not everything that Paul denies is necessarily an accusation by his opposition, and not everything that he accuses his opponents of doing or thinking represents their

⁷ In-Gyu Hong quotes: 1) W. Schmithals' view that Paul was ill-informed about the agitation of his opponents (*Paul and Gnostics*); and 2) W. Marxsen's view that Paul misunderstood his opponents (*Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to its Problems*). (*The Law in Galatians*, p.97).

⁸ Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 5.

actual goals and intentions.’ Applying Betz’s statement, as a principle, we can successfully reconstruct Paul’s opponents’ views. Betz correctly observes that although Paul never addresses his opponents directly, he addresses the issues which his opponents had introduced into the Galatian churches.⁹ Therefore, we can reconstruct the real dimensions of the situation in Galatia on the basis of the Galatian letter.

At this point it is worth noting the ‘mirror reading’ method which has been applied to Galatians by many scholars in order to reconstruct Paul’s opponents’ message. John M. G. Barclay suggests that the method of ‘mirror reading’ a polemical text such as Galatians is not an ‘unworkable technique,’ as George Lyons suggests in his *Pauline Autobiography*, but it is more difficult than is usually acknowledged. He calls this method ‘one of the most difficult and delicate of all New Testament methods.’¹⁰ Barclay observes four dangerous pitfalls in applying mirror reading to Galatians and suggests seven useful criteria in order to avoid these pitfalls.

1) Barclay mentions firstly the danger of ‘undue selectivity’ in the attempt of some scholars to reconstruct Paul’s opponents’ message, observing that it is unduly selective to restrict our search to Paul’s defensive statements in Gal. 1-2. Barclay suggests that Paul seems to reply to his opponents’ arguments in Gal. 3-4 as well. He concludes, then, that ‘we clearly need some criteria by which we can judge which are the most revealing of Paul’s statements, while also taking seriously the need to provide an explanation for the entire letter.’¹¹ Obviously it is not enough to isolate a statement of Paul and come to conclusions which cannot provide a plausible explanation for the entire letter which is Paul’s response to the crisis brought on by his opponents.

⁹ Betz, *Galatians*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ John M. G. Barclay, ‘Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31 (1987), p.84; 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.79.

2) Barclay also points out the danger of 'over-interpretation' of Paul's statements, which are not necessarily a 'rebuttal of an equally vigorous counter-statement' made by his opponents. He concludes that some scholars would have to take into account a range of other less extreme possibilities which also could be applied to some of Paul's statements as well.¹²

3) Regarding the third danger, that of 'mishandling polemics,' Barclay cautions against 'taking some of Paul's descriptions against his opponents too seriously, or taking sides in the debate.' Barclay underlines the temptation to 'dress up Paul's opponents with the clothes of one's own theological foes,' observing that those who are inclined to 'admire' Paul describe his opponents as malicious, confused and theologically bankrupt, while those who prefer to 'put Paul in his place' describe them as men who were sincere Christians with strong theological arguments.¹³

4) The final danger which Barclay mentions is that of 'latching on to particular words and phrases as direct echoes of the opponents' vocabulary.' He stresses that these words or phrases should not be used as a 'cornerstone of any theory as has all too often been done in recent scholarship on Galatians' because the assumptions which derive from them are not absolutely certain.¹⁴

However, Barclay's greatest contribution to the mirror reading method are the seven useful criteria which he has provided for mirror reading Galatians: 1) Each type of statement (assertion, denial, command, prohibition) is open to a range of interpretations, and therefore it is very important to decide carefully in which of these interpretations the truth lies. For instance, according to Barclay, when Paul asserts

¹² Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter,' p.80.

¹³ Ibid., p.81.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.82.

something that assertion means, at least, that the Galatians may be 'in danger of overlooking what he asserts,' and at most, that 'someone has explicitly denied it;' when Paul denies something, that denial means at least that the Galatians may be 'prone to regard what Paul denies as true,' and at most, that 'someone has explicitly asserted it;' when Paul commands something, that command means, at least, that the Galatians may be 'in danger of neglecting what he commands,' and at most, that 'they are deliberately flouting it;' and when Paul prohibits something, it means, at least, that 'some perceived chance that what is prohibited may be done,' and at most, that 'someone had already disobeyed him.' Between these two extreme possibilities, he says, 'there is a range of many other feasible suggestions.' It is the task of each scholar to find out where the truth lies. 2) A statement with emphasis and urgency may indicate an important issue. 3) The repetition of an argument may again indicate an important issue. 4) The mirror reading must not be applied to an ambiguous word or phrase, but only to statements with clear meaning. 5) The presence of an unfamiliar motif may reflect a particular feature of the situation to which Paul responds to. 6) The results of the above five criteria must give a consistent picture of Paul's opponents, and 7) The results must be historically plausible.¹⁵ Therefore, as Barclay argues, 'New Testament scholars need to learn to be more candid in admitting the real value of their theories, and there is a good case for establishing a sliding scale of hypotheses ranging between *certain* and *incredible*.'¹⁶

Having in mind Betz's principle¹⁷ as well as Barclay's seven criteria in applying mirror reading to Galatians' letter mentioned above, we can turn now to the investigation

¹⁵ Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter,' pp.84-85.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.85. Barclay in the last part of his article makes an attempt to clarify the results which emerged from the application of his criteria, tabulating these results in certain or virtually certain, in highly probable, probable, possible, conceivable and incredible. Ibid., pp.86-89.

¹⁷ That 'not everything that Paul denies is necessarily an accusation by his opponents and not everything that he accuses his opponents of doing and or thinking represents their actual goals and intentions.'

of the situation in Galatia in Paul's time.

Paul, in Gal.1: 6-9, gives the information that some people had undermined the gospel which he preached to the Galatians. This probably happened during his absence. Paul does not report their name or the name of the group to which they belonged. He describes them as οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς 'some who are confusing you.' Paul refers to his opponents in the third person while he addresses his arguments to the Galatians in the second person. For Louis Martyn, the fact that Paul consistently differentiates his opponents from the Galatians infers that Paul's opponents came from outside. He also assumes that Paul very likely knows his opponents' names, but he employs such colourless expressions as 'some persons' instead of using their names in order to indicate 'disdain.'¹⁸

Although Paul makes no reference to their name, he is rather interested in revealing and condemning their purpose: they want to pervert the gospel of Christ (Gal.1: 7). In order to stop their influence upon the Gentile Christians of Galatia, he anathematizes twice those who dare to preach any other gospel. Paul is forced to stress that neither he himself nor an angel from heaven could preach any other gospel (Gal. 1:8). According to Paul, therefore, their purpose was the distortion of his gospel.

Paul also expresses his astonishment that the Galatians so quickly were turning to another gospel (Gal.1:6-7). His reference to 'another gospel' implies that his opponents appeared to preach another gospel, or at least the Galatians understood their preaching as another gospel. The way in which Paul tries to turn the Galatians away from that gospel and the characterization of this other gospel as a perversion of the gospel of Christ, shows undoubtedly that the preaching of his opponents differs radically from

¹⁸ J. Louis Martyn, 'A Law - Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 38 (1985) pp. 313-314.

Paul's preaching. Barclay, applying his method of mirror-reading Galatians, argues that Paul's reference to 'another gospel' indicates that the opponents were Christians and most probably Jewish Christians, because Paul repeatedly associates their message with circumcision (Gal. 6:12-13; 5:2-4; 11-12) giving emphasis to it (criteria 3 and 2).¹⁹

Louis Martyn, dealing with Gal.1:6-7 suggests that Paul's opponents were in fact referring to their message as 'the gospel.' According to him, Paul makes a self-correction in Gal.1:7 to his previous statement in Gal. 1:6: the Galatians are turning away from the gospel instead to turning to another gospel. The fact that Paul associates his opponents with the term 'gospel' leads Louis Martyn to the conclusion that 'no less than the Apostle himself, the Teachers²⁰ are in the full sense of the term evangelists, finding their basic identity not as persons who struggle against Paul, but rather as those who preach God's good news.'²¹ It seems probable that Paul's opponents were referring to their teaching as gospel and therefore they introduced themselves as teachers, evangelists to the Galatians. This possibility could also explain in a way the polemical character of the whole letter: It would not be necessary for Paul to react the way he reacted if he just had to confront troublemakers, but if these troublemakers appeared as teachers and missionaries then Paul's reactions seem necessary, for his opponents would have had more possibility of being accepted by the Galatians. Therefore Paul's opponents seem to be missionaries who preached 'another gospel,' very different from Paul's gospel.

In Gal.2: 2-10, Paul uses a heavier designation for his opponents. Instead of οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς ('some who are confusing you') he calls them παρεισάκτους

¹⁹ Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter,' p.86.

²⁰ Louis Martyn prefers the term 'Teachers' to 'Judaizers.' For him the term 'Judaizers' means 'someone who wishes to hem in Gentile Christians by requiring them to live according to "narrow" Jewish practices,' while with the term 'Teachers' means someone who is 'embarked on an ecumenical mission.' Martyn, 'A Law - Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians,' pp. 314.

²¹ Ibid., p. 314.

ψευδοδελφους ('false brothers') who intended to restrict the liberty of Paul, Barnabas and Titus, when they visited Jerusalem. Paul's opponents' purpose seems to have failed because, according to Paul, the other disciples did not force Titus to be circumcised (Gal.2:3) and did not add or subtract anything to what Paul said (Gal.2:7). For Paul this was evident from the fact that the 'pillars' shook hands with himself and Barnabas (Gal.2:10). Therefore, according to Paul, his opponents tried to oppose the liberal position of Paul toward the question of imposing the Law on the Gentiles.

However, before dealing with the information about the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem, it is essential to deal with the discrepancies between chapter 2 of Galatians and chapters 11 and 15 of Acts. The diverging reports about Paul's journeys to Jerusalem in Paul's Letters and Acts have led contemporary scholars to divergent views. Some of them argue that Gal. 2 describes the same events as Acts 11, while others think that the events in view are those of Acts 15 or Acts 18.²² While Paul clearly states that he had visited Jerusalem three times,²³ Luke reports five journeys.²⁴

Gerd Lüdemann argues that Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 18:22 is identical with Paul's second trip to Jerusalem for the Apostolic Conference, while Acts 11:27 and 15:1 derive from Lucan redaction. Lüdemann argues that Luke did not simply 'create episodes but rather reworked traditions.'²⁵ Thus, according to Lüdemann, Paul's first journey is cited in Acts 9:26 and Gal. 1:18, the second journey in Acts 11:27, 15:1, 18:22 and Gal. 2:1, and the third journey in Acts 21:15 and Gal. 2:10. The fact that Luke reworks Paul's

²² For more details about the views held by contemporary scholars see: Robert Jewett, *Dating Paul's Life* (London: SCM Press, 1979), pp.89-91.

²³ The first to meet Peter (Gal. 1:18), the second to take part in the Apostolic Conference (Gal. 2:1) and the third to deliver the collection (Rom. 15:25-26; I Cor. 16:1-4; Gal. 2:10).

²⁴ Acts 9:26; 11:27; 15:1; 18:22; 21:15.

²⁵ Gerd Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: A Study in Chronology* (London: SCM Press, 1984), p.199.

second journey three times (Acts 11:27; 15:1; 18:22) solves the discrepancies²⁶ of Paul's five trips to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts instead of three trips mentioned in Paul's Letters. However, the point which interests us here is not the reconstruction of Paul's chronology, but the reconstruction of the situation in the Galatian churches. Although Luke in Acts 15 and 18 reworked Paul's second trip to Jerusalem, it is evident that Acts 15 and Gal. 2 refer to the same event: the Apostolic Conference. Lightfoot argues that 'the striking coincidence of circumstances and the difficulty of finding any equally probable solution' show why the second visit to Jerusalem in Gal.2 'has from the earliest times been identified with the visit recorded in Acts 15.' He stresses that from Irenaeus and other ancient and modern writers, the supportive arguments of the above view 'are sufficiently strong to resist the pressure of objections.'²⁷ Paul Nadim Tarazi, similarly, suggests that 'all the evidence points in one direction: the Jerusalem meeting reported in Acts 15 not only rendered a decision that affected the Pauline churches in Syria, Cilicia and South Galatia, but also was itself triggered by a controversy in those churches. In Gal. 2:1-10 we have Paul's own account of the same event.'²⁸

The two main pieces of evidence which lead Tarazi to the above suggestion are: 1) the letter with the decisions of the Apostolic Conference was addressed to the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:23), which includes the area of South Galatia to which the Galatian letter was addressed too; and 2) the 'struggle at Jerusalem did take place specifically for the sake of the Galatians' (Gal. 2:5), and that is why Paul was astonished by the fact that the Galatians were so quickly turning to another gospel.

²⁶ For more details about the rest of the discrepancies between Gal. 2 and Acts 15 see: Jewett, *Dating Paul's Life*, pp.63-85; Basileios Stogiannos, *The Apostolic Conference* (Yearbook of Theology Department, v.18; Thessaloniki: University Press, 1973), pp.189-197.

²⁷ Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Eight edition; London: Macmillan and Co, 1884), p.123. More details about his arguments see pp.123-128.

²⁸ Paul Nadim Tarazi, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Orthodox Biblical Studies; Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), p.10.

For him the conflict within the Galatian churches is the main reason for the convocation of the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem.²⁹ Tarazi's view is in accord with Hans Dieter Betz's view that the information given in Acts 'agrees remarkably well with Paul's own account about the purpose of Paul's journey for the Apostolic Conference: Paul's gospel was the point of the controversy because he did not prescribe circumcision.'³⁰

Tarazi's first piece of evidence (that the area in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia includes the area of South Galatia) makes it necessary to open a parenthesis to deal with the views held by modern scholarship about the area to which the Galatian letter was addressed. There has been a controversy about the area referred to by address to 'the churches of Galatia' (Gal.1:1).

William M. Ramsay, John Bligh, Frederic F. Bruce, Tarazi, and other scholars support the view that Paul's letter was addressed to the Roman province of Galatia (the so-called South Galatian theory),³¹ while Lightfoot, Betz and other scholars support the view that Paul's letter was addressed to the ethnological Galatia, that is, the territory in the central parts of Asia Minor (the so-called North Galatian theory).³² The fact that so many 'competent scholars' can be cited in support of either position leads Frederic F. Bruce to the suggestion that the evidence for neither of the above two theories is 'absolutely conclusive.' For him, however, 'the weight of the evidence favours the South

²⁹ Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.9-10.

³⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, p.85.

³¹ This theory is supported by William M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire Before A. D. 170* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), pp. 97-111; John Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle* (London: St. Paul Publications, 1970), pp.3-7; Frederic F. Bruce, *the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: the Paternoster Press, 1982), pp. 3-18; Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp. 1, 8-9.

³² This theory is supported by Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 18-20; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, pp.3-5; Ioannis Karavidopoulos, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras Press, 1980), pp.154-156; Sabbas Agourides, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Athens: Gregory Press, 1971), pp.247-251.

Galatian view.’³³

Lightfoot (defender of the North Galatian theory) argues that the term ‘Galatia’ should be understood in an ethnic and not a political sense in both Galatians and Acts. For him the phrase τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν (Acts 16:6) means ‘the Phrygian and Galatian country’ which was not Lycaonia and Pisidia but some region which belonged either to Phrygia or Galatia. He concludes, then, that ‘the Phrygian and Galatian country’ is Galatia in the narrow sense, the area occupied by the Gaulish settlers in the third century before Christ. Thus he conjectures that this area probably includes Ancyra, Pessinus, Tavium and Juliopolis and therefore that ‘at these or some of these places’ Paul founded the churches of Galatia.³⁴ Lightfoot’s main arguments are: 1) Paul and Luke use the term ‘Galatia’ ‘in its popular rather than in its formal and official sense.’ Since Mysia, Phrygia, Pisidia are all ‘geographical expressions,’ and since they occur in the same narrative (Acts 15:30-16:8), then the term ‘Galatia’ is ‘similarly used.’ 2) Various ancient authors (Caesar and Cicero) call the Gauls ‘fickle’ and ‘superstitious,’ which fits with Paul’s characterization of the recipients of his letter.³⁵ James Moffatt, another defender of the North Galatian theory, argues that Paul had visited the Galatian churches twice (Gal. 4:13 πρότερον ‘former’) which fits with Acts 16:6 and 18:23. Moffatt, in agreement with Lightfoot, suggests that the phrase τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν (Acts 16:6) should be understood as popular and geographical terms which indicate ‘not one district but two.’³⁶ According to Moffatt, the major objections to the South Galatian theory are: 1) If Derbe, Lystra and the rest of the areas belong to

³³ Bruce, *the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p. 18.

³⁴ Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 20.

³⁵ For a summary of Lightfoot’s arguments see: Richard Longenecker, *Galatians* (World Biblical Commentary, vol. 41; Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1990), p. 1xiv.

³⁶ James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament and Other Papers* (Thesis D. Litt.; Glasgow University, 1911), pp.84, 93.

the Roman province of Galatia, 'it is inexplicable why the name should not occur in Acts 13-14.' 2) There is no mention of Paul's illness (Gal.4:13) in Acts 13-14. 3) The Galatians received Paul as an angel of God and as Jesus Christ in Gal.4:14, which is a very different thing from hailing Paul as the pagan god Hermes in Acts 14:12.³⁷

Dealing with the arguments in favour of the North Galatian theory, Ramsay (a defender of the South Galatian theory) observes that they 'take the form of pointing out difficulties in the other theory.' While he acknowledges the existence of difficulties in the South Galatian theory (see above for instance the difficulties that Moffatt observes against the South Galatian Theory), he argues that the North Galatian theory avoids these difficulties 'by creating an unknown set of churches' to which Paul's letter was addressed. For him the North Galatian churches are an unknown factor and 'it cannot be either proved or disproved that the facts alluded to in the epistle suit them.'³⁸

Ramsay, enumerating the general arguments which have been held by the supporters of the South Galatian theory, observes that some of these arguments have very little value while others at least corroborate the theory. For him 'the real proof must depend on the interpretation of Acts;' 'the theory stands or falls thereby.'³⁹ Ramsay suggests that Acts 16: 4-6 is the decisive passage for the settlement of the controversy. Verse 6 'is a geographical recapitulation' of the journey which is implied in verses 4 and 5. Ramsay argues that verses 4 and 5 describe the entire journey through South Galatia, the journey to Lystra and Derbe (already mentioned in verse 1) and that to Iconium and Antioch. Thus the phrase τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν (Acts 16:6) means, according to Ramsay, 'the country which is Phrygian and Galatic.' Ramsay argues that

³⁷ James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament and Other Papers*, pp. 92-99.

³⁸ Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p.105.

³⁹ Ibid., p.97.

this phrase refers to 'a single district to which both adjectives apply.'⁴⁰ He stresses that the area in Acts 16:6 is not called 'Galatia' but Γαλατική χώρα. The use of the adjective 'Galaticus,' he continues, is employed as a geographical term in the term 'Pontius Galaticus' to denote a large district of Pontus which was added to the Roman province of Galatia. Ramsay also argues that the governor of Galatia in some Roman documents of the first century appears as governor of Galatia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Isauria, Pontus Galaticus. Thus Ramsay concludes that 'the route described in Acts 16:6 did not touch North Galatia at any point.'⁴¹

Starting from the point of view that 'if Paul did found churches in North Galatia, Paul must have done so in the course of the journey described in Acts 15:39-16:10,'⁴² as Bligh observes, it is essential to clarify the probable route of Paul's journey mentioned in the above passage, in order to cross-check how possible it was for Paul to go as far as the northern area of Galatia to Ancyra. According to Acts, Paul goes from Antioch (15:35) and Cilicia to Derbe and Lystra (16:1); then, from city to city (16:4); and through 'Phrygian and Galatian country' τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν (16:6). During this route the Holy Spirit prevents Paul from preaching the word in Asia (16:6) and thus Paul comes to the borders of Mysia (16:7); and from Mysia to Troas (16:8). The North Galatian hypothesis that Paul probably goes north to Ancyra cannot stand, for then Paul would not come to the borders of Mysia, as Luke informs in 16: 6-7. Thus Bligh concludes that 'there is no room for the founding of North Galatian churches' in Acts 15:39-16:10, and 'a visit to Ancyra would have taken Paul far out of his way.'⁴³

Coming to the argument of the North Galatian theory that Paul could not have

⁴⁰ Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 75-78.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

⁴² Bligh, *Galatians*, p.4.

⁴³ Ibid., pp.4-5.

addressed the inhabitants of Pisidia and Lycaonia ‘foolish Galatians’ or even ‘Galatians’ (Gal.3:1), we might say that this cannot be a serious argument. Although Caesar and Cicero indeed call the Gauls ‘fickle’ and ‘superstitious’ which seems to fit with Paul’s characterization to the receivers of his letter as ‘foolish Galatians,’ this argument does not mean necessarily that Gauls are the only one who possibly could be described ‘fickle’ and ‘superstitious.’ Bruce correctly argues that this argument ‘would be valid only if fickleness and superstition were not characteristic of other nations than Gauls and Galatians.’ However, he observes that ‘we have to look no farther than the Galatians’ Phrygian neighbours for another reputed example.’⁴⁴ Regarding now the argument that Paul could not even call the inhabitants of Pisidia and Lycaonia ‘Galatians,’ Bligh insists that ‘if Paul wanted a common designation for his group of churches in Pisidia (Antioch), in Lycaonia (Iconium and Lystra), in the Kingdom of Antiochus (Derbe) and in Pamphilia (Perge), it is hard to think of a more suitable title than the churches of Galatia.’⁴⁵

Finally, it is worth noting that Ramsay himself accepted the North Galatian theory at the beginning of his exploration of Asia Minor, but he abandoned that theory because of the evidence he found about the whole organization of Asia Minor in the first-century Roman Empire. The results of his research made him finally a defender of the South Galatian theory.⁴⁶ Taking into account all the above arguments, it seems correct to say that the South Galatian theory is more probable than the North Galatian theory.

Returning now to Tarazi’s view, the letter with the decisions of the Apostolic Conference was addressed to the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:23), and this includes the area of South Galatia to which the Galatian letter was

⁴⁴ Bruce, *the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, pp.7-8.

⁴⁵ Bligh, *Galatians*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Bruce, *the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p.8.

addressed is correct. Therefore, it seems correct to conclude that Gal. 2 and Acts 15 describe the same event, the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem, which took place in order to solve the problems that had emerged in Galatia.

The Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29, Gal. 2:1-10) had already confronted the question of imposing the Law on the Gentiles and had decided that no one must obligate the Gentiles to observe the Law. Acts 15:24 clearly gives us the reason for that conference: the apostles in Jerusalem heard that certain Christians who went from Jerusalem to Antioch disturbed the Gentiles by saying that they must be circumcised and keep the Law. However, according to both Acts and Galatians (Acts 15:24; Gal. 2:6,9), Paul's opponents did not have any instructions from the apostles, and there is no contradiction between Paul and the other apostles. F. C. Baur, the Tübingen scholar, on the contrary suggests that Paul did not merely contend with the false brothers but with the Jerusalem apostles and his opponents in Galatia were legitimate representatives of the Jerusalem apostles.⁴⁷ I. G. Hong rejects Baur's view, supporting Lightfoot's view that the Letter to the Galatians 'shows the true relations existing between St. Paul and the Twelve.'⁴⁸ Hong, in accord with Lightfoot, supports the view that the apostles in Jerusalem acknowledged the validity of Paul's gospel and apostolic authority,⁴⁹ and that the incident in Antioch with Peter does not point in the contrary direction, because Peter's motive was not his theological principles but his fear of the Law-observant party in Antioch.⁵⁰ This leads Hong to the conclusion that Paul's opponents 'did not have the backing of the apostles,' and thus Baur's view that the Jerusalem apostles stood behind

⁴⁷ Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, his Life and his Work, his Epistles and his Doctrine* (translated by E. Zeller, in 2 volumes; London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), vol.1, p.121.

⁴⁸ Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 68.

⁴⁹ During Paul's first and second journey to Jerusalem in Gal. 1:18-20 and 2:1-10.

⁵⁰ Φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς (Gal. 2:12).

Paul's opponents must be dismissed as unfounded.⁵¹

Likewise Schoeps, who identifies three groups --Paul's group, James' and Peter's group and the Pharisaic Judaizers' group-- suggests that the deep gulf did not exist between Paul and the Pillars but between Paul and the 'Judaizers.' The contrast between Paul and the Pillars did not reflect the real historical situation.⁵² The above scholars agree with the conclusion that Paul's opponents did not have any instructions from the apostles, and therefore, there is no contradiction between Paul and the other apostles. Their conclusion seems to be in accord with the evidence from Acts 15 and Gal. 2.

Having shown that both Gal. 2 and Acts 15 describe the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem, which took place in order to solve the problems that had emerged in Galatia, it remains to deal with the decisions of that conference and their effect on Paul's stand regarding circumcision.

Paul reminds the recipients of his letter of what the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem had already decided about the Gentiles. The controversy between Paul and his opponents was over whether or not the Gentile Christians had to observe the Mosaic Law and especially circumcision, which seems to be the central point of the conflict. This is obvious from the fact that Paul mentions that the other disciples did not force Titus, who was a Gentile, to be circumcised (Gal.2:3). Moreover, Paul accuses his opponents of trying to force the Galatians to be circumcised in order to have a reputation and not be persecuted by the Jews. This leads to the conclusion that his opponents were not simply Jews but Jewish Christians who forced the Gentiles to be circumcised in order to reduce the reactions of non- Christian Jews against the Jewish Christians (Gal. 6:12).

On the contrary, while Paul strongly gives us the impression that the apostles

⁵¹ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, pp.118-119.

⁵² Schoeps, *Paul*, pp.66-69.

approved his gospel 'free from circumcision' (Gal. 2:3), he also gives us the impression that his opponents spread the 'rumour' that Paul himself had preached circumcision elsewhere (Gal. 5:11). Tarazi correctly suggests that if the Galatians were 'so quickly' convinced by Paul's opponents 'gospel,' then his opponents 'must have presented them with seemingly compelling evidence.'⁵³ Paul's opponents probably appealed to Paul's decision to circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). This fact was well known to the Galatians because Timothy accompanied Paul on his visit to the Galatian churches.⁵⁴ Thus Timothy's circumcision is probably the basis of the 'rumour' that there was a time when Paul himself insisted on circumcision. Paul strongly denies this accusation by appealing to the case of Titus, who was not forced to be circumcised, although the 'false brothers' tried to do so (Gal. 2:3).

Tarazi suggests that the story of Timothy's circumcision 'was added' by Luke to refute Paul's opponents' accusation that Paul was against circumcision because he wanted to 'make things easier' for the Gentiles in order to 'allure them and thereby make a name for himself.'⁵⁵ However Tarazi does not provide any convincing evidence to support his hypothesis. Paul, on the contrary, gives no indication that his opponents made such an accusation against him, and if such an accusation existed he should have counteracted it as he did to other accusations against him. Therefore Tarazi's conclusion that this story was added by Luke is not correct.

Chrysostom, trying to explain the reason which led Paul to circumcise Timothy, correctly suggests that if 'the Jews' had known that Timothy was against circumcision then they would have been prejudiced against him and they would not have given him a

⁵³ Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.13.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.13; cf Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p.105.

⁵⁵ Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.14.

hearing. In order to avoid this possibility Paul circumcised Timothy. Chrysostom argues that Paul circumcised Timothy, but his final purpose was to abolish circumcision through Timothy's circumcision.⁵⁶ Commenting on Acts 16:3, he repeats the above argument. For Chrysostom the circumcision of Timothy is a real event which he does not understand to be contradictory to Paul's basic stand regarding circumcision.⁵⁷

It is apparent from the whole book of Acts that Luke's aim is to defend Paul's stand, and he would have omitted the story of Timothy's circumcision if he thought it contradictory to Paul's stand regarding circumcision. Moreover, Luke reports that story just after the assertion that circumcision was unnecessary for Gentiles (Acts 15:1-35).

Thus the solution must be found in a comparison between the case of Timothy and that of Titus. Titus was a Gentile (Gal.2:3), and if Paul had gone along with circumcising him then circumcision would need to be applied to all the Gentile Christians. On the contrary, Timothy was not a Gentile since his mother was Jewish (Acts 16:1), and therefore his case differs from that of Titus. Moreover, Paul wanted to have Timothy as a companion in his missionary activities, and circumcised Timothy 'because of the Jews' which does not mean 'out of fear of the Jews' but rather 'for the sake of convincing the Jews' (Acts 16:3). This is evident from the following two verses where Luke describes Paul's activities in general terms: In every city, Paul and his companions inform the faithful about the decisions of the apostles and the presbyters which were taken in Jerusalem, that is the decisions regarding circumcision and Gentiles (Acts 16:4). Luke describes the results of Paul's activities as well: the Christian churches were increasing

⁵⁶ PG 61,636; John Chrysostom's writings (Original text with modern Greek translation, Greek Fathers of the Church; Thessaloniki: Patristic Publications Gregory Palamas, 1979), v.20 p.242. (Subsequently cited as: E. II. E. 34, p.242); John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians and Homilies on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (English translation, Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church v. 12; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1840), p.32. (Subsequently cited as: Library of the Fathers. 12, p.32).

⁵⁷ PG 60, 247; E.II.E. 16A, p.308.

day by day (Acts 16:4-5). The fact that Luke clearly connects the story of Timothy's circumcision with the success of Paul's activities indicates that Paul circumcised Timothy in order to convince the Jews, as Tarazi argues.⁵⁸ Timothy as Paul's companion must be circumcised, otherwise the Jews, as Chrysostom correctly argues, would have been prejudiced against him and they would not have given him a hearing. Thus circumcision, in the case of Timothy, is a necessary precondition because Paul intended to use him as a preacher of the Christian gospel.

Therefore, while it is accurate that both Paul and his opponents appealed to real events and not to rumours (though they used these events to come to very different conclusions), the fact that Paul circumcised Timothy does not mean that Paul had previously included circumcision in his gospel. Paul's argument that he was persecuted precisely because he preached the abolition of circumcision (Gal. 5:11), indicates the reverse. If it was correct that Paul preached circumcision then he would not have had opponents at all.

Turning now to the incident with Peter in Antioch (Gal.2: 14) we find another important piece of evidence regarding Paul's opponents' effort to impose the Law on the Gentile Christians. Paul, describing the incident with Peter in Antioch, informs us that Peter stopped eating with the Gentile Christians only when *τινας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου* ('certain men from James') came to Antioch. Paul opposed Peter in public, stressing that it was not right that he, who was a Jew by nature, did not live as a Jew, yet at the same time forced the Gentiles to do so. These 'certain men from James' tried to force the Gentiles to 'Judaize.'⁵⁹ Their name leads us to the conjecture that they were sent to Antioch by

⁵⁸ Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.14.

⁵⁹ The term 'Judaizers' has been used by some modern scholars to identify Paul's opponents. Paul himself, however, does not call them 'Judaizers' but uses the verb 'Judaize' to describe their activities. Moreover 'Judaizing' means living according to Jewish customs and not forcing someone to become Jewish.

James, or that they wanted to give the impression that they were sent by James, exploiting his authority. Hong's observing that in the description of the incident in Antioch Paul 'does not pronounce any criticism against the men from James or against James himself, but draws an analogy between the Judaizing behaviour of Peter and the agitation of his antagonists in Galatia'⁶⁰ seems correct.

Both 'some who are confusing you' (Gal.1:7) and 'certain men from James' (Gal. 2:12) seem to have had the same purpose. The hypothesis that Paul's opponents tried to exploit the authority of James, spreading the rumour that they were sent by him, is more plausible. This is evident from the standpoint that although there was no contradiction between Paul and the apostles in Jerusalem, Paul is forced to defend himself from such an accusation. The centre of the controversy in the incident in Antioch is whether or not the Gentile Christians had to live according to the Mosaic Law.

In Gal. 2:16, just after the description of the incident in Antioch with Peter, Paul stresses that one can be saved not by the works of the Law but by the faith in Jesus Christ. This statement is identical with his gospel, which his opponents tried to distort (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul attributes to them that they wanted to be justified by the Law (Gal.5:2-6). This indicates the soteriological basis of the controversy between Paul and his opponents.

In Gal.4: 9-10, Paul quotes another piece of information about the view that his opponents spread among the Gentile Christians in Galatia: They exhorted them to observe days and months and seasons and years (Gal.4:10). Paul's fear that he has somehow laboured 'in vain' (Gal.4:11) indicates that the Galatians had already fallen into such observances or were on their way to doing so.

What customs has Paul in mind here? The connection of this statement with the

⁶⁰ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, p.120.

previous verse could lead us to the conclusion that Paul is referring to the previous religious practices of the Galatians which they observed before their conversion to Christianity. However, if we connect this statement with Paul's opponents' purpose, as it emerges from the entire Letter to the Galatians, then it could lead us to the conclusion that Paul has Jewish observances in mind.

The first possibility is supported by Paul Nadim Tarazi: He suggests that the observance of the Sabbath was, alongside circumcision, 'one of the basic tenets of Judaism' and therefore Paul should have mentioned it by name and not simply included it under the word 'days.' Thus he concludes that 'Gal. 4:10 must be a general description of the Galatians' previous religious practices.'⁶¹ Lightfoot, on the contrary, suggests that Paul 'distinctly refers to their previous idolatrous worship and no less distinctly and emphatically does he describe their adoption of Jewish ritualism.'⁶² E. P. Sanders likewise supports the view that in Gal.4:10 Paul implies 'the observance of the special days and seasons which are required by the Jewish Law.'⁶³

To my mind Tarazi's view that Paul should have mentioned the observance of the Sabbath by name is not correct. Since circumcision and the Sabbath are the most important observances demanded by Law and Paul explicitly fights against circumcision, we may assume that although he does not mention Sabbath by name he has it in mind.

Why then Paul does not mention Sabbath by name? Paul does not give any explanation, but having in mind the polemical character of Galatians one might come to some possible answers to the above question. It is worth noting Bligh's hypothesis that 'Sabbath had already gained widespread acceptance among the Gentiles in general

⁶¹ Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.222.

⁶² Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p.165.

⁶³ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.101.

(pagans as well as Christians) and was therefore no longer a distinguishing mark of the Jews.’⁶⁴ Philo in his work *On Moses*, as Bligh observes, argues that Sabbath was observed almost by everyone in his time:

πάντας γὰρ ἐπάγεται καὶ συνεπιστρέφει, βαρβάρους, Ἕλληνας, ἠπειρώτας, νησιώτας, ἔθνη τὰ ἑῷα, τὰ ἐσπέρια, Εὐρώπην, Ἀσίαν, ἅπασαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀπὸ περάτων ἐπὶ πέρατα. Τίς γὰρ τὴν ἱερὰν ἐκείνην ἐβδόμην οὐκ ἐκτετίμηκεν, ἄνεσιν πόνων καὶ ῥασιώνων αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς πλησιάζουσιν, οὐκ ἐλευθέροις μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ δούλοις, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ὑποζυγίοις διδούς;

They [Jews] attract and win the attention of all, of barbarians, of Greeks, of dwellers on the mainland and islands, of nations of the east and of the west, of Europe and Asia, of the whole inhabited world from end to end. For who has not shewn his high respect for that sacred seventh day, by giving rest and relaxation from labour to himself and his neighbours, freemen and slaves alike, and beyond these to his beasts?⁶⁵

This passage, although it contains ‘a good measure of exaggeration,’ at least to some extent must be true that Sabbath gained acceptance among pagans and Christians. If this hypothesis is correct, then Paul’s avoidance to mention Sabbath by name is quite understandable, because of the polemical character of Galatians. If Sabbath indeed gained widespread acceptance among pagans as well, and was thus, no longer ‘a distinguishing mark’ of the Jews, then it would not be necessary for Paul to fight against it. It would be enough for Paul just to imply Sabbath and not to mention it by name.

It could be also argued, in parallel to Bligh’s hypothesis, that the observance of Sabbath could be neutralized and replaced by the observance of ‘Lord’s day.’ Christianity, as is well known, finally replaced Sabbath with ‘Lord’s day.’ Paul does not give importance to the observance of Sabbath because he wants to fight against circumcision, clearly the most distinguishing mark of the Jews and one of the most important elements

⁶⁴ Bligh, *Galatians*, p.373.

⁶⁵ *Philo with an English Translation by F. H. Colson* in ‘The Loeb Classical Library’ (London: William Heinemann, 1935), vol. VI *On Moses* II, 20-21 pp. 458-461.

of the Galatian crisis.

While what is conjectured above is only a possibility, it is obvious that Paul in Gal. 4:10 does not merely refer to the Galatians' previous religious practices, as Tarazi suggests, but also refers to Jewish practices, that is, the well-known Jewish custom of the observance of 'days, months, seasons and years,' and the observance of the Sabbath is probably implied in the word 'days.' Particularly, the observance of 'days' is probably Sabbath and the weekly fast days, the observance of 'months' are the new moon celebrations, the observance of 'seasons' are the great festivals of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Dedication, and the observance of 'years' are the sabbatical and jubilee years.⁶⁶ What is necessary to stress, therefore, is the fact that the above Jewish custom is obviously a part of Paul's opponents' message, and that the Galatians had already fallen into such observances, or at least they were on their way to doing so.

Paul also implies that the validity of his gospel and apostleship was questioned by his opponents. This is evident from the fact that Paul is forced to defend his apostolic authority by stressing that his gospel is not a human invention but a revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul repeatedly asserts the divine origin of his gospel, and at the same time, strongly denies the human origin of his gospel (Gal.1:1; 6-9; 11-12; 16; 2:7). Applying here Barclay's method of mirror-reading regarding the cases when Paul makes an assertion or a denial (criteria 1a and b), and repeatedly emphasizes his assertion or denial (criteria 2 and 3), we may assume that the validity of his gospel and apostleship was questioned by his opponents.⁶⁷

Paul reminds the Galatians that the apostles in Jerusalem acknowledged his apostolic authority as well as his gospel (Gal.2:7-8). Hong's suggestion that 'Paul is not

⁶⁶ Bruce, *the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p. 206; Bligh, *Galatians*, p.370.

⁶⁷ For Barclay's seven criteria for mirror reading Galatians see pp.7-8 of this work.

involved in a theological debate with his opponents,' but rather he attempts to establish in general the theological basis of his gospel and apostleship⁶⁸ is not correct. This is evident from the fact that Paul strongly stressed that, after his Damascus Road vision, he did not seek any human authorization but started his mission immediately (Gal. 1:16-19).

Louis Martyn focuses his effort to reconstruct the message of Paul's opponents on the story of Abraham and the identity of his descendants (Gal. 3:1-29). He suggests that, although Paul does not explicitly mention his opponents here, he has them very much in mind. Paul, he says, provides his own interpretation of Gen. 15:6 'to answer a question which is not posed by the text itself.' His observing that the expression 'descendants of Abraham' has no place elsewhere in Paul's preaching is accurate, for he mentions it only in Galatians.⁶⁹ Moreover, Louis Martyn supports the view that the issue of the identity of Abraham's descendants is not Paul's and that Paul borrowed its key terms from developments in the Galatian churches.⁷⁰ Hong suggests in accord with Louis Martyn that 'the crux of the debate' is the question 'who are the true descendants of Abraham?' and therefore we must regard the identity of Abraham's descendants as the major issue of Paul's opponents.⁷¹ The story of Abraham and the issue of the identity of his true descendants is one of the arguments of Paul's opponents.

So, who are the true descendants of Abraham? Paul clearly argues that the true descendants are 'those of faith' (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, Gal. 3:6-7). His opponents on the contrary probably argue to the Galatians that the true descendants of Abraham are those who obey

⁶⁸ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, p.106.

⁶⁹ It worth noting that Barclay's fifth criterion for mirror reading Galatians (that is, the presense of an 'unfamiliar motif' may reflect a particular situation to which Paul responds to) supports Martyn's observing that the term 'descendants of Abraham' has no place elsewhere in Paul's letters and therefore Paul responds to his opponents' argument.

⁷⁰ Martyn, 'A Law - Observant Mission to Gentiles', pp.317-320.

⁷¹ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, pp. 104-105.

the Law as Abraham did. And since circumcision is undoubtedly the trademark of the Law, it was obvious to Paul's opponents that the true descendants of Abraham are they who observe circumcision as Abraham did. For them, as Martyn argues, 'Abraham was in fact obedient to the Law, not only keeping circumcision (he circumcised himself and Isaac), but also observing the holy feasts on the correct days.'⁷² This is evident from the fact that Paul's opponents based their message on circumcision (Gal. 2:3) and tried to prove that even Paul himself had preached circumcision elsewhere (Gal. 5:11) by spreading the story of Timothy's circumcision (Acts 16: 1-3).

If it is correct that the controversy between Paul and his opponents is over the identification of the true descendants of Abraham, then to what extent did Paul's opponents demand obedience to the Law? Hong supports the view that Paul's opponents tried to impose upon the Galatians the entire Law 'for full membership of the covenant community.' For him this is evident from Paul's polemic against the Law, his emphasis on the Law's inferiority to the Abrahamic promises and on the Law's temporary validity, and from the fact that the observance of the whole Law is a logical consequence of circumcision.⁷³ Sanders suggests that Paul's opponents may have employed 'a policy of gradualism,' requiring first observance of some 'major commandments (circumcision, food, days).'⁷⁴

What is obvious from these views is that the opponents demanded obedience to the Law to some extent, but we cannot accurately describe to what extent they demanded it, and particularly to what extent they persuaded the Galatians to adhere to the Law.

Having reconstructed Paul's opponents' message, it remains to investigate their

⁷² Martyn, 'A Law - Observant Mission to Gentiles', p.321.

⁷³ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, pp. 106-110.

⁷⁴ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.29 and p.56, note 58.

identity as well. Louis Martyn, dealing with their identity, suggests that in the early years of Christianity there existed two different missions to the Gentiles, one without the observance of the Law and one with the observance of the Law, the former under Paul and the latter under his opponents. His whole article is actually a very serious effort to prove this view. Martyn refers to Adolf von Harnack's theory that Peter pursued the Law-observant mission to the Jews and Paul pursued the Law-free mission to the Gentiles. This portrait, Martyn says, was drawn 'on the basis of the primary evidence of Paul's Letters, traditions and editorial material in Acts and other traditions throughout the gospels.' He says that Harnack's portrait seems 'well founded, being drawn from traditions formulated in the very early years of the church's history.'⁷⁵

Martyn, however, suggests that this 'standard portrait of early Christian missions is surely in need of modification.' He argues that 'we cannot be confident of our primary sources, because of their evident biases,' underlining that the New Testament is 'the collection of the victorious party.' He appeals to two Pseudo-Clementine writings, *The Ascents of James* and *The Preachings of Peter*. These writings mention two missions to the Gentiles in the second century, one Law-observant and one free-Law. However, as Martyn himself stresses, we cannot infer that these sources are free of bias either. Moreover, he admits that we cannot be sure that Paul's opponents in Galatia are 'historical progenitors' of the communities reflected in the above sources.⁷⁶ We therefore need more convincing evidence before we accept or reject Martyn's view. The lack of any primary source for Paul's opponents' own views makes any effort to clarify this possibility difficult.

All the above leads to the conclusion that Paul confronted in Galatia some Jewish

⁷⁵ Martyn, 'A Law - Observant Mission to Gentiles', pp.307-309.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.309-312, 323.

Christians who came from outside preaching ‘another gospel’ which was radically different from Paul’s gospel. These opponents forced the Galatians to observe circumcision and other Jewish customs, appealing to the story of Abraham and his true descendants. They accused Paul of having himself preached circumcision elsewhere, referring to the story of Timothy’s circumcision, and contested Paul’s apostolic authority. The Galatians were almost convinced by the opponents’ ‘gospel.’

The incident in Antioch with Peter seems of the same nature as the situation in Galatia. The Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem took place to solve these problems which emerged in the greater area of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, an area which included the Galatian Churches as well. These two pieces of evidence indicate that the situation described above existed not only in the Galatian Churches but also in Antioch and probably in many other Gentile Churches in the first century.

It seems accurate that there is no contradiction between Paul and the ‘pillars,’ yet Paul’s opponents, though they were not representatives of the Jerusalem Apostles and did not have any instructions from them, probably had some connection with the Jerusalem Church. The way in which Paul confronted this problem shows the huge dimension of the problem. This problem became the starting point finally for Christianity’s divorce from Judaism. The spirit of Christianity paved the way for all nations, proclaiming the good news of an equal opportunity for salvation for Gentiles and Jews, slaves and freemen, men and women (Gal. 3:28), and thus leading to the separation of Christianity from Judaism.

1.4 Judaism and Christianity: At this stage of my work, in order to have a full image of the situation in Antioch in the fourth century, I will investigate the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in general and later on from Chrysostom’s writings.

The investigation of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism is very important to find out whether or not Judaism had continued its missionary activity after the crises of A. D. 70 and 135. This will give a clear picture of the situation in the early centuries of Christianity, and throw more light on the understanding of the Christian Church's reaction to Judaism.

Louis Duchesne suggests that the catastrophes in Palestine (in A. D. 70 and 135) put an end to the expansion of Judaism. He argues that 'the religious life [of the Jews] now became very narrow. The day of liberal Jews was past and gone for good. There is no longer any desire to stand well with other nations, nor to make proselytes.'⁷⁷ The supporters of this view said that after these events the legislation of the Empire put up obstacles to Jewish proselytism and Judaism fell into isolation.

Marcel Simon, on the contrary, supports the view that the catastrophes in Palestine did not put an end to the expansion of Judaism. He insists that these crises affected only the Jews in Palestine, and thus, after these events, Judaism continued its missionary activity.⁷⁸

Likewise other scholars, such as Wayne Meeks and Robert Wilken, argue that the Bar Kochba revolt (in A. D. 135) had little effect on the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, although it brought great destruction and desolation to the Jewish community of Palestine. The above scholars stress that the relations between Judaism and Rome improved under Antiochus Pius (A. D. 138-161).⁷⁹ Scot McKnight in agreement with the above views supports the assertion that the Jews 'were not isolationists' but rather 'lived

⁷⁷ Louis Duchesne, *The Early History of the Christian Church: From its Foundation to the End of the Third Century* (English translation; London: John Murray, 1914), v 1 p.412.

⁷⁸ Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire* (translated from the French by H. McKeating; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.271-272; 371.

⁷⁹ Wayne A. Meeks, and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (Misoula, Mont: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 5-6; cf. Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1983), p.43.

among the Gentiles and were integrated fully into Gentile society.’⁸⁰

Moreover, in the second and third centuries the Jews were a significant factor in the life of the Greek-speaking cities of the East, free to follow their own customs and build synagogues. In the fourth century the Jews in Antioch had ‘a large and well-established community, highly respected and influential.’⁸¹ Thus it is not correct that the Jews had fallen into isolation after the crises in Palestine.

Regarding the second issue of whether or not legislation had put obstacles in the way of Jewish proselytism, Marcel Simon takes up E. Schwartz’s postulate that proselytism survived for a long time after the above-mentioned crises, attempting to support it with new evidence. He supports the view that the legislation enacted to prohibit proselytism ‘would not be enough in the absence of any other indications to prove that Jewish missionary activity was effectively curtailed.’ The fact that the legislation had to be constantly renewed indicates its ineffectiveness, and the severity of the penalties which were laid down by that legislation indicates the seriousness of the danger.⁸²

Therefore, it is essential to look into the legislation enacted against Jewish proselytism in order to cross-check Marcel Simon’s view that the repetition of the enacted legislation and the severity of the penalties which were laid down indicates its ineffectiveness and the seriousness of the danger from proselytism.

Louis Duchesne reports an edict of Septimius Severus (around A. D. 200), by which he forbade conversions to Judaism or Christianity. According to that Law

⁸⁰ Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p.30; 116.

⁸¹ Meeks, and Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch*, pp. 5-6; Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, pp.43; 66-67.

⁸² Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.291.

‘circumcision of anyone, who was not Jew by birth, had been strictly forbidden.’⁸³ The emperor Constantine also forbade conversions to Judaism (in A. D. 315) prescribing by Law the death penalty for those Jews who would dare to stone those of their community who converted to Christianity.⁸⁴ His successor Constantius renewed the same Law (in A. D. 352) softening however the punishment: if any person should be converted from Christianity to Judaism, his property would be confiscated.⁸⁵ Another Law forbade the former Christians the right to leave their property in a will.⁸⁶

The fact that this legislation had to be constantly renewed suggests that it was ineffective. The fact that the penalties were softening during these renewals, as Simon suggests, reflects ‘the personal inclinations of the legislator rather than a relaxation of the danger.’⁸⁷ This is evident from the fact that the death penalty was later reintroduced (in A. D. 438) not only for Christians who had converted to Judaism but also for the Jews who had proselytized them.⁸⁸

Alongside the prohibition of proselytism, the legislation was also concerned about mixed marriages between Jews and Christians, and about the ways in which Jews treated their Christian slaves. These enactments were supplementary measures to reduce the possible ways which could lead indirectly to proselytism. Regarding mixed marriages we find that legislation repeatedly prohibited these marriages by the death penalty: ‘No Jew shall receive a Christian woman in marriage, nor shall a Christian man contract a marriage

⁸³ Duchesne, *The Early History of the Christian Church*, 1, pp.262-263.

⁸⁴ *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmonian Constitutions* (translated by Clude Pharr; New Jersey, Prinseton: University Press, 1952), C. Th., 16,8,1 [p. 466]. (*The Theodosian Code* subsequently cited as: C. Th. *The Theodosian Novels* as: N. Th. and the Sirmonian Constitutions as: Sir.).

⁸⁵ C. Th., 16,8,7 [pp. 467-468].

⁸⁶ C. Th., 16,7,3 [p. 466].

⁸⁷ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.291.

⁸⁸ N. Th., 3,1 [p. 490].

with a Jewish woman.’⁸⁹

Moreover, the legislation forbade Jews to circumcise their slaves. Initially no penalty was laid down except that the slaves obtained their freedom: ‘If any Jew should purchase and circumcise a Christian slave or a slave of any other sect whatever, ... such slave shall be taken from the power of the Jew and remain free.’⁹⁰ However, later laws prescribed the death penalty for the owner of non Jewish slaves who circumcised them: ‘If the Jew should purchase a slave and circumcise him, he shall also be visited with capital punishment.’⁹¹ The above quotations clearly indicate the ineffectiveness of the anti-proselytizing legislation and the seriousness of the danger from Jewish proselytism.

However, before we come to a final conclusion, it is necessary to investigate in the Talmud whether or not the rabbis remained attracted to proselytism after the two crises in Palestine in A. D. 70 and 135.

For some Jews proselytism seemed to be a laudable task: ‘Whoever leads a pagan into a knowledge of God, it is as if he had created a life.’⁹² Proselytes enjoyed a special dignity, becoming by conversion the equals of Jews, and their merits were even superior to those of Israel; Simeon Ben Johai, for instance, said that: ‘Of the righteous it is said that they love God (Judg. 5:21). Of the proselytes it is said that God loves them (Deut.10:18). Who then is the greater, he of whom it is said that he loves the King, or he whom the King loves?’⁹³ Moreover, the Jews were exhorted to make proselytes. It was said that: ‘The wise taught in the Mishnah, if a pagan wished to be converted, one

⁸⁹ C. Th., 16,8,6 [p.467]; 3,7,2 [p.70]; 9,7,5 [p.232].

⁹⁰ C. Th., 16,9 [pp.471-472]; 16,8,22 [p.470]; 3,1,5 [p.64]; Sirm 4; 6 [p.479].

⁹¹ C. Th., 16,9,2 [p.471].

⁹² Midr. Gen. R., on 8:10. Midrash Rabbah (English translation by H. Freedman, and M. Simon, in 10 volumes; London:1951), v 1, p.266.

⁹³ Mekilta on Exod. 22:20.

must take him by the hand and lead him under the wings of the Shekhinah.⁹⁴ Proselytes were obliged to give money for the future restoration of the temple,⁹⁵ which obviously indicates the existence of proselytes.

These rabbinic statements and others lead Marcel Simon to the conclusion that Judaism's position towards proselytism did not change from one period to another, and that the majority of the rabbis persisted in their devotion to the missionary ideal.⁹⁶ The differences of opinion are not concerned with proselytism as a principle but rather with the way in which proselytism should be applied. Some rabbis, for instance, laid down very strict rules as preconditions to people becoming proselytes, indicating their reluctance to accept proselytes, whereas other rabbis were ready to accept converts even from Ammonites and Moabites,⁹⁷ people whom the Bible regards as accursed, or from Palmyra, which had a bad reputation.⁹⁸

Having investigated Judaism's position towards proselytism, we turn now to the fact that the data about Jewish missionary activity is scarce and not very exact. Pagan authors were not interested in giving such information, for they were 'struck most by the missionary activity of the Christians,' which was livelier and more efficacious. Christian authors, on the other hand, naturally avoided speaking about it. Their silence was just tactical, as Marcel Simon suggests. On the contrary, the insistence of the fathers of the early Christian Church on the necessity of fighting against the possibility of the expansion of Judaism and the legislation which they took to prohibit it, seems to be a clear sign that

⁹⁴ Midr. Lev. R., on 1:2.

⁹⁵ The Babylonian Talmud (English translation by I. Epstein; London 1935-1965), Kerithoth, 9a (vol. 32, p.67).

⁹⁶ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p. 276. For more rabbinic views see: pp.274-276.

⁹⁷ The Babylonian Talmud, Yadayim 4:4, v 34 p.563; Yebamoth II p.465.

⁹⁸ The Jerusalem (Palestinian) Talmud, Yebam., 1,5; Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.277.

Jewish missionary activity continued to exist.⁹⁹

The fathers of the early Christian Church confirm the continuation of active Jewish proselytism. Justin Martyr, for example, asserts that a proselyte became an equal to born Jews by circumcision. He addresses his 'dialogue with Trypho' to those Christians who wished to become proselytes, presupposing clearly the existence of proselytes and their great zeal to be like the Jews:

Καὶ ὅτι μὲν προσήλυτος ὁ περιτεμνόμενος εἰς τὸ τῷ λαῷ προσκεχωρηκέναι
ἐστὶν ὡς αὐτόχθων.

And because the proselyte, who is circumcised that he may have access to the people,
becomes like of themselves.¹⁰⁰

Διὰ ταῦτά σοι ὦ Τρύφων, καὶ τοῖς βουλομένοις προσήλυτοις γενέσθαι, κηρύξω
ἐγὼ τὸν θεῖον λόγον.

Wherefore, Trypho, I will proclaim to you and to those who wish to become
proselytes, the divine message.¹⁰¹

Κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐξομοιοῦσθαι σπεύδουσι.

In all points they [the proselytes] strive to be like you.¹⁰²

Tertullian likewise confirms the existence of proselytism in his *Adversus Judaeos*, where he describes an actual discussion between a Christian and a Jewish proselyte. Tertullian ironically stresses that a Gentile and not a Jew was the person who claimed God's Law:

It happened very recently that a dispute was held between a Christian and a Jewish
proselyte... the man who set up to claim God's Law for himself was of the Gentiles,

⁹⁹ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.279.

¹⁰⁰ PG 6,761; *Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho* (Anti-Nicene Christian Library, translated to English by G. Reith;Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1867), vol. 2, p.254.

¹⁰¹ PG 6, 561; *Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho*, p.116.

¹⁰² PG 6, 760; *Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho*, p.253.

and not a Jew of the stock of Israelites.¹⁰³

The Jewish missionary activity varied between one area and another. While in Italy, for instance, according to Ambrosiaster's information, it seems to have been limited, it was more evident in the East. At the beginning of the fourth century in Antioch, Chrysostom confronted the Judaizing wave, which doubtless was a 'chronic problem.' Marcel Simon suggests that, from the repeated Christian legislation (canons of some synods) prohibiting any participation in Jewish customs, 'we ought to see the persistence of proselytism as a much more general phenomenon.'¹⁰⁴

Scot McKnight, on the contrary, argues that 'neither the existence of proselytes nor the widespread positive attitudes toward proselytism proves that Judaism was a missionary religion.'¹⁰⁵ Scot McKnight argues that Judaism was not a missionary religion especially 'in the sense of aggressive attempts to convert Gentiles,' but rather saw itself as 'a light among the nations.' For him Judaism showed 'a serious openness to Gentiles to participate in Judaism at the level desired individually by Gentiles,'¹⁰⁶ and thus 'the different levels of adherence to Judaism were simply different choices made by Gentiles.'¹⁰⁷ He comes to this conclusion, however, because of his definition of 'missionary religion,' which he introduces at the beginning of his thesis. For him, a missionary religion 'is a religion that self-consciously defines itself as a religion, one aspect of whose "self-definition" is a mission to the rest of the world, or at least a large portion of that world.' In other words, 'a missionary religion is one that both defines

¹⁰³ PL 2,635; translated by Marcel Simon in *Verus Israel*, p.513.

¹⁰⁴ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.288-289; 291.

¹⁰⁵ McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.117.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.99.

itself as a missionary movement and behaves in a missionary manner.’¹⁰⁸

Steve Mason, criticizing McKnight’s definition of the term ‘missionary religion,’ observes that it ‘is critical because it is the criterion for assessing the sources’ that he uses throughout his work.¹⁰⁹ Although McKnight does not ignore all the evidence¹¹⁰ which supports the view that ‘Jews favored non-Jews joining their religion,’ he turns over these statements by suggesting that ‘enthusiastic openness’ and ‘encouragement’ are not to be equated with a missionary activity. Citing McKnight’s own words, ‘although Jews clearly admitted proselytes, and although they encouraged Gentiles to convert, and although they anticipated that Day when hordes of Gentiles would convert,’ he jumps to the conclusion, nevertheless, that ‘there is almost no evidence that Jews were involved in evangelizing Gentiles and aggressively drawing Gentiles into their religion.’¹¹¹ All the evidence cited by McKnight (pp.34-43) does not show aggressive activity, but nevertheless does show missionary activity. McKnight comes to the above conclusion because he identifies missionary activity only with aggressive activity. His definition of the term ‘missionary activity’ seems to become the criterion ‘for assessing the sources,’ as Mason argues, leading him to wrong conclusions.

Mc Knight, throughout his work, supports the view that attraction to Judaism was not the outcome of Jewish missionary activity, but rather a free choice made by Gentiles. Although this possibility cannot be completely excluded, in fact the evidence that McKnight accepts can lead to other possibilities too.

¹⁰⁸ McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, pp.4-5.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.’ reviewed by Steve Mason in *Ioudaios Review* (Ioudaios - L Electronic Bulletin Board), 1991.

¹¹⁰ Particularly the statements which speak enthusiastically of Gentile salvation from Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Tobit, the Rest of Esther, Aristeas, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Bel and the Dragon), Philo, Josephus and the rabbis. See McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, pp. 34-43.

¹¹¹ McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, p.48.

Mason argues that 'McKnight wrongly takes the easier route of insisting that unless his own assertions can be proven wrong, they are right,' which for him is 'the most serious weakness of McKnight's book.' It is not enough to select the possibility which suits one's own view, but one must check every possibility and choose the most probable one. Thus Mason concludes that 'McKnight does not evince any sense of probabilistic reasoning in historical study,' stressing that for 'the historian, this slide from mere possibility through to negative certainty, will be alarming.'¹¹²

McKnight fails, however, to take into account all the aspects of the problem, for he restricts his investigation to how Judaism appears within its own writings, without taking into account how pagans and Christians saw Judaism and what measures they took to reduce its expansion. It is of great importance to clarify how Judaism itself saw its role within the Roman Empire, and from that angle of view McKnight's work has a great value, but we must also cross-check how Judaism saw its role with the fact of how pagans and Christians saw Judaism's role. Viewed from this perspective McKnight's work is one sided. McKnight does not even mention the anti-proselytizing legislation of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, from the fact that the anti-proselytizing legislation had to be constantly renewed, it seems that the different levels of adherence to Judaism were not simply different choices made by Gentiles, as McKnight suggests,¹¹³ but rather indicates the continuity of the Jewish missionary activity, for if that legislation had succeeded in putting an end to missionary activity, then its renewal would be unnecessary. This possibility seems to be more probable than that one suggested by McKnight.

The data that McKnight accepts throughout his work could be used as evidence

¹¹² 'Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*' reviewed by Steve Mason in *Ioudaios Review* (Ioudaios - L Electronic Bulletin Board), 1991.

¹¹³ McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, p.99.

to prove a view the reverse of his. For instance, in his second chapter, McKnight quotes lists with names of proselytes from Jewish authors (Philo, Josephus and Rabbis), acknowledging the great number of these names. There, he says: 'Names of proselytes from the rabbinic writings, even if one looks only at the Tannaim, are abundant.' McKnight suggests that these lists may be nothing more than accident or that converts were so few in number that names were remembered.¹¹⁴ To my mind, it is not logical to say that the real number of proselytes must be reduced to the number preserved in these lists. However, the existence of proselytes, irrespective of whether they were few or many, is an indication of the existence of Jewish missionary activity.

The other argument that McKnight appeals to is that these proselytes 'are proselytes only in the loosest sense of the term, from honorable Gentiles to full converts,' concluding that the extensive list of names [of proselytes] 'may be nothing more than accident or it might suggest that converts were so few in number that names were remembered.'¹¹⁵ Even if it were true that some of these proselytes were not full converts, this could be taken as proof of the existence of Jewish missionary activity rather than what McKnight suggests, because the fact that some of these proselytes were not full converts indicates most probably the difficulties in becoming a full convert.

Moreover, Matt. 23:15 could be used as evidence to prove a view opposite to that of McKnight. He argues that 'it cannot be demonstrated from the evidence from the ancient world that there was such a thing as an aggressive mission to the Gentiles' as the passage in Matt. 23:15 implies, and thus he jumps to the conclusion that Matt.23:15 confirms that 'Jews were essentially uninvolved in such a thing as evangelism.'¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, pp. 32; 31-33.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.31.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp.106-107.

McKnight seems to neutralize the evidence from this passage with the argument that such a thing cannot be demonstrated by other evidence. Nevertheless, almost everyone regards this passage, as Mason points out, as ‘prima facie evidence of a Jewish missionary effort.’ Mason argues that we cannot reject the usual reading of Matt. 23:15 ‘because it does not fit with McKnight’s thesis.’¹¹⁷

Regarding the presence of Jews throughout the Roman Empire. McKnight argues that the demographical statistics are doubtful and therefore this argument ought to be laid to rest.¹¹⁸ How could the worldwide presence of the Jews, then, be explained? To my mind this could be explained as the result of Jewish missionary activity. In addition to the presence of Jews throughout the Roman Empire the fact that Jews were twice expelled from Rome for proselytizing activity is not just ‘only an exceptional and sporadic situation’ or ‘nothing more than a sporadic attempt by Jews to convert Romans to Judaism’ as McKnight suggests,¹¹⁹ but rather indicates the existence of Jewish missionary activity.

McKnight’s observation that Jewish writings (*Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Philo and Josephus*) indicate a positive attitude regarding proselytism is not vitiated by the fact that the writings of the Rabbis indicate a contribution of positive and negative attitudes towards proselytism.¹²⁰ The fact that the views of the Rabbis are varied and often contradictory indicates rather the different temperament from Rabbi to Rabbi, and the different circumstances from place to place and time to time, as Marcel Simon correctly suggests.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ ‘Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*’ reviewed by Steve Mason in *Ioudaios Review*.

¹¹⁸ McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, p.33.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.74.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp.34-43.

¹²¹ Simon, *Vetus Israel*, p. 274.

We turn now to the place of the synagogue. According to McKnight's view there is no doubt that 'Gentiles learned progressively more about Judaism in the synagogue and, further, that such adherents may have eventually come to convert through synagogue expositions.' McKnight, however, does not see sufficient evidence from the ancient world to prove that the synagogue was used as a missionary platform.¹²² But he does not see sufficient evidence because he restricts his research to Jewish writings. If, on the contrary, one looks for such evidence in Christian writings, one could find many pieces of evidence to support a view of the synagogue as a missionary platform. In John Chrysostom's writings and especially in his eight Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, he argues that the synagogue and the 'reverence' for it in the eyes of his congregation in Antioch in the fourth century, made it a place where the attraction to Judaism began and sometimes led to full conversions to Judaism.¹²³

Regarding the different levels of adherence to Judaism and McKnight's view that these levels 'simply' indicate the different choices made by Gentiles, I agree that McKnight's view is indeed a possibility, but it is not the only possibility. It is more probable to say that the existence of these different levels is also an indication of the difficulty of full conversion to Judaism, because circumcision was obviously an obstacle to full conversion to Judaism. Thus, the existence of these different levels is not necessarily an indication of the free choice of the Gentiles, but could be an indication of the results of the Jewish missionary activity and most probably the difficulties involved in the making of full converts.

All the above arguments lead to the conclusion that McKnight's view that Judaism was not a missionary religion is not correct.

¹²² McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles*, pp. 65-66.

¹²³ For particular references to Chrysostom's writings see pp. 43-53.

From the above data it appears that neither the crises in Palestine (in A. D. 70 and 135) nor the legislation enacted against proselytism succeeded in putting an end to Jewish missionary activity. The crises in Palestine did not affect the Jews in the diaspora very much, in spite of the fact that they brought great destruction and desolation to the Jews in Palestine. The repetition of the anti-proselytizing legislation, and the severity of the penalties which were laid down by it, indicate its ineffectiveness as well as the great extent of proselytism. The legislation which prohibited mixed marriages between Jews and Christians, and the legislation which prohibited Jews from circumcising their slaves, was designed to reduce every possible way which could lead indirectly to proselytism. The majority of the Rabbis, as Marcel Simon observes, persisted in their zeal to make proselytes. The fathers of the early Christian Church confirmed the continuation of Jewish proselytism.

Our investigations on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism confirm that there was an active Jewish proselytizing effort throughout the Roman Empire and especially in the East, which started from the beginning of Christianity and continued up to the fourth century. Paul, Chrysostom and many other fathers of the early Christian Church counteracted this situation by trying to suppress every kind of Christian attraction to Judaism.

1.5 The Situation in Antioch in the Fourth Century: It remains to investigate the substance of the problem which Chrysostom confronted in Antioch.¹²⁴

Chrysostom, in his eight Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, provides a great

¹²⁴ At this stage of my work, I do not intend to deal with Chrysostom's strong expressions against the Jews that emerge from the passages I will refer to. I will take into account only what is relevant to the substance of the problem that emerged in Antioch in Chrysostom's time. I will deal with the question of anti-Semitism below in chapter 6.

deal of information for our investigation about the situation in Antioch in his time. In the first discourse, he speaks of a 'serious illness' which 'has become implanted in the body of the church.' As he states, the festivals of the Jews 'are soon to march upon us one after the other and in a quick succession,' and many Christians were going to 'watch or even to join the Jews in keeping and observing their fasts.' For this very reason he was forced to deliver his Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, interrupting another series of very important discourses against the Anomeans.¹²⁵ Two important pieces of information closely connected to each other should be noted from what Chrysostom says: the historical reason for the delivery of these discourses, and the interruption of the discourses against the Anomeans to solve a pressing problem.

Chrysostom started his discourses because of the Jewish festivals which followed one another in succession. The Jews, within the first fifteen days of September-October, had three feasts which they celebrated for nine days.¹²⁶ During these days, many Christians were attracted to participating with the Jews in their festivals, and this produced a great problem for the Christian Church. These Jewish festivals were the historical occasion for the delivery of these eight discourses.

However, the second datum is more important because it reveals the huge dimensions of the problem. The fact that Chrysostom abruptly terminated his discourses against the Anomeans, who posed the most serious problem for Christianity during the fourth century, cannot be explained if the problem which he came to confront, that is

¹²⁵ PG 48, 844-845; E.II.E. 34, pp.100-102; The Fathers of the Church, vol. 68: *Saint John Chrysostom Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.3-4. (Subsequently cited as: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians).

¹²⁶ Particularly, he speaks about three Jewish feasts, which the Jews would celebrate soon. The first feast, τῶν σαλπύγων, is the feast of the new year (Rosh Ha-Shannah), which is celebrated on the two first days of the month Tishri, which corresponds to September-October. The second one, τῆς σκηνοπηγίας, is the feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), which is celebrated from the 15th to the 22nd of the month Tishri. This is an agricultural feast which is dedicated to the harvest of the fruits. The last one, τῶν νηστεῶν or τοῦ ἐξιλασμοῦ, is the feast of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which is celebrated on the 10th of the month Tishri, with acts of repentance and prayer.

participation in the Jewish festivals, was not as serious.

The seriousness of the situation produced by Anomeanism¹²⁷ could be understood if we see how the Christological controversies bothered Christianity in general, because Anomeanism is the last form of Arianism, which appeared about the middle of the fourth century. After the end of persecutions, the Christological controversies bothered Christianity for many centuries up to the sixth ecumenical council in A. D. 680 (known as 'the Trullan synod' of Constantinople). The first of the Christological controversies was the dispute with Arianism, which produced great confusion within the Christian Church during the fourth century. Arianism was condemned by the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in A. D. 325, but reappeared after its condemnation in various other forms continuing to confuse until they were condemned by the second ecumenical council of Constantinople in A. D. 381.

Moreover, the fact that many Bishops, who espoused Arianism from time to time, having the support of some emperors who were friendly to Arianism, expelled from their Sees other Bishops who supported the creed of Nicaea, and took the control of many churches within the Roman Empire is a clear indication of the seriousness of the situation. In Alexandria, for instance, the Arian Bishops expelled Athanasius (Bishop of Alexandria) five times while three times they succeeded in replacing him with their own Bishop. In Antioch, moreover, the prevalence of Arianism was more permanent. They deposed Bishop Eustathius from A. D. 330 to A. D. 360. In Constantinople, four Arian Bishops succeeded one another during a period of forty years.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The most important representatives of that group are Aetius the Syrian and his disciple Eunomius. They taught that the οὐσία ('substance') of the Father is 'unborn' while the substance of the Son is 'born,' and therefore the substance of the Son is inferior of that of the Father, because it is born from the Father. Anomeanism was opposed by Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa. John Chrysostom dedicated twelve discourses against Anomeanism (PG 48, 701-812), the first ten were delivered in Antioch in A. D. 386 and 387, and the last two in Constantinople in A. D. 398. Panagiotis Christou, *Greek Patrology*, (Thessaloniki: Byzantium Press, 1987-1994), vol. 3 pp. 424-433; E.I.E. 1, p.31.

¹²⁸ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 3 pp. 393-396.

Thus the fact that Chrysostom abruptly terminated his discourses against the Anomeans to deal with another problem clearly indicates that this another problem is very serious as well. We must exclude the possibility, therefore, that Chrysostom exaggerated for rhetorical purposes the level of Christian participation in the Jewish festivals. Chrysostom probably knew and used the rhetorical method of exaggeration many times in his discourses. However, the use of this method must be excluded here, because Chrysostom himself, evaluating the real dimensions of this problem in his eighth sermon against the Jews, tried on the contrary to conceal the real number of the Christians who participated in these feasts. Chrysostom did not restrict himself to the above reaction of concealing the real number of the Christians who participated in these feasts, but also exhorted his congregation to do the same.¹²⁹ If here Chrysostom de-emphasizes the number of Christians who participated in the Jewish festival, it does not seem logical to accept that, on the contrary, in his first discourse he exaggerates the dimensions of this problem. For Chrysostom even the hearing of such reports could mislead more Christians into observing the Jewish feasts, and his goal is to prevent this.

The above cited data points to the conclusion that the attraction that Judaism held for Christians was much more than one might expect, even though Christianity had spread not only in Antioch but also to the whole Roman Empire. Chrysostom argues that in spite of the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of Antioch were Christians, some Christians were still 'sick with the Judaizing disease.'¹³⁰ This means that those who 'were sick' were so many and the problem was so crucial as to interrupt his discourses against the Anomeans.

Chrysostom reveals the real dimensions of the problem in his story of a man who

¹²⁹ PG 48, 933; E.P.E. 34, p.384; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.218-219.

¹³⁰ PG 48, 849; E.P.E. 34, p.116; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, p.15.

‘was forcing a woman to enter the shrine of the Hebrews and to swear there an oath about some matters under dispute with him.’¹³¹ From this event it seems that in Antioch there was a systematic effort by some Christians to persuade other Christians to swear oaths in the synagogue. This story seems to be a real one. The possibility that Chrysostom makes here an exaggeration for rhetorical purposes must be excluded, because he is obviously concerned to downplay rather than to exaggerate the dimensions of the problem. Chrysostom stresses that this story was not from his guesswork but from his own experience. Why would Chrysostom make up such a story, when as I show above he tries to conceal the real number of the Christians who participated in the Jewish feasts and also exhorts his congregation to do the same?

What is of great importance from the above story (where a Christian man forced a Christian woman to swear an oath in the Jewish synagogue) is the reason that that man gives for his behaviour: ‘many people had told him that oaths sworn there were more to be feared.’¹³² This leads to the question: Why were oaths which were sworn in Judaism considered to be much more feared than those which were sworn in Christianity?

It was commonly believed, as Paul Harkins says, that ‘any oath sworn before the Jewish tribunal in a synagogue was more solemn and binding’ and the synagogues of Antioch attracted some Christians probably because ‘they found the tribunal which sat in the synagogue more solemn and impartial than the civil courts.’¹³³ Chrysostom says that the place of synagogue and the oaths which were sworn there produced ‘fear’ upon the simpler-minded Christians attracting them to Judaism.¹³⁴

The ‘reverence of the place of the synagogue’ was the source of that ‘Fear,’ as

¹³¹ PG 48, 847; E.Π.E. 34, p.110; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.11-12.

¹³² PG 48, 848; E.Π.E. 34, p.112; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, p.12.

¹³³ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, p. xl-xli.

¹³⁴ PG 48, 848; E.Π.E. 34, pp.112-114; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.13-14.

Chrysostom argues, which attracted Christians to Judaism. Chrysostom devotes to this point many arguments, trying to persuade his congregation to 'run away' from synagogues. Regarding the reason for the 'reverence for the place of the synagogue,' Chrysostom says that some Christians thought the place of the synagogue to be a holy place, for there the holy books of the Law and the Prophets were lodged.¹³⁵ It seems that this consideration influenced some Christians very much. This is evident from the amount of space that Chrysostom devotes in order to show that a place cannot become holy merely because these holy books were lodged there. Among his arguments Chrysostom invokes the case of Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-247 B. C.), who put the holy books of the Jews in the temple of Serapis, where they remained until his time. However, he argues, the presence of these books does not make holy an idolatrous temple.¹³⁶

However, healings were the deeper motive which made the place of the synagogue so attractive. Chrysostom informs us that some Christians used to go to the synagogue looking for healing from various diseases. This rumour, true or not, was strong enough to attract Christians to the synagogue. Chrysostom strongly rejects the idea that there is a possibility of being healed from any disease in the synagogue. Thus, healings within the synagogue were one of the most important points of the attraction to Judaism, since Chrysostom devotes to this point many arguments, especially in his eight Discourses Against Judaizing Christians.

While Chrysostom tries to contest the possibility that a healing might occur in a synagogue, he also adds that even if such healings did occur, Christians should not frequent synagogues. In support of his view, Chrysostom appeals to Dt.13:1-3, where Moses said to the Jews that even if a prophet rises up and performs a real sign and

¹³⁵ PG 48, 850; E.Π.E. 34, p.120; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.18-19.

¹³⁶ PG 48, 851; E.Π.E. 34, p.124; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.21-22.

afterwards calls them to serve strange gods, the Jews should not believe him, because the Lord their God permitted this test to see whether they loved him with all their heart and soul.¹³⁷ From the amount of space that he devotes to this point it seems that the rumour of healings was widespread in Antioch and that it was one of the roots of trouble for Christianity in Antioch.

Chrysostom, at the end of his first discourse, tries to prevent his congregation from participating in any of the Jewish customs, whether small or great. He fought against a trend which could lead to Judaism if it was not stopped immediately.¹³⁸ He also suggests, in his commentary on Galatians, that although his audience considered the observance of one commandment of the Mosaic Law to be slight and unimportant, such observance, if not corrected, would have the power (as the leaven has with the lump) to lead them into complete observance of Judaism.¹³⁹

Many times in his writings, Chrysostom identifies the problem which he confronted in Antioch with the problem that Paul confronted in Galatia. Chrysostom, in one instance, describes the situation in Galatia in these terms: 'Some of the Jews who believed, yet were filled with the prepossessions of Judaism,¹⁴⁰ intoxicated by vain-glory, and desirous of obtaining for themselves the dignity of teachers, came to the Galatians, and taught them that the observance of circumcision, Sabbaths, and newmoons, was necessary, and that the endeavour of Paul to abolish it was not to be borne.'¹⁴¹ Chrysostom gives here the content of the message of Paul's opponents: they preached circumcision, Sabbaths

¹³⁷ PG 48, 855; E.P.E. 34, p.134; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.29-30.

¹³⁸ PG 48, 855; E.P.E. 34, p.138; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, pp.31-32.

¹³⁹ PG 61, 667; E.P.E. 20, p.356; Library of the Fathers. 12, p.76.

¹⁴⁰ The phrase 'the prepossessions of Judaism' must be understood rhetorically regarding the polemical tone of Chrysostom's writings in general. The problems emerging from such rhetorical phrases, and particularly whether or not this rhetorical polemic could lead to anti-Semitism, will be investigated later in chapter 6.

¹⁴¹ PG 61, 613; E.P.E. 20, p.162; Library of the Fathers. 12, p.2.

and newmoons, which Paul was trying to abolish. Therefore the controversy between Paul and his opponents was about these Jewish customs.

Chrysostom, mentioning the incident in Antioch with Peter, insists that Paul's statements against Peter (Gal. 2:11-16) were valid not only for the Gentile-Christians in Galatia, but also for all who suffer from the same disease: 'Paul's object is not therefore to correct Peter, but his animadversion had to be addressed to him, though it was not pointed at the disciples; and not only at the Galatians, but also at others who labour under the same error. For though few are now circumcised yet, but [there are many who are] fasting and observing the Sabbath with the Jews.'¹⁴² Chrysostom clearly states here that the observance of circumcision was not so intense in Antioch as it had been in Galatia, but the observance of the Jewish fasts and Sabbath remained intense in his time as it had been in Galatia three centuries ago.

This seems to contradict his previous statement that the problem in Antioch was identical with the problem in Galatia, because obviously circumcision is the strongest indication of adherence to Judaism. Many Christians went to synagogues and participated in Jewish festivals, but few of them went all the way and became full Jews, which meant in the case of men, being circumcised. Chrysostom argues against circumcision, but not to the same extent as he argues against participation in the Jewish fasts and feasts.

However, he also gives the impression in his writings that the 'Judaizers' insisted on circumcision in his time as well as three centuries earlier in Galatia: 'But someone might say: 'Is there so much harm in circumcision that it makes Christ's whole plan of redemption useless?' Yes, the harm of circumcision is as great as that, not because of its own nature but because of your obstinacy. There was a time when the Law was useful

¹⁴² PG 61, 643; E.I.E. 20, p.268; Library of the Fathers. 12, p.42. The dispute of the two apostles was a real one though Chrysostom wrongly argues for the opposite. A reconstruction of the incident of Antioch can be found in chapter 4 under the subtitle 'The Incident of Antioch.'

and necessary, but now it has ceased and is fruitless. If you take it on yourself to be circumcised now when the time is no longer right, it makes the gift of God useless.’¹⁴³ Chrysostom implies, here, that some Christians insisted on circumcision in his time as well. In order to neutralize their argument, he stresses that circumcision makes Christ’s plan of salvation useless. In another instance he also argues: ‘Do not tell me that circumcision is just a single command; it is that very command which imposes on you the entire yoke of the Law... We do not say this in accusation of the Law. Heaven forbid... But we are forced to say all these things because of the untimely contentiousness of those who do not use the Law as they should.’¹⁴⁴ Chrysostom repeats here that some Christians insisted on circumcision. As he points out, his arguments against circumcision were his reaction to the effort of the ‘Judaizers’ to impose circumcision on the Christians of Antioch in his own time. He says that his attack against the Law, circumcision and fasting, is not intended to accuse the Law itself, but to react against ‘those’ who did not use the Law as they should, implying that some Christians were trying to impose circumcision as well.

Thus the fact that circumcision was not observed by many Christians, does not mean that the ‘Judaizers’ stopped their efforts to impose circumcision on Chrysostom’s congregation. The ‘Judaizers’ probably insisted on circumcision, although they did not have great success in this regard, as Paul’s opponents in Galatia had.

The difficulty of imposing circumcision in the fourth century Antioch could be partially explained from the fact that Christianity was completely separated from Judaism and there was a hostility between them, while in first century Galatia Christianity seems to have been closely related to Judaism. In the first century, the Christian position against

¹⁴³ PG 48, 858; E.I.E. 34, pp.146-148; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, p.37.

¹⁴⁴ PG 48, 859; E.I.E. 34, p.152; Discourses Against Judaizing Christians, p.41.

the Jewish Law was not yet formulated, giving the Law-observant Jewish Christians the chance at least to try to impose circumcision upon the Gentiles. However, in fourth century Antioch the Christian position was formally formulated, making more difficult any effort to spread circumcision among the Christians. Moreover, circumcision is painful and not attractive.

The most complete description of the situation comes when Chrysostom stresses that Paul's words to the Galatians were also valid for all who in his time still continue to 'Judaize:' 'Let those who even now Judaize and adhere to the Law, listen to this, for it applies to them.'¹⁴⁵ The substance of the problem is not to be found simply in the observance of some Jewish customs, but in the tendency to move toward Judaism in general. Chrysostom's term 'to Judaize' is obviously his own evaluation of the situation in Antioch. This term was already used by Paul (Gal. 2:14), and Chrysostom borrowed it from Paul in order to describe the similarity between the situation in Antioch in his time and that in Galatia in Paul's time.

To summarize, then, the most attractive aspects of Judaism to Christians were 1) the Jewish feasts and particularly the feast of the New Year (Rosh Ha-Shanah), the feast of the Tabernacles (Sukkot) and the feast of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur); 2) the place of the synagogue; 3) the binding quality of the oaths which were sworn there; 4) and the healing which might occur there. Although Chrysostom identifies the situation in Antioch in his time with the situation in Galatia in Paul's time, he accepts that the tendency for Christian males to go the full way and be circumcised was not so intense in Antioch as it had been in Galatia. Therefore we can list circumcision as among the aspects of the problem of attraction to Judaism in Antioch but acknowledge that not

¹⁴⁵ PG 61, 648; E.I.E. 20, p.282; Library of the Fathers. 12, p.47.

many Christians in Antioch observed it.

The problem of attraction to Judaism was so great that it forced Chrysostom to terminate his discourses against the Anomeans, which was the most crucial problem faced by Christianity during the fourth century, in order to deal with it. At least in a few cases the situation reached extremes, when some Christians tried to force other Christians to participate in Jewish rites, as is evident from the story about a Christian man who forced a Christian woman to swear an oath in the Jewish synagogue, that Chrysostom narrated from his own experience.

All the above data leads to the conclusion that Chrysostom confronted in Antioch a serious movement toward Judaism among his Christian flock.

1.6 The Focus of my Thesis: All the evidence points in one direction: The situation in Antioch in the fourth century is very similar to that in Galatia in the first century. The problem which Paul confronted in Galatia would turn out to be a chronic one for the Church, which continued to confront a very similar situation for many centuries after Paul.

Therefore, the study of these later events might throw some light backward on the investigation of the subject of the relation of Paul to the Law. Obviously the case of Antioch is a very suitable one to investigate, although we could probably find other cases in which the later Christian Church confronted situations similar to that in Galatia. However, I propose to investigate the case of Chrysostom, for Chrysostom has many similarities with Paul. They both confronted their opponents in the same extreme way, using strong expressions in their polemic, losing their temper many times, and making statements which could easily be misunderstood as anti-Semitic. Moreover, they both expressed their opinions more calmly elsewhere, Paul in Romans and Chrysostom in his

commentary to Galatians.

Therefore, the focus of my thesis will be to analyze Paul's position towards the Law, evaluating the results of contemporary research by comparing it with Chrysostom's understanding of his own situation. This does not assume that Chrysostom's understanding is always right. It is the duty of each scholar to investigate in which cases Chrysostom is right and in which cases he is not, cross-checking Chrysostom's own evaluation of each point with the information provided from other relevant sources. This principle will be followed throughout this work.

Thus, besides the similarities in the situation that both Paul and Chrysostom confronted, I will try to show that Chrysostom is constantly interested to search for the literal meaning of scripture, which makes him a good reader of Paul. Thus, his views should be taken seriously by modern scholars in their effort to have a better understanding of Paul. My proposal aspires to further clarify and to give a new direction to study of the crucial issue of the relation of Paul to the Law.

‘PAUL AND THE LAW’
IN
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

PART 2

2 **EARLY CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS**

3 **JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AS AN EXEGETE**

2

EARLY CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS.

2.1 The Situation in Early Christian Exegesis: The exegesis of the Early Christian Church was a continuation of Exegesis which ancient Judaism practised in its later period. The most distinctive mark of Exegesis in Judaism, was the interpretation of the Law. The rabbinic schools produced a system of exegesis, efficient enough to cover the whole life of the Jews. In this system, 'inconsistencies in the Biblical text had to be explained away; errors, redundancies, absurdities, or anything shocking, indecent or unworthy of Divine inspiration had to be removed.' Every verse was regarded as independent of the other verses and could be interpreted without any reference to its context ignoring the historical background of the context. 'The historical sense of any text could be evaded,' and instead of it 'a symbolic sense could be read in.' From this system of exegesis, as Hanson observes, a 'Torah-directed form of allegory was born.'¹

The formation of the rabbinic system of exegesis, where anything 'shocking, indecent or unworthy of Divine inspiration had to be removed' is closely related to the sealing of the canon of scripture. The criterion for inclusion of a book in the canon of scripture depends on whether or not a book was divinely inspired. According to rabbinic

¹ Richard Patrick Crosland Hanson, 'Biblical Exegesis in the Early Church,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: volume 1, From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. By Peter R. Ackroyd and Christopher F. Evans (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), p.412.

tradition, however, this criterion is 'a necessary but not sufficient condition' for inclusion or exclusion in the canon of scripture, because 'not every prophecy was included in the Bible.'² As Moshe Halbertal argues, since 'prophecy ceased during the Persian period, any book after that time would by definition be excluded from the canon.' Thus, as Halbertal assumes, the sealing of the canon 'is connected to a general view concerning the cessation of prophecy.'³

In order to support his assumption, Halbertal appeals to the book of Ben Sira which, although it contains nothing particularly problematic, nevertheless is excluded 'because of its late date.'⁴ Halbertal also appeals to the book of *Ecclesiastes*, to support his view that the inclusion of a book in the canon does not 'imbue' the book with authority and that the reader of the book, 'more than the text itself, becomes the bearer of authority.' As he points out, *Ecclesiastes* 'is bound together with the rest of the Bible,' although 'traditional motifs such as Divine Providence and revelation are absent in *Ecclesiastes*, and it contains more than a hint of heresy.' In *Ecclesiastes*, moreover, the meaningfulness of history is rejected. Since *Ecclesiastes* became part of the Bible, the reader introduced a new allegorical reading of it in order to make it 'consistent with the rest of the Bible.' Then the hedonistic message in *Ecclesiastes* is metaphorically interpreted to mean 'go and do good deeds and study Torah.'⁵ The same is true for the *Song of Songs* and *Esther*. Since they became part of the Bible, a new allegorical reading of them was introduced. In the *Song of Songs*, love is allegorically interpreted to mean the relationship between God and man; and in *Esther* the absence of God's name is

² Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book. Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 1997), p.17.

³ Ibid., p.17.

⁴ Ibid., p.17.

⁵ Ibid., pp.23-26.

allegorically interpreted to represent the 'concealment of the Divine Presence from Israel.'⁶

The allegorical method was already used in Hellenism where the hermeneutical approach consisted in 'discovering in a poetic or other text another meaning apart from the literal sense and also beyond the original intentions of the author.' Concern to safeguard Homer's poems from the improbability and even absurdity of the stories which he told about the gods and the heroes led the Greek philosophers to suppose that he intended to allude to other subjects.⁷ For instance, Theagenes of Rhegium, in the 6th century B.C., interpreted the discord among gods in Homer's stories as an allegory of the discord of the natural elements. Anaxagoras, in the 5th century B. C., interpreted gods as symbols of natural and other forces, taking for instance Zeus as the symbol of intelligence.⁸ However, Plato in his *Laws* (Νόμοι),⁹ dealing with the improbability and the absurdity of the stories, regarding the acts of the gods and heroes in Homer's poems, points out that the people who hear these stories, 'are not set upon abstaining from unrighteous acts, but upon doing them and atoning for them.'¹⁰ Looking at these stories in regard to the duties of children to their parents, Plato argues that he 'cannot praise them, or think that they are useful, or at all true.'¹¹ Particularly, dealing with the act of robbery, Plato points out that 'robbery is a shameless thing' and thus, 'let no one be deluded by poets or mythologers into a mistaken belief of such things, nor let him suppose, when he thieves or is guilty of violence, that he is doing nothing base, but only

⁶ Halbertal, *People of the Book. Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, p.26.

⁷ Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), p.5.

⁸ Ibid., pp.5-6.

⁹ Plato's *Laws* were written in 360 B.C.E.

¹⁰ Plato's *Laws* 885.c.5 - 885.e.6. Translated by Benjamin Jowett in *The Internet Classics Archive*.

¹¹ Plato's *Laws* 886.b.10 - 886.e.2. Translated by Benjamin Jowett in *The Internet Classics Archive*.

what the gods themselves do, for such tales are untrue and improbable.' Then, he comes to the conclusion that 'he who steals or robs contrary to the law, is never either a god or the son of god,' and that of this act, that is robbery or violence, 'the legislator ought to be better informed than all the poets together.'¹²

Thus, the allegorical method was already utilized largely not only in Jewish Exegesis but also in Hellenism. The Christian Church took over these existing traditions of exegesis, but it used them for its own purposes, giving them a different figure. The Christians shifted the emphasis of their exegesis from the Torah to the Prophets, because they were concerned to show Jesus as the Messiah. The historical books, which were more suitable for this aim, were open to the method of 'typology,' where both events and persons could be read as foreshadowings or types of Christ.¹³

The end of the persecutions was at the same time the beginning of a new period. The Early Christian Church in the fourth century confronted huge problems because of the Arian controversy which sprung up within the Church. Nestorianism and Monophysitism afterwards would provoke similar problems. These circumstances created the necessity of instituting more systematic studies of Scripture, as the heretics had already done. The Christian Church, because of the Arian controversy, turned to the Bible to find how divine is Christ and build its arguments in order to confront them.¹⁴ The Early Christian Church created a biblical exposition with the practical needs of the Church for the defense of orthodoxy and the edification of the faithful in mind, providing all the necessary materials to confront all these heresies which threatened its survival.¹⁵

Therefore, analyzing the explanatory methods of this period, we must have in mind

¹² Plato's Laws 941.b.2 - 941.c.2. Translated by Benjamin Jowett in *The Internet Classics Archive*.

¹³ Hanson, 'Biblical Exegesis in the Early Church,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.413.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.440.

¹⁵ For more details about the Arian Controversy see Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 3, pp.393-438.

this historical reality and base our research on it: The Christian Church used the already existing methods from Judaism and Hellenism, giving to them a new figure to fit its particular needs.

The exposition of the Bible gained a fundamental place within early Christianity, shaping every action in the Christian life from doctrine to discipline and worship. The whole life of the early Christian Church was conditioned by the interpretation of Scripture. The history of doctrine, as Simonetti observes, is the history of exegesis in that the development of doctrine 'is based on the interpretation of a certain number of passages in Scripture in the light of particular needs.'¹⁶

It is essential to make here a parenthesis to deal with Irenaeus of Lyon, Philo and the Gnostics because of their influence on the development of a systematic method of interpretation in the fourth century Christian Exegesis.

Irenaeus of Lyon: It is worth noting that we may hardly speak about what is called Christian Bible and Christian exegesis before Irenaeus (A.D. 180). Before Irenaeus, as Rowan A. Greer observes, 'it is no exaggeration to say that the Christian attitudes towards scripture remain obscure and confused.' Irenaeus is the first witness 'both to the existence of a Christian Bible and to a framework for interpreting it.'¹⁷

Particularly, Irenaeus is the first who uses the term 'New Testament'¹⁸ and his canon of the Bible includes: as 'Old Testament' the Greek translation of the Hebrew

¹⁶ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.1.

¹⁷ James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1986), pp.111, 116.

¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.9.1. Eusebius provides the information that Melito, the bishop of Sardis, acknowledges the same term for he uses the term 'Books of the Old Testament' (in his *Ecclesiastical History* 4.26.14).

Bible, known as 'Septuagint,'¹⁹ and as 'New Testament' a collection of Christian writings. His Old Testament includes, in addition to the books included in the canon of Hebrew scripture, the Old Testament apocrypha,²⁰ whereas his New Testament includes the four Gospels, Acts, the twelve letters of Paul,²¹ 1 Peter, 1 and 2 John and Revelation, but omits James, Jude, 2 Peter, and Hebrews.²² Irenaeus does not regard *Hebrews* and the *Shepherd of Hermas* as apostolic and authoritative writings. For Irenaeus, the criterion for the inclusion of a book in the New Testament canon is its 'apostolicity.'²³

In Irenaeus we find, moreover, the first framework for interpreting the Bible. He provides 'the rule of faith' as a principle for the interpretation of the Bible. In his dispute with the Gnostics, Irenaeus attacked their interpretation of scripture 'at a level of content rather than at a level of exegetical theory,' resorting to the principle of authority.²⁴ Irenaeus argues that the proper authority exists in the bishops and the presbyters of the Church who have their 'office through succession in an unbroken line of episcopal ordination' from the apostles and their disciples.²⁵ The Christian Church alone is, for Irenaeus, the 'storehouse of authentic apostolic tradition.'²⁶

The apostolic faith, for him, 'is the norm for Christian belief and the point of departure for its theological articulation.' By the apostolic faith Irenaeus means scripture

¹⁹ According to legend, this translation made by seventy-two Jews for Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

²⁰ These are Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 and 2 books of the Maccabees, 1 Esdras, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Song of the three holy Children, Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

²¹ Except the letter to Philemon which Irenaeus regards as a part of the letter to Colossians and Hebrews which he does not regard as Paul's. Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 2, p.704.

²² Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.110. Panayiotis Christou supports the view that Irenaeus 'maintains sensations of James, Jude and 2 Peter.' Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 2, p.704.

²³ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, pp.109-110; p.204, n.1.

²⁴ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.24. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.20-25.

²⁵ Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p.14. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1-5.

²⁶ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.24.

and the rule of faith.²⁷ According to Irenaeus' own metaphor,²⁸ 'the apostles like rich men putting money in the bank, deposited in the church the scriptures and the rule of faith.' By the 'rule of faith,' he means a summary of the faith that 'is not totally fixed verbally but that is recognizable as an ancestor of later Christian creeds.'²⁹

It is essential to point out that for Irenaeus the rule of faith is identical with scripture, it derives from scripture and is applied to scripture.³⁰ Irenaeus, in his dispute with the Gnostics, argues that even if the apostles themselves had not left us scriptures, we should not reject tradition,³¹ accusing the Gnostics that they 'consent neither to scripture nor to tradition.'³² Irenaeus does not intend to disparage scripture, but to underline the equal authority of the apostolic oral tradition with scripture.³³ Irenaeus also observes that the Gnostics fail to observe the order of scripture because they appeal to obscure passages in order to explain the clear ones.³⁴ The rule of faith is 'a kind of canon within the canon' which can be deduced by the careful reader who uses the plain passages to interpret the obscure ones.³⁵

John Barton points out that Irenaeus' rule of faith is 'a framework within which both scripture and church teaching must be heard and assimilated, and against which both may be judged' and not 'an ecclesiastical tradition additional to the traditions in scripture,

²⁷ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, pp.123-124.

²⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.4.1.

²⁹ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.124.

³⁰ Ibid., p.124.

³¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.4.1.

³² Ibid., 3.2.2.

³³ This is obvious from the fact that Irenaeus repeatedly appeals to scripture in order to confront the views held by the Gnostics, assuring that scriptures are 'indeed perfect, since they are spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit' (*Against Heresies* 2.28.2).

³⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.28.3; 2.27.1; 2.27.3; 2.26.3; 2.10.1.

³⁵ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, pp.175.

containing extra dogmas.³⁶ The issue of authority for Christians, according to Barton, 'lies with such a rule rather than scripture itself; for scripture is capable of being read in many different ways.' Thus, the rule of faith determines the basic elements of the faith, providing the context within which scripture is to be read.³⁷

The church's faith, after Irenaeus, becomes the key to unlock the meaning of scripture.³⁸ Thus, as Robert Grant suggests, Irenaeus is really 'the father of the authoritative exegesis.'³⁹ The rule of faith 'did not settle the question of method, nor did it solve problems of detail in the theological, moral and spiritual exposition of the Bible.' From one point of view the rule of faith 'was limited as a unifying framework for interpreting scripture,' but from another point of view these limitations 'are precisely what enable the task of interpretation.'⁴⁰

Regarding Irenaeus' method of interpretation, Greer argues that Irenaeus is highly ambiguous, for while we should suppose Irenaeus' method would be typological, his definition of 'typology' as a relationship between earthly and heavenly realities would normally be called 'allegory.' Thus it is possible to argue, Greer says, that Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia⁴¹ 'resolve the sort of confusion found from Irenaeus' work by consciously elaborating two methods opposed to each other.'⁴²

Likewise Manlio Simonetti observes that in Irenaeus there appears both 'typological' and 'vertical' 'allegory.' The former is based on a 'supposed deficiency in

³⁶ John Barton, *People of the Book? The Authority of the Bible in Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1988), p.30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.31.

³⁸ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, pp.176.

³⁹ Robert Grant and David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (Second Edition; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p.50.

⁴⁰ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, pp.198.

⁴¹ For details of Origen's and Theodore's methods of interpretation see later on in this chapter.

⁴² Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.178.

the literal sense' and the latter sees sacred earthly realities as the *typos* of heavenly realities. For Irenaeus 'the allegorical sense should be superimposed on the literal one' for certain passages of scripture, but he 'never felt the need to elucidate the ways in which this superimposition operated.' Simonetti argues that we would expect in Irenaeus a 'systematically literalist approach to counter arbitrary Gnostic allegorizing,' but such an approach is sometimes accompanied by an allegorical reading, especially in the interpretation of the parables.⁴³ In the parable of the wicked husbandmen,⁴⁴ for instance, Irenaeus argues that God planted the vineyard of the human race when he formed Adam and chose the fathers; then he let it out to husbandmen when he established the Mosaic dispensation. Irenaeus also sees the hedge around the vineyard as a figure of the particular instructions regarding the Jewish worship; the building of the tower as God's choosing of Jerusalem; the winepress as the receptacle of the prophetic spirit. Thus when the householder cast the wicked husbandmen out of the vineyard and gave the vineyard to other husbandmen it is seen as God's rejection of the Jews and their replacement by the Christian Church.⁴⁵

Hanson also observes that Irenaeus uses both the traditional 'typology' as well as 'allegory,' arguing however that there are limits to Irenaeus' use of 'allegory.' Irenaeus insists on the view that the doctrine of the apostles proclaimed one and the same God and thus, 'if any one were to suggest that what the apostles said about God should be allegorised he would be quite wrong.'⁴⁶

⁴³ Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, pp.21-24.

⁴⁴ Matthew 21:33-44; Mark 12:1-11; Luke 20:9-18.

⁴⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4. 36. 1-2.

⁴⁶ Hanson, 'Biblical Exegesis in the Early Church,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p. 427. Cf., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3. 12. 11.

Philo: Clement of Alexandria's 'very extensive copying' of Philo's writings and Origen's references to him make Philo an exegetical forerunner of the school of Alexandria.⁴⁷ Thus, it is necessary, at this stage, to deal with Philo's use of allegory and his influence upon the Christian Exegesis of the fourth century.

Philo divided allegorization into two classes, the *physical* and the *ethical*. In the *physical* allegorization he placed passages which referred to God and the nature of the world, and in the *ethical*, passages which referred to the duties of man. Philo, took this division from the Stoics.⁴⁸ Philo's principles of 'allegory' are clearly expressed in his work, *Concerning Noah's Work as a planter*: There are certain situations, he observes, in which the literal sense of the passage must be denied and the allegorical sense then can be introduced. Philo argues that passages containing, for example, anything unworthy of God must be interpreted allegorically, as well as passages which are difficult to understand, whether they seem historically improbable or contain inconsistencies. If something seems perfectly obvious, there must be a deeper meaning hidden.⁴⁹

Philo, dealing with the trees in the garden of Eden, argues that these trees do not resemble the trees familiar to us but 'trees of Life, of Immortality, of Knowledge, of Apprehension, of Understanding, of the conception of good and evil.' The Scripture itself, he points out, demonstrates the necessity of allegorization, and he calls 'allegory' 'the method dear to men with their eyes opened.'⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Robert Grant argues, however, that we should not consider Philo as an exegetical forerunner of that school although he acknowledges that Clement copies very extensively Philo's writings and Origen refers to him. Grant instead of calling Philo an exegetical forerunner, prefers to state that Philo just prepares the way for the Alexandrian Christians. Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p.52.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 52-53. For Philo, for instance, the seven-branched candelabrum is a symbol of the seven planets (*Life of Moses*, 2.103); Abraham and Sarah are symbols of mind and virtue (*Abraham*, 99.1-4).

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.53. The same views were also supported by Origen and are cited below under the title 'Origen.'

⁵⁰ *Philo with an English Translation by F. H. Colson* in 'The Loeb Classical Library,' vol. 3, book II, plant.36, p.230.

Since for Philo the scriptures are the work of God, every expression, every word and letter has its meaning. Moreover, when in a passage we find an obvious meaning, we have to search for a deeper meaning hidden within it. Philo, like the Stoics, discovers the hidden meaning of Scriptures by etymology and arithmology, but this meaning must be discovered in its source.⁵¹

Gnostics: The Gnostics, in the second century, also used allegorization. Gnostics maintained a cosmic dualism and believed that God had given his revelation through Jesus only to them. The New Testament's meaning could be understood only through the Gnostic myths. Gnostics were the first who provided a systematic exegesis of the New Testament.

Heracleon produced the first commentary to be written on one of the Gospels. This commentary exists only in fragments preserved by Origen in his commentary on the Gospel of John. From these fragments we can see his allegorization. Heracleon rejected the literal meaning of the text in order to find its hidden symbolic meaning.⁵²

The particular need to counteract the Gnostics' excessive allegorisations led Christian exegetes to turn to the Bible and develop their own system of exegesis, as the Gnostics had already done. The polemic with the Gnostics stimulated the development of a systematic method of exegesis.⁵³

For the Early Christian Church, Irenaeus' 'rule of faith' provided the basic hermeneutical principle to attack the interpretation provided by the Gnostics. Irenaeus attacks them, however, 'at a level of content rather than at a level of exegetical theory.'⁵⁴

⁵¹ Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p.53.

⁵² Ibid., pp.54-55.

⁵³ Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.34.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.24.

The development of a systematic method of interpretation is a task which is accomplished later on by others such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom.

We can distinguish two main tendencies in early Christian Exegesis, which because of the geographical place where they originated are known as the School of Antioch and the School of Alexandria. These two schools, in spite of the opposed methods that they used, had actually the same purpose, the confrontation of the heresies. We can clearly see this strongly expressed in the writings of the representatives of each school. Both of these Schools had members who were later condemned by Synods, because of their Christological mistakes, but also had distinguished members, who were not condemned. Moreover, both of their methods influenced the progress in Christian Exegesis for many centuries afterwards.⁵⁵

2.2 The School of Alexandria: Although the Alexandrians espoused ‘allegory’ as their preferred method of exegesis, ‘allegory’ had been well known and widely used by Stoics, Philo and Gnostics long before.⁵⁶ Among the Christians, Clement of Alexandria is the first who used this method in a thoroughgoing way and Origen, the most distinguished member of the Alexandrian School, is the one who sets out the principles of Christian allegorization, in the fourth book of his *De Principiis*.

Before, however, we deal with the methods espoused by the representatives of these schools, it is essential to clarify the meaning of their methods such as ‘typology’

⁵⁵ We have to restrict ourselves, therefore, only to the evaluation of their methods, because the aim of this chapter is not to give the history of these schools from their beginning to their decay, but to analyze their principles of exposition. This will be necessary in order to identify later how these methods were expressed in John Chrysostom’s writings and what was his contribution in the history of early Christian Exegesis.

⁵⁶ For more details see the first pages of this chapter.

‘allegory’ and ‘theory.’ ‘Typology’⁵⁷ is the interpretation of ‘an event belonging to the present or the recent past as the fulfilment of a similar situation recorded or prophesied in scripture,’ while ‘allegory’⁵⁸ is the interpretation of ‘an object or person (or a number of objects or persons) as in reality meaning some object or person of a later time, with no attempt made to trace a relationship of similar situation between them.’⁵⁹ ‘Typology,’ in other words, may be defined ‘as the establishment of historical connections between certain events, persons or things in the Old Testament and similar events, persons or things in the New Testament.’⁶⁰

The difference between these two methods is as follows: ‘typology’ searches for ‘linkages between events, persons or things within the historical framework of revelation,’ whereas ‘allegory’ searches for ‘a secondary and hidden meaning underlying the primary and obvious meaning of a narrative.’ This secondary meaning, as Woollcombe stresses, ‘does not necessarily have any connection at all with the historical framework of revelation.’⁶¹

The Antiochenes used ‘theory’ for ‘a sense of Scripture higher or deeper than the literal or historical meaning.’ However this higher and deeper sense of Scripture was

⁵⁷ The commonest meaning of the noun τύπος is to ‘signify the impression made on wax by a seal.’ G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Studies in Biblical Theology: Essays on Typology* (London: SCM Press, 1957), pp.60-61. The noun τύπος (from the verb τύπτειν) means ‘a blow,’ ‘something wrought of metal or stone,’ ‘the type or a model of a thing,’ ‘an outline, sketch, draught.’ Liddell, and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (seventh edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 824.

⁵⁸ The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (in his *Questiones Homericae* 22) defines ‘allegory’ as follow: ὁ τὰ ἄλλα μὲν ἀγορεύων τρόπος, ἕτερα δὲ ὧν λέγει σημαίνων ἐπωνύμως ἀλληγορία καλεῖται ‘that is called allegory which, as the name implies, says one thing but means other than what is said.’ Richard Patrick Crosland Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen’s Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p.39; cf Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p.175. The verb ἀλληγορέω (ἄλλος and ἀγορεύω) means ‘to speak so as to imply something other than what is said,’ and the noun ἀλληγορία (an allegory) is ‘a description of one thing under the image of another.’ Liddell, and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p.37.

⁵⁹ Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, p.7.

⁶⁰ Lampe and Woollcombe, *Studies in Biblical Theology*, p.39.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.40.

firmly based on the letter of Scripture. The Alexandrians used the term 'theory' too, but it is essential to clarify that they used it as equivalent to 'allegory.'⁶²

Describing in general the principles of these two main schools of interpretation, it is true to say that the Alexandrians placed their emphasis on the allegorical interpretation of scripture giving a supplementary role to the literal one, while the Antiochenes emphasized the interpretation of scripture in the light of its historical context.⁶³

The Antiochenes applied the meaning of 'theory' in the exposition of the prophets. They strongly rejected the Alexandrian opinion that the Christocentric understanding of the prophecies 'was something added to the original prophecy.' For them prophecies were at the same time both historical and Christocentric.⁶⁴

Having clarified the terms 'typology' 'allegory' and 'theory,' we turn now to how the representatives of each school used these terms and what the interactions of that usage.

Clement of Alexandria: Clement of Alexandria was the first among Christians who used the allegorical method, but his thought was not yet systematic. Clement makes use of a Christocentric interpretation of the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament.⁶⁵ Faith in Christ, was obviously his main principle. His exegesis is based on that of Philo. It is generally accepted that he copied very extensively Philo's writings in his work.⁶⁶

⁶² Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p.66.

⁶³ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, p.175.

⁶⁴ Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p.66.

⁶⁵ PG 8,1345; Strom. IV, 21; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, in 12 volumes: Clement of Alexandria, v.2, pp.201-202.

⁶⁶ Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, pp.55-56; Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.38.

Philo, for instance, on the basis of the etymology of Isaac as meaning 'laughter' and Rebecca as 'patience,' had interpreted Gen.26:8,⁶⁷ as meaning that 'the wise man Abimelech finds delight in wisdom.'⁶⁸ Clement, however, on the basis of the same etymologies, interprets Gen.26:8 in a Christological direction, seeing 'Abimelech' as Christ and the 'window' as Christ's incarnation. Thus, Clement on the basis of the Philo's etymologies takes Gen.26:8 as meaning that 'Christ through his incarnation contemplates the joy and the constancy of his Church.'⁶⁹

Clement was influenced by Philo's cosmological and moral interpretation. He takes the Temple as a symbol of the universe (*Strom. V.6*) and the tablets of the Law containing the decalogue as a symbol of the world and its ten elements: sun, moon, stars, clouds, light, wind, water, air, darkness and fire (*Strom. VI.16*).⁷⁰

Clement, like Philo, was convinced that scripture cannot contain anything banal and that every word was written with a precise intention 'hidden' and 'not immediately perceptible.'⁷¹ For Clement 'every word and syllable of Scripture has its meaning, but since it is written symbolically, the meaning is usually not the obvious one.' The truth had been transmitted only through enigmas and symbols, allegories, metaphors and analogous figures.⁷² Clement developed a theory of the symbolism of the Bible. He says, for instance, that the Lord spoke 'in a mysterious way,'⁷³ concluding in general that scripture

⁶⁷ According to Gen. 26:8 Abimelech through a window saw Isaac embracing Rebecca.

⁶⁸ *Philo with an English Translation by F. H. Colson* in 'The Loeb Classical Library,' vol.3, book II, plant.169-170, p.300.

⁶⁹ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.38. Cf. Clement's Paed. I 5:22-23.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.38.

⁷¹ PG 8,1372; *Strom.*IV,25; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 2, p.214.

⁷² Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.35.

⁷³ PG 8,742; *Strom.* I,9; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, p.380.

as well spoke in a mysterious language of symbols.⁷⁴

Clement uses the method of ‘allegory’ to find the hidden meaning of scripture, but he is not unaware of the risks of ‘allegory.’ Having in mind the excesses of the Gnostic allegories, he stresses that ‘allegory’ must not ‘change’ the meanings of a passage. The Gnostics wrest their false opinions, as he points out, by selecting ‘ambiguous expressions,’ making use of the mere words, and not looking to the sense of the quotations they make. Thus, he argues, the truth is to be found when each one of the points is in agreement with similar points from scriptures as well:

Κάν τολμήσωσι προφητικαῖς χρήσασθαι γραφαῖς καὶ οἱ τὰς αἱρέσεις με-
τιόντες, πρῶτον μὲν οὐ πάσαις, ἔπειτα οὐ τελείαις, οὐδὲ ὡς τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ ὕφος
τῆς προφητείας ὑπαγορεύει, ἀλλ’ ἐκλεγόμενοι τὰ ἀμφιβόλως εἰρημένα, εἰς τὰς
ἰδίας μετάγουσι δόξας, ὀλίγας σποράδην ἀπανθιζόμενοι φωνάς, οὐ τὸ
σημαινόμενον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν σκοποῦντες, ἀλλ’ αὐτῇ ψιλῇ ἀποχρώμενοι τῇ λέξει·
... ἡ ἀλήθεια δὲ οὐκ ἐν τῷ μετατιθέναι τὰ σημαινόμενα εὐρίσκεται (οὕτω μὲν
γὰρ ἀνατρέψουσι πᾶσαν ἀληθῆ διδασκαλίαν), ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ διασκέπασθαι τί τῷ
Κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ παντοκράτορι Θεῷ τελέως οἰκεῖόν τε καὶ πρέπον, κἂν τῷ βεβαιοῦν
ἕκα-στον τῶν ἀποδεικνυμένων κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν πάλιν τῶν ὁμοίων
γραφῶν.

And if those also who follow heresies venture to avail themselves of the prophetic scriptures; in the first place they will not make use of all the scriptures, and then they will not quote them entire, nor as the body and texture of prophecy prescribe. But, selecting ambiguous expressions, they wrest them to their own opinions, gathering a few expressions here and there; not looking to the sense, but making use of the mere words. ... But the truth is not found by changing the meanings (for so people subvert all true teaching), but in the consideration of what perfectly belongs to and becomes the Sovereign God, and in establishing each one of the points demonstrated in the scriptures again from similar scriptures.⁷⁵

From the above passage, it seems true to conclude that Clement is not unaware of the risks of ‘allegory.’ Acknowledging the excesses of the Gnostic allegories, he requires

⁷⁴ PG 9, 348, Strom. VI, 15; Anti-Nicene Christian Library, 2, p.377.

⁷⁵ PG 9, 533, Strom. VII, 16; Anti-Nicene Christian Library, 2, p.478.

two controlling facts: The truth is found only when the interpretation of a passage leads to a result which is 'appropriate and perfectly consonant with the majesty of God,' and when 'it is based on the support of other biblical passages,' as Simonetti observes.⁷⁶

Origen: Origen is the most distinguished member of the Alexandrians for he sets out the principles of Christian allegorization in the fourth book of his *De Principiis*, developing a more systematic method of interpretation. All the characteristics of his exegesis can be found in the writings of Clement and other exegetes who preceded him, but not in such a systematic development.⁷⁷

The two 'fundamental convictions' which mark out Origen's interpretation are the belief that the scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit and that they have a deeper-hidden meaning, beyond that which appears upon the surface of the text. Origen finds it necessary to search for a deeper-hidden meaning of scripture in order to defend its inspired character.⁷⁸

For Origen, the fact that the 'extraordinary and irresistible diffusion of Christianity, in spite of every difficulty, even violent resistance, had already been predicted by Christ' confirms the inspiration of scripture.⁷⁹ As he points out 'if we observe how powerful the word has become in a very few years' and that it was preached 'everywhere throughout the world,' despite the conspiracies which were formed against the Christians and the

⁷⁶ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.37.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.39; Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, pp. 55-56. Greer argues that Origen is 'the first, if not the only one, of the fathers' who argues in detail for a method of interpretation of the Bible (Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.179); Simonetti likewise points out that Origen 'made biblical hermeneutics into a real science' conditioning decisively all subsequent patristic exegesis (Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.39).

⁷⁸ Maurice F. Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: volume 1, From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. By Peter R. Ackroyd and Christopher F. Evans (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), pp.461-462, 465.

⁷⁹ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.41.

small number of teachers, 'we have no difficulty in saying that the result is beyond any human power.'⁸⁰

Origen, arguing in support of the inspiration of scripture, compares Moses and Jesus Christ with all the 'Greek and Barbarian' legislators. Then he observes that no one 'Greek or Barbarian' legislator was able to impress his teaching upon another nation, or even on any number of persons worth mentioning in a single nation; whereas many 'Greeks and Barbarians' deserted the laws of their fathers and the established gods in order to observe the law of Moses and the discipleship of the words of Jesus Christ.⁸¹

For Origen 'there is not one jot or title of scripture that cannot bring spiritual profit.' He holds the view of verbal inspiration of scripture, which was common enough to many Jewish and Christian exegetes before him. But, when he says that every jot and title of scripture is inspired, he means 'every jot and title of the intended meaning.'⁸²

Origen does not only think that scripture is a book inspired by the Holy Spirit, but also identifies it with Christ the Word of God (=Logos): 'The letter of the sacred text functions, like the human body assumed by Christ, as the envelope which encloses the divine Logos.'⁸³ Origen demonstrates the divinely inspired character of scripture 'by first treating it as a pure historical document.' In his fourth book *De Principiis*, for instance, he underlines certain messianic prophecies⁸⁴ demonstrating that they 'were fulfilled in the human person of Christ.'⁸⁵ Then he concludes that the scriptures were divinely inspired

⁸⁰ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 1:2; PG 11, 345; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.277-278.

⁸¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 1:1; PG 11, 344; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.275-277.

⁸² Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, p.475.

⁸³ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.41; cf., Origen, *Contra Celsus*, VI,77.

⁸⁴ From Gen.49:10 and Deut.32:21.

⁸⁵ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 1:3-4.

for they had foretold Christ's advent and the power of His doctrine.⁸⁶

Regarding the search for a deeper-hidden meaning, Origen argues that throughout the whole church in his time there is a belief that the whole law is indeed spiritual and that its spiritual meaning is not known to all.⁸⁷ Over and above the literal sense, scripture has a deeper spiritual meaning which is hidden intentionally by the Holy Spirit in order to prevent 'uninstructed' people from readily approaching profound truths.⁸⁸ The deeper spiritual meaning of scripture is concealed beneath the literal one which 'covers it, and clothes it like a veil, a garment, or a body,' causing difficulties in fully understanding the meaning of scripture.⁸⁹ For Origen the literal meaning 'does not represent the ultimate goal of scripture but serves rather as an educative starting point which points the reader to an awareness of the deeper meaning.'⁹⁰

Origen finds it necessary to explain how scripture must be read and understood in order to avoid the numerous errors which have been committed by the Jews and some heretics. The Jews, as he argues, have not accepted Jesus as Christ because following the letter of the prophecies regarding Him⁹¹ they saw none of these things visibly accomplished during the advent of Him who is believed to be Christ.⁹² The heretics, on the other side, reading certain other passages⁹³ from the Old Testament, thought that the Demiurge(=Creator God) was an imperfect and unbenevolent God and Jesus Christ, who

⁸⁶ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.41. Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 1:6.

⁸⁷ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book I, Preface 8; IV 2:2.

⁸⁸ Origen, *De Principiis*, IV 2:7.

⁸⁹ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.42; Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.179. Origen, *De Principiis*, III 6:1; IV 1:6; IV 2:8.

⁹⁰ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.42; cf., Origen, *De Principiis*, IV 2:1.

⁹¹ Is.61:1; Ps.45:5; Zch.9:10; Is.7:15; 11:6-7.

⁹² Origen, *De Principiis*, IV 2:1.

⁹³ Jr.15:14; Ex.20:5; I Sm.15:11; Is.45:7; Am.3:6; Mch.1:12; I Sm.18:10.

was not the Demiurge, had come to announce a more perfect deity.⁹⁴ Then Origen argues that the Jews and some heretics succumbed to the above false opinions because they understood scripture according to its mere letter and not to its spiritual meaning:

Αἰτία δὲ πᾶσι τοῖς προειρημένοις ψευδοδοξιῶν καὶ ἀσεβειῶν ἡ ἰδιωτικῶν περὶ Θεοῦ λόγων οὐκ ἄλλη τις εἶναι δοκεῖ ἢ ἡ γραφή κατὰ τὰ πνευματικὰ μὴ νενοημένη, ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς τὸ ψιλὸν γράμμα ἐξηλειμμένη.

Now the cause, in all the points previously enumerated, of the false opinions, and of the impious statements or ignorant assertions about God, appears to be nothing else than the not understanding the scripture according to its spiritual meaning, but the interpretation of it agreeably to the mere letter.⁹⁵

It is worth noting that for Origen the search for a deeper hidden spiritual meaning in scripture is in accord with the apostolic tradition of the Church. Origen tries to substantiate the apostolic nature of that tradition quoting certain passages from Paul's letters.⁹⁶ This tradition was to be found even in the Old Testament.⁹⁷ Moreover, the ecclesiastical tradition of second century Alexandria, which Origen inherited, was to a very marked degree characterized by an allegorical approach to scripture.⁹⁸ The 'sacred books,' he argues, 'have come down to us, we must point out the ways (of interpreting them) which appear (correct) to us, who cling to the standard of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ according to the succession of the apostles.'⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Origen, *De Principiis*, IV 2:1.

⁹⁵ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:2; PG 11, 360; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.294-295.

⁹⁶ Particularly Origen quotes: Paul's interpretation of Deut.25:4 in I Cor.9:10, I Cor.2:7-8, I Cor.10:4,11, the allegory of Sarah and Hagar in Gal.4:22-26, Col.2:16-17 (Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:6). Further support, as Wiles observes, could be found 'in the whole approach of the epistle to the Hebrews and in the story of Peter's vision on the rooftop at Joppa.' cf., 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, p.466.

⁹⁷ Ps.78:2 ('I will open my mouth in parable; I will utter dark sayings of old') indicates that the Psalmist himself had understood the historical accounts of Exodus and Numbers to contain a deeper hidden meaning: Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, p.466.

⁹⁸ The *Epistle of Barnabas* and the writings of Clement of Alexandria, show the allegorical approach to scripture. Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, p.466.

⁹⁹ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:2; PG 11, 360; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, p.295.

Origen also observes, in the same context, that even the most simple have believed that scriptures contain certain mystical economies. Certain instances described in scripture such as the intercourse of Lot with his daughters, the two wives of Abraham, the two sisters married to Jacob and the two handmaids who bore Jacob children, indicate the existence of such ‘mystical economies.’¹⁰⁰

The prophesies and the gospels, he continues, are filled with ‘enigmas and dark sayings;’ the revelations made to John conceal ‘unspeakable mysteries’ and the epistles of the apostles include countless numbers of ‘most profound ideas.’¹⁰¹

For Origen, the difficulty in understanding fully the meaning of scripture, which results from the above findings, could be solved in searching for different types of meaning for every passage of scripture. Origen, on the basis of Prov.22:20, distinguishes three different senses of meaning: the *literal* sense, the *moral* sense the *spiritual* sense which correspond to the division of the human person into *body*, the *soul* and the *spirit*:

οὐκοῦν τριχῶς ἀπογράφεσθαι δεῖ εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν τὰ τῶν ἁγίων γραμμάτων νοήματα... Ὡςπερ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος συνέστηκεν ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἡ οἰκονομηθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν δοθῆναι γραφή.

the individual ought, then, to portray the ideas of holy scripture in a threefold manner upon his own soul... For as man consists of body and soul and spirit, so in the same way does scripture, which has been arranged to be given by God for the salvation of men.¹⁰²

Origen’s threefold division of scriptural meanings, as Simonetti observes, is parallel to Paul’s division of the human person into *spirit*, *soul* and *body* (I Thes. 5:23).¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:2; PG 11, 360; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.295-296.

¹⁰¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:3.

¹⁰² Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:4; PG 11,364; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.299-301.

¹⁰³ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.43; Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.180.

For Origen there are certain occasions when the above threefold pattern of interpretation has to be reduced to a twofold: the literal and the spiritual.¹⁰⁴ Origen does not seem to be wholly consistent in the nature of the distinction which he draws between the moral and the spiritual senses. The difference between these two senses appears in two main forms, as Wiles observes. The first one is based to 'differing levels of spiritual attainment,' where the moral sense corresponds to the 'pure milk' and the spiritual sense to the 'solid food.' The second one 'concerned rather with the content of the interpretation,' where moral interpretation relates to 'human experience' and spiritual interpretation to 'Christ and the great truths of God's saving dispensation.'¹⁰⁵

Thus, as Wiles argues, 'most of the time Origen himself works in terms of two senses only, the literal and the spiritual. It is only in that form that his system can be understood consistently as a method of exegesis.'¹⁰⁶

For Origen certain scriptural passages cannot have a literal meaning whereas all have a spiritual meaning: 'With regard to scripture as a whole, we are disposed to admit that all of it has a spiritual significance, but not all of it has a literal significance, since in several places it can be seen that a literal sense is impossible.'¹⁰⁷

The literal sense of scripture is, for Origen, the 'literally literal meaning of the words.' As Wiles observes, 'when the Psalmist declares that God's truth 'reaches to the heaven,' Origen feels constrained to insist that clouds cannot be intended literally in such

¹⁰⁴ As Wiles observes, there is a real difficulty in the attempt to find meanings of scripture analogous to body, soul and spirit because there is no clear distinction between soul and spirit, or between the moral and the spiritual senses of scripture: Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, pp.467-468; This simpler distinction, as Simonetti observes, is based on Christ's division into man and God, or on the division of Christians into simple and perfect Christians: Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.43.

¹⁰⁵ Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, p.468.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.470; Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.180.

¹⁰⁷ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 3:5; PG 11, 385; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, p.326.

a thing.’ However, by the literal sense of scripture, Origen also means some passages, as factual statements which conflict with some other statements of scripture, or are morally unworthy of divine revelation, ‘which have a straightforward and intelligible historical meaning, were at that level of understanding simply not true.’ Thus Origen, in order to solve these contradictions is bound to conclude that ‘in fact they did not happen and the scriptural account is there solely for the sake of its spiritual interpretation.’ The surprising thing, as Wiles argues, is that whereas Origen ‘has taken the big step’ of accepting this principle, he is ‘very reluctant’ to use it. Origen, for instance, does not reject the literal historical meaning of the story of the building of Noah’s ark, or the incest of Lot’s daughters, but he makes on the contrary ‘valiant attempts to overcome them.’ The discrepancies, moreover, between the different gospel records, cannot be fully solved unless one admits that some apparently historical and factual statements are ‘not historically and factually true.’ Thus, in the great majority of cases, as Wiles concludes, Origen ‘prefers to suggest the most far-fetched harmonising explanation rather than to apply the principle of non-historicity.’¹⁰⁸

Origen denies the presence of the literal sense in certain scriptural passages in order ‘to eliminate, through allegorical interpretation, passages too crudely anthropomorphic in their representation of divinity,’ for these anthropomorphic passages disconcerted educated Greeks and encouraged the Gnostics to reject the Old Testament.¹⁰⁹

Origen points out that the purpose of Scripture is the revelation of ‘intellectual truths’ rather than of God’s working in history, and that the history merely conceals the truths:

¹⁰⁸ Wiles, ‘Origen as Biblical Scholar,’ in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, pp.470-471.

¹⁰⁹ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, pp.44-45; Roman Greer observes that ‘Origen’s fundamental distinction correlates with the Platonic distinction between the perceptible order of sense appearances and the intelligible order of immutable reality.’ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.179.

Χρὴ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο εἰδέναι, ὅτι τοῦ προηγουμένου σκοποῦ τυγχάνοντος τὸν ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς εἰρμόν ἀπαγγεῖλαι γεγεννημένοις καὶ πρακτέοις, ὅπου μὲν εὔρε γινόμενα κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν ὁ Λόγος ἐφαρμόσαι δυνάμενα τοῖς μυστικοῖς τούτοις, ἐχρήσατο ἀποκρύπτων ἀπὸ τῶν πολλῶν τὸν βαθύτερον νοῦν· ὅπου δὲ ἐν τῇ διηγήσει τῆς περὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἀκολουθίας οὐχ εἶπετο ἢ τῶνδὲ τινῶν πράξεις ἢ προαναγεγραμμένη διὰ τὰ μυστικώτερα, συνύφηεν ἡ γραφὴ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τὸ μὴ γινόμενον, πῇ μὲν μὴδὲ δυνατόν γενέσθαι, πῇ δὲ δυνατόν μὲν γενέσθαι, οὐ μὴν γεγεννημένον.

And this also we must know, that the principal aim being to announce the spiritual connection in those things that are done, and that ought to be done, where the Word found that things done according to the history could be adapted to these mystical senses, he made use of them, concealing from the multitude the deeper meaning; but where, in the narrative of the development of supersensual things, there did not follow the performance of those certain events, which was already indicated by the mystical meaning, the scripture interwove in the history [the account of] some event that did not take place, sometimes what could not have happened; sometimes what could, but did not.¹¹⁰

Supporting the principle that ‘history merely conceals the truths,’ Origen finds incredible the picture of the first three days of creation without sun and the other stars, as well as the picture of the devil who takes Jesus up to a high mountain. From these and more other examples he concludes that there are thousands of such instances where the Bible cannot be literally interpreted.¹¹¹

Origen’s principle that countless instances recorded in the Bible cannot be literally interpreted, must not lead us, however, to the conclusion that for him there is no real history in the Bible in general. Origen does not say that no one history in the Bible is real, just because a certain one is not real. Thus, as he argues, it is the task of every reader to ascertain whether the literal meaning is true or not.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 2:9; PG 11, 375-376; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.313-314.

¹¹¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 3:1; PG 11, 377; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, pp.316-317.

¹¹² Origen, *De Principiis*, Book IV 3:4; PG 11, 384-385; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1, p.323.

Regarding the 'difficult and ambiguous passages' Origen says that they must be interpreted using similar other passages from the Bible which are clearer.¹¹³ The cross-checking of an ambiguous passage with other biblical passages, works as a controlling fact to avoid the arbitrary Gnostic interpretations. It is 'a valuable method for checking the acceptability of any suggested interpretation,'¹¹⁴ which indicates that Origen is not unaware of the risks of 'allegory.'¹¹⁵

2.3 The School of Antioch: The Antiochenes strongly opposed the Alexandrian 'allegory,' espousing 'typology' and 'theory' as their preferred methods of exegesis. The most distinguished members of the School of Antioch are Diodore of Tarsus and his students Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom. Theodore of Mopsuestia is the most original of the Antiochenes who carried out the principles and the tendencies of this School. The Nestorian and Monophysite struggle brought suspicion on the School of Antioch, and Diodore and Theodore were condemned for their position as forerunners of Nestorianism.¹¹⁶ However through Chrysostom, whose works were totally unsuspected, the Antiochene exegesis survived in the Eastern Church after the fall of the School.

Diodore of Tarsus: Diodore of Tarsus, as Socrates asserts, 'limited his expositions to the literal sense of scripture, without attempting to explain that which was mystical.'¹¹⁷ He avoided 'allegory' and investigated the literal sense of Scripture.

¹¹³ Clement of Alexandria likewise depends his method of exegesis on this principle too. For more details about Clement's view see above under the title 'Clement of Alexandria.'

¹¹⁴ Wiles, 'Origen as Biblical Scholar,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* 1, p.485.

¹¹⁵ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.46.

¹¹⁶ They were condemned by the fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 and the seventh Ecumenical Council in A. D. 787.

¹¹⁷ PG 67, 668 Socrates 6,3; English translation, *The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era*, v.3; London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1844), p.422.

Diodore wrote a book called: *What is the Difference between theory and allegory*, where he expressed his principles of exposition. Diodore, there, distinguished in history both 'theory' and 'allegory.' For him the right method of exposition must be based on the historical-literal context of the Bible.¹¹⁸ As Florofski argues, Diodore 'was probably interested to defend the realism of the Bible in order to confront the 'Hellenism' which was concealed behind 'allegory.'¹¹⁹ In Diodore's eyes 'while allegory weakens and abuses the letter of the text, theory recognises a higher level of meaning which overlies the literal without deleting or weakening it.'¹²⁰ It is difficult to say in detail how Diodore applied his principles.¹²¹ Whereas he wrote commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New Testament, only a few fragments of them are preserved. These fragments, as Wiles observes, are 'just sufficient to indicate the creative nature of his mind, but not enough to provide us with any detailed knowledge of his thought.'¹²²

Theodore of Mopsuestia: Theodore of Mopsuestia is the most original of the Antiochenes. He carried out the principles and the tendencies of the School of Antioch. He wrote commentaries on almost every book of the Bible, but most of them are lost. There survive four commentaries: on the Psalms (partly in Greek, partly in Latin), on the minor Prophets (in the original Greek), on John's Gospel (in a Syriac translation) and on

¹¹⁸ George Florofski, *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century* (Translated in Greek by Panayiotis K. Pallis; Thessaloniki: Pournaras Press, 1991), p.404.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.404.

¹²⁰ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.67.

¹²¹ Florofski, *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century*, p.404. Maurice F. Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: volume 1, From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. By Peter R. Ackroyd and Christopher F. Evans (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), p. 490.

¹²² Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p. 490.

the minor Epistles of Paul (in a fifth-century translation).¹²³ The exegetical work of Theodore of Mopsuestia was ordered to be burned by the fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in AD 553. This Council considered Theodore responsible for the Christological errors of his pupil Nestorius, and accused him of the rejection of some of the books from the canon of the Bible.¹²⁴

Regarding the divine inspiration of scripture, Theodore agrees with the widely accepted view by all his contemporaries, that the primary author of all the scripture was the Holy Spirit. He pays, however, more attention than they to the precise nature of the Holy Spirit's role and of the human author's role. For Theodore the Holy Spirit provides the content of revelation and the human author gives it the appropriate form in co-operation with the Holy Spirit. Theodore's usage of the image of the human author as the pen in the hand of the real author, the Holy Spirit¹²⁵ is obviously an image which arises naturally out of the text of the Psalm 45 and not Theodore's own invention. Theodore's usage of that image, therefore, should not lead to the conclusion that his conception of the role of the human author is purely passive or instrumentalist. In several other passages, as Wiles argues, Theodore's emphasis 'lies on the inspiration as a special imparting of revealed truth.'¹²⁶

One of the charges laid against Theodore by the fifth Ecumenical Council was his rejection of some of the books from the canon of the Bible. Theodore suggests that the books of the Bible which contain no prophetic, messianic or historical elements but merely 'human wisdom,' as *Job*, must be excluded from the canon. Some of the historical

¹²³ Ibid., p.492.

¹²⁴ Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p.68.

¹²⁵ In his commentary on Psalm 45.

¹²⁶ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p. 493.

books, as *Chronicles* and *Ezra-Nehemiah*, must be excluded because they are merely historical. From the canon of the New Testament Theodore rejects the *Catholic Letters*.¹²⁷

Regarding Theodore's rejection of some of the Books from the canon of the Bible, Wiles points out, however, that in most cases 'we lack the evidence that would be required to evaluate their accusation with any degree of confidence.' He also observes that the rejection of *Chronicles* and *Ezra-Nehemiah* is in line with the early Syrian church, and the rejection of *2 Peter*, *2 and 3 John*,¹²⁸ *Jude* and *Revelation* is in accord with the general Antiochene tradition.¹²⁹

Theodore regards *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes* as useful works written by Solomon who did not have the gift of Prophecy but only the gift of prudence. Comparing these two books with the prophetic writings, he gives them lower value, but he does not reject them from the canon of the Bible. Regarding *Job*, Theodore observes that the words of Job in the poetic sections of the book contain curses and complaints, which are totally at variance with Job's character. This observation leads him to the conclusion that the author of that book was not Job, but a learned pagan, an Edomite, who wrote it to satisfy his own vanity, rejecting it from the canon of the Bible. And finally he rejects the *Song of Songs* because of the 'absence of any special gift of prophecy.' He says that it is not even appropriate for public reading.¹³⁰ Simonetti argues that Theodore rejects the *Song of Songs* because he reads it as a simple love song, observing that Theodore is the only one among early Christian Exegetes who rejects the traditional interpretation of the

¹²⁷ Grant and Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p.67.

¹²⁸ Cf., Judith Lieu, *The Second and Third Epistles of John* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), pp.5-36.

¹²⁹ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.494.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.495.

couple in this book as Christ and the Church.¹³¹

Having seen Theodore's views regarding the inspiration of scripture and the rejection of some of the books from the canon of the Bible, we turn now to Theodore's method of exegesis. The commonest description of his exegesis is to call it 'anti-allegorical.' His work *On Allegory and History*, was directed particularly against Origen and his method, but only one fragment has survived.

Theodore's exegesis on Gal.4:24 is obviously the appropriate starting point to study his principles of exegesis. In the few Greek fragments of Theodore's commentary on Galatians¹³² one may find the view held by Theodore regarding Paul's use of the term ἀλληγορούμενα 'allegorical:'

Ἀλληγορίαν ἐκάλεσεν τὴν ἐκ παραθέσεως τῶν ἤδη γεγονότων πρὸς τὰ παρόντα σύγκρισιν.

He calls allegory the comparison of present events with events which have already occurred.¹³³

In the above passage, Theodore reflecting the main policy of the Antiochene School, argues that Paul made in Gal.4:24 a comparison between two realities, turning virtually Paul's 'allegory' into 'typology.' Theodore strongly rejects any interpretation of Gal.4:24, which denies the historical reality of the passage. As Simonetti points out, Theodore 'accuses the allegorists of abusing Paul's expression to eliminate the actual scriptural meaning and to invent foolish fables.'¹³⁴

¹³¹ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.70.

¹³² Theodore's commentary on Galatians, which was probably burned by the fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553 AD. (See above p.85). However, it is preserved in a fifth century Latin translation and a few Greek fragments, published by H. B. Swete in 1880. The Greek fragments are also preserved in PG 66, 897-912.

¹³³ Swete, H. B., *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii: The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments, with an Introduction, Notes and Indices* (Cambridge: University Press, 1880), p.79; PG 66,908. It is my own translation.

¹³⁴ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.73.

In the preserved fifth century Latin translation of Theodore's commentary on Galatians, Theodore argues that Paul does not dismiss the historical narrative of the story nor does he add any new things to the old story; but in fact he puts these events in their accurate historical context:¹³⁵

sic et illa quae secundum Abraham sunt referens, secundum ut et in diuinis scripturis scriptum esse uidetur, ostendere uero cupiens qua de causa illis sit abusus, adicit: *quae sunt per allegoriam dicta*. qui studium multum habent interuertere sensus diuinarum scripturarum et omnia quae illuc posita sunt intercipere, fabulas uero quasdam ineptas ex se confingere, et allegoriae nomen suae ponere desipientiae; hanc uocem apostoli abutentes, quasi qui hinc uideantur sumpsisse potestatem ut et omnes intellectus diuinae exterminent scripturae, eo quod secundum apostolorum *per allegoriam* dicere nituntur, et ipsi non intellegentes quantum differt quod ab illis et ab apostolo hoc in loco dictum sit. Apostolus enim non interimit historiam, neque euoluit res dudum factas; sed sic posuit illa ut tunc fuerant facta, et historiam illorum quae fuerunt facta ad suum usus est intellectum, quando quidem dicens.

Now, after reminding us of the story of Abraham as we read it in the Bible, Paul goes on to add -because he is eager to explain why he has drawn on this story- 'Now this is an allegory.' Countless students of scripture have played tricks with the plain sense of the Bible and want to rob it of any meaning it contains. In fact, they make up inept fables and call their inanities 'allegories.' They so abuse the apostle's paradigm as to make the holy texts incomprehensible and meaningless. They go to much trouble to say just what the apostle says, 'This is by way of an allegory,' but they have no idea how far they stray from what Paul is saying here. That is because he neither dismisses the historical narrative nor is he adding new things to an old story. Instead, Paul is talking about events as they happened, then submits the story of those events to his present understanding.¹³⁶

In the above passage, Theodore strongly attacks the allegorical approach based on Paul's expression in Gal.4:24. As he argues, the allegorists 'so abuse Paul's expression

¹³⁵ The latin version of Theodore's comments on Gal. 4:22-25 (Swete's pp.72-81) is translated by Paige Lindsey and F. Lewis Shaw and cited in Joseph W. Trigg's, *Biblical Interpretation* (Message of the Fathers of the Church, vol.9; Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), p.172-177.

¹³⁶ Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, pp.73-74. Translated by Paige Lindsey and F. Lewis Shaw, in Trigg's, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.173.

as to make the holy texts incomprehensible and meaningless.’ Then, he concludes that the understanding of the allegorists differs from what Paul is saying, accusing them of having no idea how far they stray from what Paul actually wants to say.

It is worth noting that Theodore in an attempt to support his view, in the same context with the above passage, observes that Paul’s expressions ‘corresponds to,’ ‘just as’ and ‘at that time’ indicate that Paul acknowledges the historicity of the account. Then he accuses the allegorists of abusing ‘the historical accounts of the Bible as if they were no different from dreams in the night:’

sic pro omnibus negotiis historiam confessus est. Nec enim confinia esse dixisset illa quae secundum Agar fuerunt *illius quae nunc est Hierusalem*, quam nunc esse confitebatur. Neque *sicut* posuisset, quem non esse existimabat. Nam quod dixit, *sicut*, similitudinem utique ostendit; similitudo autem fieri non poterit, rebus non stantibus. Addito et quod dixerat *tunc*, incertum existimans quantum tempus designans dicit. Superflua autem erit et temporum diuisio, si tamen non fuerit factum. Sed apostolus quidem ita dicit; isti uero omnia e contrario faciunt, omnen de diuina scriptura historiam somniorum nocturnorum nihil differre uolentes; nec enim Adam, Adam esse dicunt, quando maxime eos de diuina scriptura ‘spiritualiter’ enarrare acciderit -spiritalem etiam interpretationem suam uolunt uocari desipientiam- neque paradisum, paradisum, neque colubrum, colubrum esse dicentes.

Above all else, Paul acknowledges the historicity of the account. Otherwise he could not say that Hagar ‘corresponds to the present Jerusalem,’ thus acknowledging that Jerusalem does exist in the here and now. Neither would he say ‘just as’ had he referred to a non-existent person. By saying ‘just as’ he demonstrates an analogy, but an analogy cannot be demonstrated if the things compared do not exist. In addition he says ‘at that time,’ indicating the particular time as uncertain or indefinite, but he would not have had to distinguish the particular time if nothing at all had really happened. This is the Apostle’s manner of speaking. Those allegorizers, though, turn it all inside out, as if the accounts in the Bible were no different from dreams in the night. They do their exegesis of scripture ‘spiritually’ -they like to call this silliness ‘spiritual interpretation.’ Adam is not Adam, paradise is not paradise, and the serpent

is not a serpent.¹³⁷

Thus, as Theodore concludes, what Paul actually wants to say is that by means of allegory one can illustrate the difference between the two covenants by comparing Hagar and Sarah:

uult autem dicere quoniam per allegoriam simile poterit quis illis duobus, id est, Agar et Sarrae, duo testamenta; ita ut sit Agar quidem in ordine legitimorum praeceptorum, quia etiam lex data est in monte Sina.

Here he actually desires to tell us that by means of allegory one can illustrate the difference between the covenants by comparing these two women, Hagar and Sarah, and that Hagar represents the order of regulation by law, for the Law was given on mount Sinai.¹³⁸

Theodore's interpretation of Paul's use of the term 'allegory' in Gal.4:24 is poles apart from that of the Alexandrian allegorists. The interpretation of this passage reveals the distinctive difference between the Alexandrians and the Antiochenes in the usage of the term 'allegory.' The Alexandrians apply 'allegory' to unhistorical events, whilst the Antiochenes insist to apply it to historical events.¹³⁹ Theodore, following the main policy of the Antiochene School, argues that Paul made there a comparison, and 'a comparison necessarily implies two realities,' turning virtually Paul's 'allegory' into 'typology.'¹⁴⁰

Besides Theodore's approach to Paul's use of the term 'allegory' in Gal.4:24, it is worth noting his own understanding of Paul's views regarding the Law, an issue very important for the scope of this thesis. Theodore, insisting on the point that Paul makes

¹³⁷ Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, pp.74-75. Translated by Paige Lindsey and F. Lewis Shaw, in Trigg's, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.174.

¹³⁸ Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, p.79. Translated by Paige Lindsey and F. Lewis Shaw, in Trigg's, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.177.

¹³⁹ See also the clarification of the terms 'typology, allegory and theory' in pp.68-69.

¹⁴⁰ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.507; Chrysostom likewise in his commentary on Galatians follows similar approach too. See more analysis of Chrysostom's comments on Gal.4:24 in the next chapter of my thesis under the title 'Chrysostom's Use of Typology,' and PG 61, 662.

his case from factual historical events, turns to investigate Paul's intention in using the story of Abraham, that is 'to demonstrate that the things Christ accomplished are greater than those recounted in the Law and that the righteousness we can have is manifestly more honorable than the righteousness in the Law.'¹⁴¹ The Law requires fulfillment of its commands and those who try to satisfy the commands of the Law find it impossible to do so. As Theodore argues, Paul 'makes it of utmost importance that righteousness is by grace and that such righteousness is better than the righteousness resulting from the fulfillment of the requirements of the Law.'¹⁴² Summarizing his view regarding righteousness,¹⁴³ Theodore says:

iusitificatio equidem est et in lege [et] apud Christum. Sed in lege quidem acquiritur ab illo qui labore multo et sudore eam adquirere poterit; quod erat durissimum, immo (ut ucrius dicam) impossibile, si tamen pro legum scrupulositate id quis uellet iudicare; nam non peccare ex integro hominem existentem impossibile est. Hic uero per solam gratiam acquiritur.

In any case, righteousness is both within the Law and in Christ, but under the Law one has to earn righteousness by much effort and hard work. This is very difficult; it is, let me assure you, almost impossible to observe scrupulously every requirement of the Law. Sinlessness, is not possible in human life; in truth, it can only be obtained by grace.'¹⁴⁴

Theodore espouses the typological interpretation of the Old Testament. Certain statements which referred to individuals in the Old Testament and seem 'heavily hyperbolic' are in fact totally fulfilled in Christ, and certain events of the Old Testament

¹⁴¹ Translated by Paige Lindsey and F. Lewis Shaw, in Trigg's, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.175.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.172.

¹⁴³ Theodore repeatedly expresses the above cited views. For more references on Theodore's views regarding the works of the Law and justification by faith can be found in Swete's, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*: from the Latin translation in pp. 24-25, 33; from the Greek fragments in p.8, p.28 (notes 2 and 4), p.42, 45, 50 and PG66, 844; 900-901.

¹⁴⁴ Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, p.77. Translated by Paige Lindsey and F. Lewis Shaw, in Trigg's, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.176.

are in fact 'typoi' of events in the New Testament. He accepts a christological interpretation of a text 'only if it is applied to Christ in the New Testament in the most explicit way,' reducing the presence of Christ in the Old Testament to the barest necessary minimum. Theodore gives a christological sense only to six texts in all the Twelve Minor Prophets, and to Psalms 2, 8, 44 and 109.¹⁴⁵

Particularly he relates Psalms 2 and 8 to Christ because these Psalms were applied to Him in the New Testament. However, Theodore does not come to the same conclusion in every case where a verse of a Psalm is applied to Christ in the New Testament.

For Theodore, 'if David is speaking in the 'person' of Christ in one verse of a psalm, he must be doing so throughout that psalm.' Thus, in the case of Psalms 22 and 69, he rejects their christological sense because they do not refer to Christ in the same sense as Psalms 2 and 8.¹⁴⁶

Following his Jewish contemporaries, Theodore sees prophecies of the Old Testament, which had already been taken to be messianic by Christians and earlier Jews, as having been fulfilled in Israel's history and particularly in its post-exilic period. For him, the Old Testament dispensation is complete in itself and thus he sees very few direct links with the dispensation of the New Testament.¹⁴⁷

Regarding now the limitations of his christology, even though he demonstrates the union of the human and divine nature of Christ in a 'single *prosopon*' he 'does not really

¹⁴⁵ These Psalms have already been accepted by the Jews as messianic. Moreover, he is the only one among early exegetes who denies the traditional interpretation of the couple in the *Song of Songs* as Christ and the Church. Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, pp.69-70.

¹⁴⁶ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, pp.499-500; Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.182.

¹⁴⁷ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.70.

manage to unite in a satisfactory way' the human and divine nature of Christ.¹⁴⁸

In the beginning of his commentaries on each of the Minor Prophets, and on some Psalms, Theodore in an introduction describes the historical references and underlines the grammatical and linguistic features of the text on which he comments in order to set out accurately the literal meaning of the text.¹⁴⁹ As Joseph Trigg argues, Theodore in his attempt to understand prophecies in their original context, uses the techniques of Hellenistic grammar 'rather than looking for recondite symbolism.'¹⁵⁰

The prophetic books, as Theodore observes, 'are not broken up into clearly separate units' like the Psalms. Thus, applying his principle of 'seeking a consistent, connected interpretation' of each book, he does not see any case in the prophetic books which is related directly to Christ equivalent to that of Psalms 2, 8, 45, 109. The only prophecy which Theodore applies directly to Christ, as Wiles observes, is the last prophecy of the last prophet: Mal.4:5-6. Thus, for him, prophecies can only be referred to Christ as a secondary reference, but yet 'this kind of application to Christ is comparatively rare.' He does so only if it is applied to Christ in the New Testament in the most explicit way. However, some well known New Testament testimonies are simply ignored because they 'cannot be easily or intelligently related to the original Old Testament context.'¹⁵¹

Theodore bases his interpretation on the literal and historical meaning of scripture, which was the most famous characteristic of the Antiochene School. The 'historical

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.73.

¹⁴⁹ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.71.

¹⁵⁰ Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.163. However, as Trigg points out, Theodore's 'concern for history led him to argue, eruditely but less than convincingly, that Hagar, an Egyptian could also be considered an Arabian.' Ibid., p.164.

¹⁵¹ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.502.

events of the Old Testament themselves, rather than isolated texts,' have for Theodore a prophetic function.¹⁵² Theodore insists that the Old Testament must be understood within its own historical setting; the Law and the Prophets could be seen as types or shadows of the 'new dispensation' in Christ, without destroying, however, the historical reality of the Old Testament.¹⁵³ As Rowan Greer points out, Theodore provides 'a literal explanation of the Old Testament, preserving the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments, but guarding the original application of the Old to Hebrew history,' as opposed to a 'rejection of the original meaning of the Old Testament.'¹⁵⁴

Theodore emphasises the gap between the Old and the New Testaments. He contrasts the entire present era with the future era. The 'incarnation of the Logos has started a new direction in the history of the world, representing the anticipation of the era to come.' He underlines the relationship between the baptism of Christ and that of the individual Christian, and not the relationship and the continuity of the Old and the New Testaments. He understands baptismal regeneration 'as a typos of the true, eternal birth which will occur in the resurrection of the dead.' Thus, his typology takes an 'eschatological thrust' where the continuity between the Old Testament and the New is of little significance.¹⁵⁵

Simonetti argues that Theodore's rigidly literal exegesis leads him to ignore the symbolic value of various details of the Gospel of John, making his exegesis in these instances unsatisfactory.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.163.

¹⁵³ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.508.

¹⁵⁴ Rowan A. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Exegete and Theologian* (London: The Faith Press, 1961), p.104; Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.163.

¹⁵⁵ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.71.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.73.

2.4 Conclusions: On the basis of the data cited in this chapter, it seems that the Early Christian Church took over the existing methods of exegesis which were in use in Hellenism and Judaism, adapting them to its own needs in the confrontation with Arianism, Nestorianism and Monophysitism in the fourth century.

Allegory was utilized largely in Jewish Exegesis in which 'inconsistencies in the Bible had to be explained away; errors, redundancies, absurdities, or anything shocking, indecent or unworthy of Divine inspiration had to be removed.'¹⁵⁷ In Hellenism, in order to safeguard Homer's poems from the improbability and even absurdity of the stories about the gods and the heroes, 'allegory' was also applied. The discord among the gods in Homer's stories was interpreted by Theagenes of Rhegium, in the 6th century B.C., as an 'allegory' of the discord of the natural elements; and gods were interpreted by Anaxagoras, in the 5th century B.C., as symbols of natural and other forces.¹⁵⁸

Irenaeus sets out the first framework for interpreting the Bible, providing the 'rule of faith,'¹⁵⁹ as a principle of scriptural interpretation. Irenaeus uses both the traditional 'typology' and 'allegory.'¹⁶⁰ His method of interpretation is highly ambiguous. While we should suppose that Irenaeus' method would be typological, his definition of 'typology' as a relationship between earthly and heavenly realities¹⁶¹ would normally be called 'allegory.'

The Gnostics were the first who provided a systematic exegesis of the New Testament, espousing allegory. The particular need to counteract the excessive

¹⁵⁷ Hanson, 'Biblical Exegesis in the Early Church,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.412.

¹⁵⁸ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.5.

¹⁵⁹ By the 'rule of faith' Irenaeus means a summary of the church faith: Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.124.

¹⁶⁰ However, Irenaeus limits the use of allegory to certain passages only and especially to the parables. Hanson, 'Biblical Exegesis in the Early Church' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.427.

¹⁶¹ Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, p.178.

allegorisations of the Gnostics forced the Christian interpreters to develop their own system of exegesis. Irenaeus' 'rule of faith' provided the basic hermeneutical principle to attack the interpretation provided by the Gnostics, attacking them, however, 'at a level of content rather than at a level of exegetical theory.'¹⁶²

The development of a systematic method of interpretation is accomplished later on by the representatives of the School of Alexandria and the School of Antioch. After the detailed presentation of the application of their methods in interpreting scripture, we may now come to some conclusions.

The first issue which must be reconsidered is the opposition between the school of Antioch and the school of Alexandria. It is not correct to think that the Alexandrians completely rejected the existence of the literal meaning from every scriptural passage. Although the Alexandrians, searching for a deeper hidden meaning in scripture, gave to the literal meaning obviously a supplementary role, they did not deny that certain passages have a literal sense. Origen, for instance, 'generally used allegorical exegesis in addition to, and not as a substitute for literal exegesis.'¹⁶³ On the other side, the Antiochenes were not 'exclusively literalist.'¹⁶⁴ Diodore, for instance, as Simonetti observes, 'does accept that the story of Cain and Abel, at a higher level of meaning, signifies the hostility of the Jews towards the church.'¹⁶⁵ Moreover, in the fifth century the Antiochenes 'tended to lose their grasp of the historical nature of typology and began to treat typology as if it were allegorism.'¹⁶⁶ The existence of some 'non-literalist' approaches even by the Antiochenes led modern scholars to diminish the contrast

¹⁶² Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.24.

¹⁶³ Lampe and Woolcombe, *Studies in Biblical Theology: Essays on Typology*, p.57.

¹⁶⁴ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.67.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.67.

¹⁶⁶ Lampe and Woolcombe, *Studies in Biblical Theology: Essays on Typology*, p.60.

between the two schools, as Simonetti observes.¹⁶⁷ Karlfried Froehlich argues that the sharp antithesis between the two schools is a 'construct.' He grounds his view on the fact that Origen 'did not deny the historical referent of most texts,' arguing that 'at close inspection both allegory and theory speak about the same analogical dynamic Origen so eloquently described: the biblical text leads the reader upward into spiritual truths that are not immediately obvious and that provide a fuller understanding of God's economy of salvation.'¹⁶⁸

Turning now to the evaluation of the methods espoused by the representatives of each school it is essential to stress that these methods could equally lead to fruitful or dangerous results, depending on the factor of the interpreter.

Thus, in the case of 'allegory' one may observe that Clement of Alexandria and Origen were not unaware of the risks of allegory. Clement, for instance, having in mind the excesses of the Gnostic allegorisms, argues that 'the truth is not found by changing the meanings but in consideration of what perfectly belongs to and becomes the Sovereign God, and in establishing each one of the points demonstrated in the scripture again from similar scriptures.'¹⁶⁹ Origen likewise points out the necessity for cross-checking any suggested interpretation of a difficult or ambiguous passage with that of other similar biblical passages which are clearer.¹⁷⁰

One might find a lot of evidence in the writings of Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia which indicate the existence of a 'contrast' between the methods of interpretation espoused by them. However, one should be cautious on the fact that Theodore is the only exception where such a 'contrast' could be found. Thus the modern

¹⁶⁷ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, pp.67-68.

¹⁶⁸ Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.20.

¹⁶⁹ For further details see pp.71-72 of my thesis, under the subtitle 'Clement of Alexandria.'

¹⁷⁰ For further details see pp.79-80 of my thesis, under the subtitle 'Origen.'

scholars should not generalize that 'contrast' to the rest of the representatives of the schools of Alexandria and Antioch. In the case of John Chrysostom, for instance, there is no indication to suggest the existence of any kind of 'contrast.' This points forward to the next chapter of this thesis, where I will try to show the significant differences in the approach of Chrysostom.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Chrysostom, for instance, does not rigidly exclude allegory from his exegesis, but reduces its usage to the bare minimum. For more details see the next chapter under the subtitle 'Chrysostom's use of allegory and typology.'

3

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AS AN EXEGETE.

3.1 Chrysostom's Education: Dealing in the previous chapter with the methods of exegesis of the most important representatives of the Early Christian exegesis, we came up against the fact that the most part of their writings is missing, making any effort to reconstruct their methods more difficult. In the case of Chrysostom, however, the situation is better since most of his writings are preserved. Thus an approach to his writings seems useful since Chrysostom follows the Antiochene tradition of exegesis.

The most important source regarding John Chrysostom's life is the '*Dialogue about the Life and the Acts of the Blessed John*' which was written by his friend Palladius, bishop of Elenoupolis.¹ Other worthy sources are the fragmentary notes of the fifth century historians, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoretus.²

Before dealing with Chrysostom's own training, it is essential to outline in general

¹ Palladii, *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*, PG47,5-82; E.II.E. 1, pp.52-302.

² The particular part of the above historians' writings which deals with Chrysostom can be found in Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6, 2-23; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 8,2-28; Theodoretus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5,27-36. The original text and an English translation of these writings can be found in Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib.1-7; PG67,29-842; Socrates, *A History of the Church in Seven Books (The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era*, v.3; London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1844). Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib.1-9; PG67,843-1630; Sozomen, *A History of the Church in Nine Books (The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era*, v.4; London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1844). Theodoretus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib.1-5; PG82,881-1280; Theodoretus, *A History of the Church in Five Books (The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era*, v.5; London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1844).

terms the educational system of the fourth century. Firstly a child went to the *Elementary School* where the *grammarians*, the elementary teacher, initiated him into the mysteries of the alphabet. Besides reading and writing, an elementary understanding of arithmetic was considered necessary. These schools kept their pupils for this training for a period of two or three years. Chrysostom Baur suggests that Chrysostom attended the *Elementary School* at an early age. In the second step, a child entered the *Middle School*, where the *grammaticus* lectured first of all on Greek literature and history, prosody, poetry, geometry and geography. The classification of the material and the planning of the study hours was left in general to the pleasure of the teacher. The length of the curriculum depended on the zeal of the students or the financial standing of their fathers. The third and highest degree of education was received by the young students in the schools of the rhetoricians and the philosophers, the *sophists*. The course of study in these schools always extended over about four years, between the fifteenth and the twentieth year. Only exceptionally were there older students.³

Particularly in the middle of the fourth century, Antioch had a famous rhetorician, Libanius, born in the city. Libanius taught in Antioch for forty years and his life, deeds and teaching methods became the standard model for teachers and schools.⁴

His success lay in his inspired adaptation and reproduction of the distinctive classical writings, while 'his own productions are rather flat and hollow' and as Baur says, Libanius was 'an excellent teacher, who knew how to inspire youth, but not an outstanding thinker or original author.'⁵ Although in all his life Libanius remained a 'devoted worshiper of the Greek gods,' he had many Christians among his pupils such

³ Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time, vol.1 Antioch* (London, Glasgow: Sands & Co, Newman Press, 1959), pp.10-11.

⁴ Ibid., pp.16-17.

⁵ Ibid., p.18.

as Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom.⁶

According to Socrates and Sozomen, Chrysostom was taught rhetoric by Libanius and philosophy by Andragathius.⁷ For the latter nothing is known but his name. Palladius does not mention any teachers of Chrysostom, giving only the clue that he abandoned the 'sophists' chatter' at the age of eighteen.⁹ Chrysostom himself narrates an incident where his *sophist*¹⁰ expressed great astonishment in regard to his mother for she had been a widow from the age of twenty, saying 'what women there are amongst the Christians.'¹¹

On the basis of this story and especially on Chrysostom's description that his teacher 'exceeded all men in his reverence for the gods,' which at that time could only mean Libanius, 'it has been supposed, even from the earliest times, that Chrysostom had been a pupil of Libanius.' It would appear very improbable, as Baur points out, that such a gifted and wealthy young man as Chrysostom could have studied rhetoric in Antioch in the second half of the fourth century, without having heard the famous Libanius, since pupils flocked to his school from all parts of the empire.¹² Thus, it seems highly probable that Libanius was Chrysostom's teacher.

At this stage, it is essential to deal with rhetoric in general in order to have a better

⁶ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 Antioch, pp.16,20-21.

⁷ Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6, 3; PG67,665; Socrates, *A History of the Church in Seven Books (The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era)* v.3, p.421; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 8,2; PG67,1513; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib.1-9; PG67,843-1630; Sozomen, *A History of the Church in Nine Books (The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era)* v.4, p.376.

⁸ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 Antioch, p.23.

⁹ Palladii, *Dialogus* 5; PG47,18; E.I.E. 1, pp.94.

¹⁰ This term refers to the rhetor and to the teacher of rhetoric. Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews. Phetoric and reality in the late 4th century*, p.96.

¹¹ PG48,601; E.I.E. 30, p.18. Libanius says the same of his own mother, but as Baur observes 'Libanius has been to blame for such plagiarisms,' and therefore suggests that 'here also the thought of a plagiarism is not to be rejected without further proof.' Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 Antioch, p.26, notes 4 and 11.

¹² Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 Antioch, p.23.

understanding of Chrysostom's education under Libanius. The training in rhetoric consisted of three parts: theory, study of models and exercise. In the first part the student learned the rules and principles of speech making, in the second he studied the classical writings to see how these rules and principles were applied, and in the last part he wrote his own speeches, such as *encomiums*, *invectives* and *comparisons*.¹³

As Robert L. Wilken puts it, 'besides the archaizing tendency, the sophists made extensive use of hyperbole, of arresting metaphors and striking comparisons. They also employed a whole range of technical literary and rhetorical devices, such as repetition of parallel phrases, play on words similar in sound but dissimilar in sense, alliteration, assonance, and an effective approach to persuasion and argumentation.'¹⁴

Using *hyperbole* (that is exaggeration), the rhetors overstate and magnify even the simplest actions of daily life. Everything could be written exaggeratedly.¹⁵ Chrysostom, for instance, starts his first sermon of the *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians* with two paragraphs of hyperbole. As a result, as Chrysostom points out, his audience broke into applause and praise.¹⁶ Wilken argues that for Chrysostom the use of hyperboles 'are the very stuff of his preaching, and they fill page after page, frequently overshadowing the presumed topic of the speech.'¹⁷

Besides *hyperbole*, a rhetor uses carefully worked out *metaphors* and *similes*, which 'communicated the speaker's point with forcefulness and clarity.' Sometimes,

¹³ Libanius, in his rhetorical handbook, *Progymnasmata*, provided examples of *encomiums*, *invectives* and *comparisons* for the guidance of his students. It included, for instance, *encomiums* on Diomedes, Odysseus, Achilles, Demosthenes, justice and farming, *invectives* on Achilles, Hector, Aeschines, wealth and anger, (*Libanii Opera*, ed. By Foerster, vol. 8.217-328) and *comparisons* of Achilles with Diomedes, Demosthenes with Aeschines (*Libanii Opera* vol.8.334-360). Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, pp.98,100.

¹⁴ Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, p.96.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.107.

¹⁶ PG48,843-844; E.I.I.E. 34, pp.98-100; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.2-3.

¹⁷ Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, p.107.

metaphors are drawn out at length, with many details, but the main point of the speech is always clear to the audience, which 'can enjoy the play of language without losing the main idea of the speech.' Detailed descriptions are also employed by the rhetors 'not only to illustrate a point, but also to divert the audience and give it a rest before returning to the theme.'¹⁸

Chrysostom uses metaphors 'drawn from athletics, the military, the sea, pastoral life and medicine.' Chrysostom like other rhetors in the fourth century sometimes 'heaps up series of metaphors.'¹⁹ Dealing, for instance, with excessive love of wealth Chrysostom gives ten metaphors in one passage,²⁰ and with the foes of the church he gives six metaphors.²¹ Chase, stressing that metaphors play an important part in Paul's teaching, argues that Chrysostom 'takes an obviously true and sensible view of the scope of teaching by metaphors.'²²

Other technical devices used by the rhetors were *parison*, *arsis*, *oxymoron*, *epanaphora*, and *antistrophe*.²³ All these devices were used for different purposes such as 'to praise and to censure, to encourage and to restrain, to comfort and to blame,' because the rhetorical tradition 'was ready to be molded to whatever ends the rhetor wished.' The rhetors were 'more interested in the effect their speeches had on their

¹⁸ Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, pp.107, 109.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 110.

²⁰ Ibid., p.110. Cf., PG52,416; E.I.E. 33, p.174.

²¹ Ibid., p.110. Cf., PG50,613; E.I.E. 37, p.178.

²² Frederic Henry Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co, 1887), p.180.

²³ *Parison* is a string of parallel phrases. In *arsis* the point is first formulated negatively and then positively. *Oxymoron* combines two or more contradictory terms. In *epanaphora* the same word is repeated at the beginning of series of clauses or sentences. In *antistrophe* the same word is inserted at the end of successive clauses. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, p.111.

audience, in how things sounded and how people responded, than in the truth of what they said.’²⁴

Psogos or *invective* and *encomium* were two other forms of speech learned in the rhetorical schools of the fourth century.²⁵ Particularly in *psogos* or *invective*, the rhetor was ‘less interested in the veracity of his language, whether it conformed to some objective standard of truth, than he was in the effect his words would have on his hearers.’²⁶

Closing the parenthesis regarding rhetoric and its technical devices, we turn now to Chrysostom’s philology. Chrysostom’s linguistic education was restricted to Greek alone, which ‘he knew how to handle with dexterity and clearness rarely attained in any age.’²⁷ As Chase points out, Chrysostom wrote ‘the purest and best Greek of all the ecclesiastical authors,’ and ancient and modern philologists claim Chrysostom ‘as a pure Atticist.’ His language is not only grammatically correct, but he also writes a pleasant, lucid, lightly flowing style.’²⁸ Chrysostom, however, never learned Latin, Syrian or Hebrew.²⁹

Besides rhetoric and philosophy, Chrysostom was taught the sacred scriptures in the famous theological school, ‘Asketerion,’ which was established by Diodorus and

²⁴ Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, pp.111-112.

²⁵ The rhetor, in the *encomium* praises and honors his subject, whereas in the *invective* vilify and defame it. The practice of invective, as Wilken argues, is very important in understanding Chrysostom’s *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*. See a detail analysis of this form of speech and the related issue of Anti-Semitism in the separated chapter under the title ‘Anti-Semitism or Anti-Judaism?’

²⁶ Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, p.112.

²⁷ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 *Antioch*, p.26.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.305.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.24. Chrysostom says that only those who wanted to win a position at the imperial court have to learn Latin (cf. PG47,357), and calls the Syrian language a ‘barbarous language.’ (Cf. PG50,646). When Chrysostom quotes a passage in Hebrew, it comes from Origen’s Hexapla, or from hearsay. Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 *Antioch*, p.97. Cf. Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.32.

Carterius. There, he formed his method of interpretation of scripture.³⁰ He is not an interpreter who follows radical methods, but he follows generally the Antiochene way of thought and interpretation where he belongs. Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia are the most outstanding representatives of the Antiochene School. Chrysostom, in comparison with Theodore, is the more moderate interpreter and is closer to the explanatory methods of their common teacher Diodore, bishop of Tarsus.³¹ The Antiochene School was condemned by the fifth ecumenical Council (in A. D. 553) because of Theodore's extreme theological teaching, but conserved its methods of exposition through Chrysostom's writings.

What is of most interest to us is the part of Chrysostom's writings which deals with the interpretation of scripture. Chrysostom interpreted most of the books of the bible using usually the form of sermons.³² Chrysostom delivered these sermons in front of his congregation and not in front of any students. Panagiotis Christou supports the view that it is possible to say that Chrysostom also interpreted in front of students, but only in the period before his priesthood. It seems that Chrysostom himself did not have the time to record his sermons because he delivered them frequently. His sermons were recorded by some stenographers, and afterwards were inspected by him.³³ From every sermon, Chrysostom is at pains to draw moral conclusions for the edification of his flock. As Simonetti observes, 'it would be enough to note that the myriad possibilities which John could find in the text... are based on a rigorously literal reading of it, something which

³⁰ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol. 1 *Antioch*, p.93.

³¹ Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 1, p.490.

³² The only exception is *Galatians* which has the form of commentary, but its original form must be a series of sermons. Probably these sermons were adapted to commentary by one of his pupils.

³³ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, 4, pp.278-279. Robert I. Wilken support the view that the stenographers recorded Chrysostom's sermons, 'which were afterwards transcribed and circulated.' Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, p.105.

shows his full adherence to Antiochene exegetical precepts.’³⁴

3.2 Chrysostom’s philosophical and spiritual formation: Before dealing with Chrysostom’s exegesis, it is essential to outline his philosophical and spiritual views on the Perception of God, Christology, Mariology, Original Sin, Sufferings, Moral Perfectibility and his interest in doctrinal issues.

Chrysostom’s Perception of God: Regarding human knowability of the nature of God, Chrysostom stresses that God is incomprehensible.³⁵ Setting out the incomprehensibility of the nature of God to human beings, in his first five sermons *Περὶ Ἀκαταλήπτου* ‘De incomprehensibiliti, contra Anomeos’³⁶ Chrysostom rejects the views held by the Anomeans that man is able to have knowledge of God as God has knowledge of Himself. This expression seems to represent word for word the central view held by the Anomeans because it is explicitly quoted by Chrysostom,³⁷ and confirmed by Socrates.³⁸

The Anomeans, holding the view of the unlimited teachability of man, come to support the view that man is able to have knowledge of the world, the energy of God as well as the essence of God.³⁹ The Anomeans were radical Arians, who taught that the

³⁴ Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, p.74.

³⁵ PG 63,19, E.I.E. 24, pp.232-234; PG 48,742, E.I.E. 35, pp.168-172; PG 48,720, E.I.E. 35, p.82; PG 48,728-729, E.I.E. 35, p.116; PG 48,732, E.I.E. 35, p.132; PG 48,843, E.I.E. 34, pp.98.

³⁶ PG 48,701-748, E.I.E. 35, pp.10-188.

³⁷ Chrysostom, in his second sermon *Περὶ Ἀκαταλήπτου* ‘De incomprehensibiliti, contra Anomeos,’ says that *Ἐτόλμησεν ἄνθρωπος εἰπεῖν, ὅτι ‘Θεὸν οἶδα, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς ἑαυτὸν οἶδε.’* ‘A human being dared to say that I know God as God knows Himself.’ PG 48,712, E.I.E. 35, p.50. It is my own translation.

³⁸ Socrates, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4,7, confirms Chrysostom when he reports Eunomius’ own teaching: ‘God knows no more of his own substance than we do; nor is this more known to him, and less to us: but whatever we know about the Divine substance, that precisely is known to God; and on the other hand, whatever he knows, the same also you will find without any difference in us.’ PG 67, 473, Socrates 4,7; English translation, *The Greek Ecclesiastical Historians of the first six centuries of the Christian Era*, p.305.

³⁹ E.I.E. 35, p.6. More about Anomeanism see footnote 127 in p. 45 of my thesis.

essence of the Son is wholly unlike the essence of God, hence they are called Anomeans. In the early 360s, Eunomius turned their doctrine into ‘a rationalistic system of which the centre-piece was the complete knowability of God.’⁴⁰

Chrysostom, in his first five sermons *Περὶ Ἀκαταλήπτου* ‘De incomprehensibiliti, contra Anomeos,’ which are in effect his reaction against their threat, stresses that ‘the essence of God is incomprehensible to all the world,’ arguing that only the Son and the Holy Spirit know precisely the essence of God.⁴¹ For Chrysostom, God is incomprehensible to all but the Son and the Holy Spirit. Defining the limits of human knowability of God, he argues that the Son, who alone has a total knowledge of God, reveals to human beings only as much as they withstand.⁴²

It is worth noting that Chrysostom, in his effort to support his view, takes advantage of his extensive knowledge of scripture and his skill in introducing fitting quotations from all parts of scripture. As Frances M. Young observes, Chrysostom makes a ‘remarkably sensitive appeal to scripture,’ in his effort to substantiate his perception of God.⁴³ In his first sermon *Περὶ Ἀκαταλήπτου*, for instance, Chrysostom appeals to the well known text of I Cor.13:9-10,12:

Ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν· ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τότε τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται... Βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἑσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.

For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete

⁴⁰ John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom. Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995), pp.60-61.

⁴¹ PG 48,732-733, E.II.E. 35, p.132. He distinguishes the acts of God from His substance, calling them *οἰκονομίαι*. The substance of God is incomprehensible, he points out, but His acts could be comprehended. E.II.E. 35, p.8.

⁴² PG 48,741-742, E.II.E. 35, p.166. Chrysostom repeats this view in PG 48,720, E.II.E. 35, p.82.

⁴³ Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.159.

comes, the partial will come to an end... For now we see in a mirror, dimly but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.'⁴⁴

Commenting on Paul's expression that the fragmentary knowledge will be ended and will be replaced by the complete one, Chrysostom exploits every chance offered by I Cor.13:9-10,12 to attack the Anomeans view of complete knowability of God. Comparing the part of knowledge which we have now to that which is left to have, he concludes that we have now only 'the hundredth or the thousandth' of the complete knowledge. As he argues, the example of the complete man and the child, which Paul himself quotes in I Cor.13:11, shows the difference between the partial knowledge which we have now and the complete knowledge which is left to have in the future.⁴⁵

Chrysostom makes a distinction between the terms οὐσία (essence, substance) and ἐνέργειαι (energies) of God, calling them οἰκονομίαι (oikonomiai, economies).⁴⁶ Whereas the essence of God is completely incomprehensible to human beings, the energies of God, he argues, are comprehensible. Defining, thus, the limits of human knowledge, Chrysostom observes that we know God's acts, that He is 'present everywhere,' is 'without beginning, unborn and eternal,' that He 'begat the Son' and that 'the Spirit emanates from Him,' but we do not know His essence, that is, how He is present everywhere.⁴⁷

In order to support his view that whereas the essence of God is incomprehensible to human beings, the energies of God are comprehensible, Chrysostom turns to Paul's expression that 'we have but fragments of knowledge and glimpses of prophetic insight.'

⁴⁴ The translation is quoted from *The New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible.

⁴⁵ PG 48,703, E.II.E. 35, pp.16-18. In the same context with this text Chrysostom exploits in the same way Paul's example of the mirror through which we now see bewildering shadows.

⁴⁶ PG 48,706, E.II.E. 35, p.28-30; PG 48,715, E.II.E. 35, p.64; PG 48,729, E.II.E. 35, pp.118-120.

⁴⁷ PG 48,704, E.II.E. 35, p.20.

As he argues, by that expression, Paul⁴⁸ does not say that he knows part of God's essence while he does not know other parts of His essence. As he points out, Paul rather admits that he knows that God exists, but does not know what His essence is; he knows that God is everywhere, He is wise and great, but he does not know how.⁴⁹

It is worth noting that besides Chrysostom's sensitive appeal to many scriptural quotations to show that Paul, the prophets, and the angels enunciate that they do not know God's essence, Chrysostom also sets out logical reasons to support his view that God is incomprehensible. Pointing out to his audience that they are ignorant of how food stuff is changed into phlegm and blood and bile and the rest, which they eat daily, or of the nature of the sky, which they see daily, Chrysostom wonders how then one claims to know the essence of the invisible God.⁵⁰ It is likely that Chrysostom's audience found his case convincing, as Kelly points out, because it 'found his confident handling of the texts irresistible.'⁵¹

It remains to investigate the views held by Chrysostom regarding the limits of human knowledge in relation to the philosophical background of his time. The major philosophical schools of the Hellenistic Age were primarily concerned with the task of teaching people 'how to live,' and providing them with specific moral instruction. It was generally accepted by all these schools that virtue is teachable, and thus, virtue is closely related to knowledge.⁵²

Socrates' basic idea was that 'if you know what is right you will do it,' and that

⁴⁸ Chrysostom repeatedly stresses that the prophets and the angels, like Paul, ignore as well the substance of God. PG 48,705, E.II.E. 35, pp.22-24; PG 48,707, E.II.E. 35, p.26-30; PG 48,707, E.II.E. 35, p.32.

⁴⁹ PG 48,706-707, E.II.E. 35, p.30.

⁵⁰ PG 48,704, E.II.E. 35, p.20; PG 48,717-718, E.II.E. 35, p.72.

⁵¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 62.

⁵² Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (second Edition, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), pp.301, 303. Cf., Plato's *Meno* 87.c.5.

‘wrongdoing is the result of wrong thinking and wrong information.’⁵³ After Socrates, Plato’s basic idea was that knowledge is a matter of recollection. The soul, which is ‘immortal, possessing both preexistence and continued postexistence,’ learned the ideas before it dwelled in a body. ‘Persons can have concepts only because they had them previously. Ideas are known a priori, independently of experience.’ For Plato, knowledge is innate and it is the task of the teacher to evoke it.⁵⁴

In order to find out how Chrysostom’s view on the human ability to have knowledge is related with the philosophical background of his time, it is essential to deal with Plato’s *Myth of the Cave*.⁵⁵ The basic idea of this myth, is that human beings know only shadows of reality and shadows of themselves; they never see anything but shadows, mistaking them for reality. The meaning of this allegorical myth, is that the real truth, the world of ideas, is represented by the sun and only those who have seen the world of ideas can explain the realities better than those who know only this shadowy world of sense.⁵⁶

Chrysostom’s point, based on Paul’s expression that ‘we have now only the hundredth or the thousandth of the complete knowledge,’ recalls Plato’s basic idea, in his *myth of the Cave*, that is that ‘we know only shadows of reality and shadows of themselves.’ It seems that Chrysostom borrows Plato’s terminology, drawing, however,

⁵³ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.309. Cf., Plato’s *Protagoras* 345.d.9 - 345.e.4; *Gorgias* 509.e.5 - 509.e.7; *Apologia Socrates* 25.e.6 - 26.a.4. Cf., Aristotle’s *Eudemian Ethics* 1216.b.3 - 1216.b.9; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1145.b.23 - 1145.b.27.

⁵⁴ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, pp.314-315. Cf., Plato’s *Meno* 81.c.5 - 81.e.4; *Phaedo* 72.e.5 - 73.b.5; 76.a.1 - 76.b.2; 91.e.6. According to Plato’s *Theory of Ideas*, ideas are neither physical or mental; they are outside space and time, but they are real. The physical world is just a poor imitation of the world of ideas. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.313.

⁵⁵ Cf., Plato’s *Myth of the Cave* in his *Republic VII* 514a - 518c. According to that beautiful and powerful myth, human beings from their birth live in a cave, where they are chained and forced to face the inside wall of the cave. Outside the entrance of the cave there is a fire. Other beings, who pass between the fire and the entrance of the cave, cast their shadows on the inside wall. In order to have knowledge, human beings have to break their chains and get out of the cave. Only a few march out and past the fire, climbing a steep hill. These, who finally reach the top of the hill can see the sun. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.313.

⁵⁶ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.314.

different conclusions. Throughout his writings, it does not seem that Chrysostom espouses any of the basic elements of Plato's theory of knowledge, as that knowledge is recollection of concepts, which persons had previously, or that knowledge is innate and it must be evoked by the teacher. Frances M. Young, commenting on Chrysostom's view of the human ability to have knowledge of God, argues that 'it is true that philosophical terms are drawn into a process of exegetical deduction, yet the outcome is surely a valid expression of the intent of scripture.'⁵⁷

Christology: Regarding his Christology, Chrysostom argues that the Son is of the same essence as the Father. In his seventh sermon Περὶ Ὁμοουσίου 'De Consubstantiali' Chrysostom uses three times in the same context the term ὁμοούσιος to describe the relation of the Son to the Father.⁵⁸ Besides this term, Chrysostom uses similar expressions as 'equal to the Father,' 'equal in essence' and 'equality in essence.'⁵⁹

Chrysostom stresses 'the complete and perfect divinity of Christ against the Arians, and the complete and perfect humanity against the Apollinarians.'⁶⁰ Regarding the incarnation of Christ, Chrysostom stresses that the Son had a human body identical with ours in nature but not sinful:

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀμαρτωλὸν σάρκα εἶχεν ὁ Χριστός, ἀλλ' ὁμοίαν μὲν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τῇ ἀμαρτωλῷ, ἀναμάρτητον δέ, καὶ τῇ φύσει τὴν αὐτὴν ἡμῖν.

For sinful flesh it was not that Christ had, but like indeed to our sinful flesh, yet sinless, and in nature the same with us.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, p.159.

⁵⁸ PG 48,758, E.P.E. 35, pp.226-228. Chrysostom, moreover, uses the term ὁμοούσιος as in four other occasions: PG 55,275, E.P.E. 6, p.364; PG 61,214, E.P.E. 18A, p.140; PG 61,216, E.P.E. 18A, p.148; PG 62,339, E.P.E. 22, p.196.

⁵⁹ Johannes Quasten, *Patrology vol. III The Golden Age of the Greek Patristic Literature From the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1963), p.474.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.475

⁶¹ PG 60,515, E.P.E. 17, p.154. Library of the Fathers, 8, p.219.

In spite of the acceptance of two natures in Christ, Chrysostom stresses that there is but one Christ. He insists on a 'union' of the two natures in Christ and not a 'mixture.' Chrysostom, in his commentary on Philippians, determines precisely the nature of this 'union.' Paul's expression 'He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men' refers to Christ's divinity, whereas Paul's expression 'He took, He became,' refers to His humanity. Thus, he concludes: 'Let us not then confound nor divide the natures. There is one God, there is one Christ, the Son of God; when I say 'One,' I mean a union, not a confusion ; the one Nature did not degenerate into the other, but was united with it.'⁶²

Chrysostom insists on the 'union' of the two natures in Christ, stressing that there is but one Christ. In his commentary on John, Chrysostom espouses the terms *ένώσει* 'union' and *συναφεία* 'conjoining' to determine the kind of the 'union' of the two natures in one person, in Christ, although he does not investigate the nature of this 'union:'

Τῇ γὰρ ένώσει καὶ τῇ συναφείᾳ έν έστιν ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος καὶ ἡ σὰρξ, οὐ συγχύσεως γενομένης, οὐδὲ άφανισμοῦ τῶν οὐσιῶν, άλλ' ένώσεως άρρήτου τινὸς καὶ άφράστου. Τὸ δὲ ὅπως, μὴ ζήτηι. Έγένετο γὰρ, ὡς οἶδεν αὐτός.

For by an union and conjoining God the Word and the Flesh are One, not by any confusion or obliteration of substances, but by a certain union ineffable, and past understanding. Ask not how for it was made, so as He knoweth.⁶³

Chrysostom's determination of the meaning of the words *εις Χριστός* 'one Christ' differentiates him from the Antiochenes. Theodore of Mopsuestia 'seeks to prove that in Christ there could be only a moral, not a physical, union of the two natures.'⁶⁴

⁶² PG 62,231-232, E.I.E. 21, pp.538-540. Library of the Fathers, 13, pp. 79-80.

⁶³ PG 59,80, E.I.E. 12, pp.638-640. Library of the Fathers, 4, pp.91-92. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. dealing with the Christological problem appealed to this passage of Chrysostom. Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 296; Quasten, *Patrology vol. III*, p.476.

⁶⁴ Otto Bardenhewer, *Patrology. The Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church* (translated from the second edition by Thomas J. Shahan; Berlin, Karlsruhe, Munich, Strassburg, Vienna: B. Herder,1908), p.340. Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 296.

Mariology: Regarding Mariology, it seems true that Chrysostom ‘deliberately exercised reserve and refused to take sides in the discussion of this issue, because he never uses the title Θεοτόκος ‘Theotokos’ for the Virgin Mary, neither the titles Χριστοτόκος ‘Christotokos’ and Ἀνθρωποτόκος ‘Anthropotokos.’⁶⁵ Chrysostom repeatedly stresses the everlasting virginity of Mary,⁶⁶ arguing that the impotent women of the Old Testament were foreshadowings which help us to accept it.⁶⁷

Original Sin: Besides Chrysostom’s views on Christology and Mariology, it is worth noting his view on original sin, which arose in a dispute between the Pelagian Julian of Eclanum and Augustine. The particular statement of Chrysostom which caused the dispute was from his sermon *Ad Neophytos*:⁶⁸

Διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ τὰ παιδία βαπτίζομεν καίπερ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἔχοντα.

Therefore we certainly baptize also little children although they have no sins.⁶⁹

On the basis of this statement Julian of Eclanum alleged that Chrysostom rejected original sin. Augustine, on the contrary, rejecting Julian’s conclusion rightly argued that Chrysostom with the plural ‘sins’ meant personal sins and not original sin. Augustine appealed to eight additional passages from Chrysostom’s works to support his argument.⁷⁰

As Peter Brown argues, Augustine, trying to ‘explain a complex phenomenon,

⁶⁵ The Antiochenes rejected the term Θεοτόκος and instead of it they preferred to suggest the term Χριστοτόκος. Theodore of Tarsus, Chrysostom’s teacher, used the term Ἀνθρωποτόκος. Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 296; Quasten, *Patrology vol. III*, p.476; Berthold Altaner, *Patrology* (translated by Hilda C. Graef; Edinburgh, London: Nelson, 1960), p.383.

⁶⁶ Quasten, *Patrology vol. III*, p.476.

⁶⁷ PG 54,445-446, E.Π.Ε. 4, pp.250-252; PG 50,741-742, E.Π.Ε. 8A, pp.148-150; PG 51,359-361, E.Π.Ε. 31, p.268-272; PG 56,84, E.Π.Ε. 8, pp.466-470.

⁶⁸ This sermon rediscovered by Haidacher. Quasten, *Patrology vol. III*, pp.478, 452.

⁶⁹ E.Π.Ε. 30, p.386. It is my own translation.

⁷⁰ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 297; Quasten, *Patrology vol. III*, p.478; Altaner, *Patrology*, p.384; Otto Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, p.339. Cf., Augustine, *Contra Julianum*, I,22.

‘simply by reducing it to its historical origins,’ reminds his congregation that when Adam and Eve ‘had disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, they had been “ashamed,” and covered ‘their genitals with fig-leaves.’⁷¹ Thus, for Augustine, the punishment of Adam and Eve’s disobedience is the ‘shame at the uncontrollable stirring of the genitals’ and sexual feeling was a penalty for their disobedience, ‘a torture to the will.’⁷² As Peter Brown concludes, Augustine’s view emphasized ‘subjective elements’ such as the loss of control in the sexual act and tensions caused by shame.⁷³

It is essential, however, to point out that Chrysostom’s teaching on original sin does not coincide with Augustine’s teaching.⁷⁴ Although Chrysostom repeatedly stresses that the consequences or penalties of the original sin affect not only our first parents, but also their descendants, nevertheless he does not say that the original sin itself was inherited by their posterity and that it is inherent in their nature. Chrysostom insists that the inheritance of the original sin could not be accepted because it would abolish the concept of the αὐτεξούσιον ‘free will’ of human beings.⁷⁵ If original sin, he argues, is inherited by all people, and all people became sinners because of Adam’s sin, then they would not be responsible for their sins and would not even deserve punishment. Commenting on Rom 5:19, Chrysostom argues that the word ἁμαρτωλοί ‘sinners’ means that human beings became ‘liable to punishment and condemned to death’ because of Adam’s sin.⁷⁶ Thus, for Chrysostom, the consequences of original sin which affect human

⁷¹ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), p.388.

⁷² Ibid., p.388.

⁷³ Ibid., pp.388-389.

⁷⁴ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 297; Quasten, *Patrology vol. III*, p.478; Altaner, *Patrology*, p.384; Otto Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, p.339.

⁷⁵ Peter Brown, comparing Augustine’s view with that of Chrysostom, observes that Chrysostom ‘at least preserved a tiny oasis of personal responsibility,’ while Augustine ‘will flood the world with uncontrollable powers, under the shadow of the justice of his God.’ Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p.396.

⁷⁶ PG 60,477, E.II.E. 17, p.20. Library of the Fathers, 8, p. 154.

beings are that they became 'liable to punishment and condemned to death.'

Sufferings: Regarding human suffering, Chrysostom acknowledges that the present life is closely connected with mourning and suffering, the present time is time of probation.⁷⁷ Suffering, however, according to Chrysostom, functions positively to produce spiritual progress in the Christian life. He insists, for instance, that only through suffering one can become a perfect Christian; every righteous man has to pass through suffering in order to be saved. In general, as he points out, all the righteous men indeed have had a life full of sufferings, pains and innumerable miseries.⁷⁸ Chrysostom appeals especially to the case of Paul, stressing that although no one from all people who lived on earth was more righteous than Paul, however, there is no one who suffered more than Paul.⁷⁹

Touching upon the cause of suffering, Chrysostom supports the view that God permits human misery not to engulf us but to make us more worthy and genuine, and to give us greater proof of His power.⁸⁰ Temptations come to human beings, he says elsewhere, by the demons after the permission of God for the probation and the perfection of human beings.⁸¹ Temptations, sufferings, human misery have a redemptive effect on Christians and thus, Christians have to face them as a medicine⁸² and to endure them with bravery.⁸³ Chrysostom assures his audience that God gives more patience and

⁷⁷ PG 63,122, E.II.E. 24, p.578; PG 55,55, E.II.E. 5, p.178; PG 62,645, E.II.E. 23, p.616.

⁷⁸ PG 63,51, E.II.E. 24, p.340; PG 55,93, E.II.E. 5, p.328; PG 63,204, E.II.E. 25, p.276; PG 50,697-698, E.II.E. 37, p.375.

⁷⁹ PG 50,571, E.II.E. 34, p.548.

⁸⁰ PG 55,355, E.II.E. 6, pp.670-672.

⁸¹ PG 56,362, E.II.E. 1, p.528.

⁸² PG 55,352-353, E.II.E. 6, p.662.

⁸³ PG 52,627, E.II.E. 38, p.70.

comfort than sorrow,⁸⁴ and exhorts them to praise God for every unpleasant event in their life saying 'glory be to God for everything.'⁸⁵ Thus, he recommends his audience to prepare their children so that they can bear all the probations and sufferings of life.⁸⁶

In his three sermons to his friend Stageirios, a monk who suffered from epilepsy, Chrysostom argues that what was seen in Stageirios' life as God's abandonment was virtually God's providence.⁸⁷ Chrysostom, appealing to the case of Abraham and his terrible sufferings, points out that Abraham, despite his own sufferings, has never said that God abandoned him, or averted him, or stopped taking care of him.⁸⁸ Thus, Chrysostom assures twice his friend Stageirios that 'God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.'⁸⁹

Chrysostom also points out to his friend Stageirios that the only thing that should make one ashamed is sin,⁹⁰ and thus, he shall not be ashamed when his epilepsy throws him to the ground in front of his friends, because only the fall into sin should make one ashamed.⁹¹

Regarding the philosophical background of Chrysostom's views on suffering it seems that Chrysostom's insistence on the redemptive effects of sufferings is 'patently

⁸⁴ PG 52,722, E.II.E. 38, p.360.

⁸⁵ PG 52,719-720, E.II.E. 38, p.350. Chrysostom, in his fourth letter to Olympias, assures her that he himself will not stop saying 'glory be to God for everything' despite his own sufferings during his days in exile. This expression, according to Palladius, was Chrysostom's last saying before he died in exile. PG 68,10, E.II.E. 1, p.160.

⁸⁶ PG 62,154, E.II.E. 30, p.662.

⁸⁷ PG 47,447, E.II.E. 29, p.110. Chrysostom elsewhere says that even God's abandonment is a kind of providence. PG 55,155, E.II.E. 5, p.560.

⁸⁸ PG 47,459, E.II.E. 29, p.156.

⁸⁹ PG 47,440, E.II.E. 29, p.74; PG 47,494, E.II.E. 29, p.292. Cf., I Cor. 10:13.

⁹⁰ PG 52,627, E.II.E. 38, p.70.

⁹¹ PG 47,450, E.II.E. 29, pp. 116-118.

Christian.’ However, some of Chrysostom’s views as, for example that ‘things which are commonly reckoned evil are not really such,’ or that ‘a man’s only experience of genuine evil is when he chooses to do wrong’ are ‘Stoic in inspiration.’⁹²

Moral Perfectibility: The concept of the αὐτεξούσιον ‘free will’ of human beings is the basis on which Chrysostom founds his confidence in human moral perfectibility. God created man with free will, as he repeatedly stresses, and it lies with him and his free volition to choose virtue or malice. Otherwise, Adam should neither be punished when he disobeyed the command of God, nor should he be rewarded if he observed it.⁹³

Human beings, he adds, are not good or bad by nature, but become good or bad by their own free will and volition. This free will and not fate or natural coercion rules human beings.⁹⁴ The knowledge of virtue is inherent in them and they are able to come to moral perfection only by using their free decision and free will.⁹⁵ For Chrysostom no one can confine the freedom of human beings, neither God nor the devil.⁹⁶ God summons everyone to be justified, but does not coerce anyone. Human beings cannot be justified unless they themselves want it.⁹⁷ Neither God’s acts, nor His foreknowledge violate the free will of human beings.⁹⁸

⁹² Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p.44. For the similarities and differences in terminology and meaning between Stoicism and Chrysostom in general see below in this chapter in pages 122-124.

⁹³ PG 53,166, E.II.E. 2, p.570; PG 53,132, E.II.E. 2, p.432; PG 63,509, E.II.E. 33, p.320; PG 56,155, E.II.E. 8A, p.476; PG 58,575-576, E.II.E. 11, pp.575-576; Sources Chretiennes v.50,259, E.II.E. 30, p.514.

⁹⁴ PG 61,21-22, E.II.E. 18, pp.52-54; PG 56,282, E.II.E. 31, pp.342-344; PG 61,186, E.II.E. 18A, p.28; PG 63,509-510, E.II.E. 33, p.322-324.

⁹⁵ PG 62,20, E.II.E. 20, p.452; PG 61,20, E.II.E. 18, p.48; PG 49,140, E.II.E. 32, p.384.

⁹⁶ PG 53,204, E.II.E. 2, p.716.

⁹⁷ PG 62,240, E.II.E. 21, p.570; PG 63,99, E.II.E. 24, p.504; PG 60,579, E.II.E. 17, p.376; PG 59,83, E.II.E. 12, p.654; PG 50,488, E.II.E. 36, p.450; PG 51,144, E.II.E. 26, pp.442.

⁹⁸ It is worth noting how Chrysostom understands Judas’s betrayal: Judas betrayed Jesus Christ, he argues, using his own free will, and no one coerces him to betray Him. Thus, the fact that Jesus Christ predicted Judas’s betrayal does not mean that Jesus Christ or anyone else coerces Judas to become betrayer. Jesus Christ predicted Judas’s betrayal because He foreknowledges that Judas would betray him using his own free will. PG 58,573-575, E.II.E. 11, pp.352-356; PG 56,170-171, E.II.E. 1, p.324; PG 49,375, E.II.E. 35, p.560.

Regarding moral perfectibility, Chrysostom argues that only a really free person could become virtuous.⁹⁹ Giving the definition of who is really free, he says that only the one who is virtuous is really free, and that one who is free from his passions. The effort of becoming virtuous coincides with that of becoming free. Thus, Chrysostom points out that one who is a slave although remaining a slave could be really free, when he becomes free from his passions; and one who is free could be a slave, if he is not free from his passions.¹⁰⁰ Describing the consequences of passions, he says that passions change people into wild animals, tear up their souls, are unsatisfied and kill them at last.¹⁰¹

Moreover, Chrysostom argues that moral perfectibility consists in the combination of morals and doctrine.¹⁰² Giving the definition of virtue, Chrysostom says that virtue is the precise observance of the Faith's truths and the proper style of life.¹⁰³ He expresses his confidence on the possibility of virtue's acquisition, insisting that nothing can prevent one from exercising virtue.¹⁰⁴ The remembrance of our sins and the following rewards assist in the acquisition of virtue, which grows up progressively, and it is the fruit of our care and God's cooperation.¹⁰⁵

It remains to search for the philosophical background of Chrysostom's views on moral perfectibility. The terminology he uses is commonplace to the Stoic philosophy. Particularly, Chrysostom's expression that only a really free person could become

⁹⁹ PG 49,101, E.Π.E. 32, p.230; PG 57,387, E.Π.E. 10, p.412.

¹⁰⁰ PG 61,156-157, E.Π.E. 18, pp.536-538; PG 55,237, E.Π.E. 6, p.216; PG 62,599, E.Π.E. 23, pp.450-452; PG 63,145, E.Π.E. 25, pp.84-86; PG 58,574, E.Π.E. 11, p.348.

¹⁰¹ PG 51,44, E.Π.E. 26, pp.130-132; PG 55,102, E.Π.E. 5, p.364; PG 62,471, E.Π.E. 23, p.16.

¹⁰² PG 53,110, E.Π.E. 2, p.344; PG 64,500-501, E.Π.E. 2, p.536; PG 53,31, E.Π.E. 2, p.46; PG 51,287, E.Π.E. 27, p.336.

¹⁰³ PG 52,463, E.Π.E. 31, p.504.

¹⁰⁴ PG 50,452, E.Π.E. 36, p.230; PG 49,235, E.Π.E. 30, p.558; PG 58,592, E.Π.E. 11, p.432 PG 54,396, E.Π.E. 4, pp.48-50.

¹⁰⁵ PG 63,166, E.Π.E. 25, p.152; PG 50,711, E.Π.E. 36, p.618; PG 57,201, E.Π.E. 9, pp.374-376; PG 57,280, E.Π.E. 9, p.674; PG 63,234, E.Π.E. 25, p.380.

virtuous, echoes the Stoic view that it is only the wise man who is truly free.¹⁰⁶ For the Stoics, the goal of life is virtue.¹⁰⁷ Despite the same terminology, Chrysostom comes to different thoughts. Chrysostom, for instance, does not espouse the view that ‘virtue is a matter of making the right judgments’ and that ‘a person is either wise or foolish, virtuous or nonvirtuous’ and ‘either has or does not have the capacity to make right judgments.’¹⁰⁸ For Chrysostom, a person is able to come to moral perfection only by using their free decision and free will.¹⁰⁹ On the contrary, the Stoics admitted that ‘no one truly wise ever actually existed,’ presenting the wise person as an ideal.¹¹⁰ Moreover, in Chrysostom, the effort of becoming virtuous is closely related to doctrine. For Chrysostom, virtue is the precise observance of the Faith’s truths and the proper style of life,¹¹¹ while for the Stoics virtue is a matter of making the right judgments and the virtuous person lives in accord with reason (logos); that is to live according to nature. Thus, the definition of virtue is not the same, in Chrysostom and the Stoics.

As Kelly observes sometimes in Chrysostom’s writings ‘we catch echoes of the great Stoic commonplaces, which he had inherited from his upbringing. As he expounds them, however, they are almost always interwoven with distinctively Christian themes.’¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p.21. The Stoics says, according to Diogenes Laertius, that ‘only he (the wise man) is free, but the inferior are slaves:’ μόνον τ’ ἐλεύθερον (τὸν σοφόν), τοὺς δὲ φαύλους δούλους. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 7.121. The English translation is from the book, Anthony A. Long and David N. Sedley *The Hellenistic Philosophers vol 1. Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.431.

¹⁰⁷ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.337. According to Diogenes Laertius, ‘Zeno in his book *On the Nature of Man* is the first who said that living in agreement with nature is the goal (end) of life, which is living in accordance with virtue:’ πρῶτος ὁ Ζήνων ἐν τῷ Περὶ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως τέλος εἶπε τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ κατ’ ἀρετὴν ζῆν Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 7.87. The English translation is from the book: Long and Sedley *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol.1, p.395.

¹⁰⁸ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.338.

¹⁰⁹ PG 62,20, E.II.E. 20, p.452; PG 61,20, E.II.E. 18, p.48; PG 49,140, E.II.E. 32, p.384.

¹¹⁰ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.338.

¹¹¹ PG 52,463, E.II.E. 31, p.504.

¹¹² Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 267.

Without coming to a detailed comparison between Stoicism and Christianity, for such a comparison is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is sufficient to outline their similarities and differences.¹¹³ For instance, with regard to the perception of God, in Stoicism one finds only ‘an immanent god,’ a ‘divine reality’ who is found in everything, but not ‘a fully personal God’ as in Christianity.¹¹⁴ In Stoicism there is no personal immortality as in Christianity, but the divine part of a person after his death ‘went back into the Whole.’ Moreover, Stoicism by *apathy* leads to a denial of emotions in human experience, while Christianity brings ‘joy and hope into the world.’ In Christianity one ‘acts benevolently not merely in fulfillment of the obligation of a common kinship in the universe or even in God, but because they have learned self -sacrifice and active love from God in Christ.’ However, in Stoicism ‘self-respect, not love was the driving force.’¹¹⁵

Thus, it seems correct to conclude that ‘whatever the similarities in Christian and Stoic ethical thought, these instructions are placed in such a fundamentally different worldview as to give them different significance,’¹¹⁶ and that ‘conscious borrowings are probably the exception rather than the rule.’¹¹⁷

Chrysostom’s Interest in Doctrinal Issues: Although Chrysostom did not dedicate specific sermons to doctrinal issues, it is not correct to conclude that he shows no interest in the major doctrinal issues of his time. If one collects together all the doctrinal references of his writings, then Chrysostom could compete with all the fathers

¹¹³ There is an interesting comparison of Stoicism and Christianity in Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, pp.346-47 and Hans-Josef Klauck *The Religious Context of Early Christianity. A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (translated by Brian McNeil, edited by John Barclay, Joel Marcus and John Riches; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), pp.427-428.

¹¹⁴ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.346, 335.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.346-347.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.346.

¹¹⁷ Klauck *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, p.427.

of the Church in doctrinal production.¹¹⁸ It seems true to say that Chrysostom in dealing with the interpretation of the biblical text, does not hesitate to make a parenthesis and attack the heretics, whenever the text gives him the chance to do so. This seems natural since Chrysostom grows up in an age where the Church was convulsed by the controversy of Arianism and later by that of Nestorianism and Monophysitism. The exposition of scripture had the task of supplying all the necessary arguments to confront these heresies. Therefore Chrysostom, like all his contemporaries, could not do anything but deal with this priority of the Church.

In his commentary on Galatians, for instance, at many points he inserted his comments, particularly in Christological subjects. Commenting on Paul's apostolic authority, for example, in Gal.1:1, Chrysostom went off at a tangent and spoke strongly against the heretics. He argues that the word 'by' before the name of Jesus Christ, does not imply any distinction of Essence between the Son and the Father, for in this context the word 'by' was applied to both the Son and the Father.¹¹⁹

Chrysostom also argues, in the same context, that the baptismal formula does not imply an inferiority of the Son because He is named after the Father, because here Paul placed the Son before the Father. Thus, Chrysostom concludes that the order in which the Son and the Father are cited does not imply any distinction of Essence between Them.¹²⁰

It is worth mentioning that Chrysostom does not avoid commenting on the last part of the sentence in Gal.1:1 where Paul says that the Father raised the Son from the dead.

¹¹⁸ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 292.

¹¹⁹ PG 61, 614-615; E.P.E. 20, pp.168-170; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.4-5.

¹²⁰ PG 61, 615; E.P.E. 20, p.170; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.5. It seems that the heretics who Chrysostom has in mind are the Arians and the Macedonians, although he does not mention them by name. The Arians and the Macedonians denied the co-equality and consubstantiality of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Library of the Fathers, 12, p.4 (see note at the end of the page).

Within the Christological debate, this point was probably an argument among the Arians and the Macedonians, who in Chrysostom's time suggested the inferiority of the Son. Thus, Chrysostom rhetorically speaking turns to Paul, asking him why he does not introduce here any of his great statements as, for instance, in Phil.2:6 and Heb.1:3, or any of John's statements as in John 1:1, or any statement of Jesus Christ that He Himself said to the Jews, as in John 5:19.¹²¹ Then Chrysostom suggests that Paul's intention in not doing so is to remind the Galatians in the discourses of the benefits which had been conferred on them through the Cross and the Resurrection.¹²²

Returning to the main argument which the 'heretics' call upon, that the Father raises the Son from the dead, Chrysostom accuses these 'heretics' of taking certain scriptural passages in isolation and insisting on them. Chrysostom argues that even the shadows of those who believe in Christ and their garments could raise the dead and thus it is a 'stretch of folly' and a 'manifest of insanity to say that Christ could not raise Himself. Besides this argument, Chrysostom appeals to two scriptural passages¹²³ to support his reasoning.¹²⁴

What is worth noting here is that Chrysostom rejects the interpretation of scripture word by word, which was a distinctive mark of the Alexandrians. In the above passage, for instance, Chrysostom insists that these 'heretics' are 'wilfully deaf to all sublimer' doctrines for they select and interpret certain passages isolating them from the whole scripture.

Following his custom of making a parenthesis to deal with doctrinal issues, Chrysostom besides other doctrinal issues deals with the Dualistic systems of Marcionism

¹²¹ It is worth noting here Chrysostom's skill in introducing fitting quotations to support his arguments.

¹²² PG 61, 615-616; E.P.E. 20, p.172; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.5-6.

¹²³ John 2:19 and 10:18.

¹²⁴ PG 61, 616; E.P.E. 20, pp.172-174; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.6.

and Manichaeism.

Marcion, the most important representative of the Dualistic movement of Marcionism, kept in his system some Gnostic elements as the estrangement of God from the world, the evil nature of nature and, in consequence, an extreme ascetism, docetism and anti-Judaism.¹²⁵ Starting from the opposition between the Old and the New Testament, Marcion comes to the differentiation of two Gods, one inferior, that of the Old Testament, and one superior, that of the New Testament. The superior God is good but unknown, while the inferior God is righteous and known.¹²⁶ In his canon of scripture, Marcion replaces the Old Testament with his lost work '*Antitheses*' and from the New Testament accepts the Gospel of Luke and 10 Epistles of Paul excluding the three pastoral Epistles. Rejecting Jesus Christ's birth from the Virgin Mary, Marcion teaches that Christ came to the world as an adult and appeared with the image of man. The humanity of Christ, His sufferings and His death were apparent rather than real (that is the main view of Docetism). Because of his extreme ascetism, Marcion also rejects the sacrament of marriage.¹²⁷

Mani or Manichee, the most important representative of the Dualistic movement of Manichaeism, like Marcion kept in his system such Gnostic elements as extreme ascetism and anti-Judaism. In general Manichee's teaching is a syncretistic mixture of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Gnosticism and Christianity. Manichee accepts two absolute principles (that of light and darkness, good and evil, God and matter), competing with each other.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 2 p. 180.

¹²⁶ Cf., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.27.2, 4.2.2; Justin Martyr *Apology* 26.5; 58,1; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.11.2, 4.11.9, 4.18.9, 5.13.3.

¹²⁷ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 2 pp. 181-186. Cf., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.28.1; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.2.

¹²⁸ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vol. 2 p. 188-194.

In his system of biblical exegesis, Chrysostom, following his custom of making a parenthesis and dealing with doctrinal issues, exploits every chance offered by the scriptural text to attack the views of Marcion and Manichee.¹²⁹

Particularly, Chrysostom repeatedly opposes the view of Docetism that the humanity of Christ, His sufferings and His death were apparent rather than real.¹³⁰ He also says that they reject the sacrament of marriage, accusing them that they reject it because they feel disgusted by it.¹³¹ Chrysostom is aware of their rejection of the Old Testament and their differentiation of two Gods, one inferior, that of the Old Testament who is righteous and known, and one superior, that of the New Testament who is good but unknown.¹³²

3.3 Chrysostom's extensive knowledge of Scripture: What astonishes every one who studies Chrysostom's works is his extensive knowledge of scripture. Chrysostom 'scatters the pearls of his scripture quotations, as from an inexhaustible treasure, through the many-colored fabric of his sermons.'¹³³ The advantage of reading and learning the bible in his mother tongue, and the fact that at that time many monks and priests 'had learned the Holy scriptures entirely or in great part from memory,' as Chrysostomus Baur correctly observes, can partly only explain Chrysostom's knowledge of scripture. What astonishes us is not only his excellent memory in quoting long passages of scripture, but also his skill in introducing fitting quotations and synonymous passages from all parts of

¹²⁹ Chrysostom attacks Marcionism as many as 52 times, and Manichaeism as many as 53. Most of my references to Chrysostom's writings deal with Marcionism and Manichaeism at the same context.

¹³⁰ PG 48,759; E.I.E. 35, p.232; PG 48, 766; E.I.E. 35, pp.256-258; PG 57,77; E.I.E. 9, pp.240-242; PG 57,458; E.I.E. 10, p.730; PG 58,739; E.I.E. 12, p.196.

¹³¹ PG 48,536; E.I.E. 29, p.456.

¹³² PG 48,797; E.I.E. 35, pp.360-362; PG 57,430; E.I.E. 10, p.610; PG 60,53; E.I.E. 15, p.158.

¹³³ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 Antioch, p.315.

scripture. And yet there is no indication that Chrysostom had ever known or possessed a concordance for preachers.¹³⁴ His sermons, as Baur points out, contain no less than seven thousand quotations from the Old Testament and eleven thousand from the New Testament.¹³⁵

Regarding Chrysostom's canon of scripture, Frederic Henry Chase argues that Chrysostom used the disputed books later in his life. Although, Chase recognises that there is no indication of Chrysostom's acquaintance with *2 and 3 John* and *Jude*, he argues that the evidence regarding Chrysostom's knowledge of *2 Peter* 'has been understated.'¹³⁶ Dealing with the five fragments on *2 Peter* in Cramer's catena, which bear Chrysostom's name, he argues that they 'are too brief to warrant a positive opinion,' but their language and style 'seem to point to their being excerpts from some work of Chrysostom.' Dealing with the evidence regarding Chrysostom's acquaintance with *Revelation*, Chase makes two points: some words that Chrysostom uses in his first Homily on Matthew 'seem distinctly to refer' to the description of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation; and, according to Palladius, Chrysostom used a phrase from the Revelation at his departure from Constantinople. Chase also appeals to Suidas' assertion that 'Chrysostom received the three Epistles of St. John and the Apocalypse.' The above cited evidence together with Suidas' assertion, Chase says, point to the conclusion that 'Chrysostom later in his life used the disputed books and commented on one of them, while at the same time they remained less familiar to him.'¹³⁷

Regarding Chrysostom's canon of the Old Testament, Chase, in agreement with other scholars, points out that Chrysostom unlike Theodore 'adheres purely and simply

¹³⁴ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 *Antioch*, p.316.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.316.

¹³⁶ Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.79.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.80-81.

to the canon of the Septuagint.’ Holding the view that *Synopsis Scripturae Sacrae* is the genuine work of Chrysostom, Chase argues that it includes ‘without any indication of inferiority, the following of the disputed books, viz., Esther, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus.’¹³⁸

Baur, on the contrary, argues that Chrysostom’s canon of scripture agrees with the canon of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the rest of the Antiochenes. He observes that *Judith, Esdras 1 and 2, Maccabees 1 and 2*, are never represented in Chrysostom’s seven thousand citations from the Old Testament and thus ‘these books obviously did not belong to his canon.’ Likewise Baur observes that *Revelation, 2 and 3 Peter, 2 and 3 John* and *Jude* are never represented in Chrysostom’s eleven thousand citations from the New Testament.¹³⁹

However, the arguments to which the two scholars appeal are not sufficient to lead to any conclusion beyond any doubt. Baur’s observing that Chrysostom never made citations from some books of the bible, although it is true, and no one could overlook it, does not in itself prove Baur’s conclusion. For comparing Chrysostom’s case with that of Theodore of Mopsuestia one may argue that, Theodore rejected from the canon some books because they do not contain prophetic, messianic or historical elements (as Song of Songs), but merely human wisdom (as Job), or only the gift of prudence (as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes).¹⁴⁰ In the case of Chrysostom, despite the fact that most of his writings are preserved, there is no indication to point to a rejection of any of the disputed books because of its content. Moreover, one may argue that Chrysostom was not attacked on

¹³⁸ Chase observes that *Codex Hierosolymitanus*, discovered by Bryennius, agrees as to its text with *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae* and *Codex Lugdunensis*, but also includes the synopsis of the last five of the Minor Prophets, which is omitted in *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae* and *Codex Lugdunensis*. Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.28.

¹³⁹ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 Antioch, p.317.

¹⁴⁰ For more details see my previous chapter under the subtitle ‘Theodore of Mopsuestia.’

this point and never condemned by any Council, while Theodore was strictly condemned by the fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in AD 553.

Likewise one may argue that Chase's observations regarding the five fragments in Cramer's catena and Chrysostom's use of a phrase from the Apocalypse, according to Palladius, although seemingly true, however are not enough to warrant his conclusion that Chrysostom accepted beyond any doubt the disputed books later in his life. The fact that Chrysostom was not attacked on this point and never condemned by any Council could probably point to other suppositions. The fact that Chrysostom does not make any statement where he clearly accepts or rejects any of the disputed books could probably point to the view that for Chrysostom the issue of the clarification of the canon was not so important as it was for Theodore and that is the reason of Chrysostom's silence. Thus, regarding Chrysostom's canon of scripture it does not seem correct to conclude that Chrysostom accepted the disputed books later in his life beyond any doubt.

Regarding the text form of scripture, Chrysostom's Old Testament text is the Greek translation of the Septuagint,¹⁴¹ which was in common use till his time. Origen established a trustworthy text of the Septuagint in his *Hexapla*, in the third century, and soon after, Lucian revised it making a comparison with the Hebrew text and with the Syrian Peschitto. Chrysostom's New Testament text probably goes back to that of Lucian.¹⁴²

Besides the Septuagint, Chrysostom often makes references to other Greek

¹⁴¹ As Chase points out, 'few of the Greek Fathers were in any real sense Hebrew scholars, and Chrysostom was not one of them,' and thus whatever knowledge he seems to possess comes from tradition or from hearsay.' Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, pp.28-29. Probably, as Baur suggests, Chrysostom 'was free from the temptation to wish to gain the admiration of his hearers by making scripture quotations in foreign languages, which no one understood.' Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 *Antioch*, p.315.

¹⁴² Lucian's text became the official text of the School of Antioch. Diodore, as Baur observes, 'made it the ground work of his theological instruction' and Theodore like Chrysostom made use of it in their writings. Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 *Antioch*, pp.317-318; cf., Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, pp.31-32.

versions of scripture. In his commentary on the Psalms he seems to refer to the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, although never by name. He also seems to refer to the *Hexapla* of Origen, since 'he frequently adds a transliteration of the Hebrew and makes use of renderings which cannot be identified with the above-named versions.'¹⁴³ Chrysostom, however, does not make much use of the above versions. While he quotes the variations from other versions, he 'contents himself with discussing the Septuagint text alone.'¹⁴⁴ Indeed, Chrysostom tends to use the Septuagint 'as a final authority and to argue from it as if from the original.'¹⁴⁵ The fact, however, that the Septuagint is a translation and not the original version of the Old Testament, is recognised by Chrysostom as one among other reasons for its obscurity.¹⁴⁶

It is worth noting that Chrysostom alone among his predecessors and contemporaries does not take into account the myths regarding the origin of the Septuagint. As Chase points out, for Chrysostom the story regarding the Septuagint 'is part of a long story of providential care watching over the bible.'¹⁴⁷ According to Chrysostom's own story, when the sacred books were burned during a war, God inspired Ezra to rewrite them from the fragments which were preserved; and afterwards He arranged that they should be translated by the Seventy.¹⁴⁸ Elsewhere Chrysostom says that Ptolemy the King of Egypt, three hundred years before Christ, commanded some Jews to translate the Jewish books into Greek.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.32.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.33.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.34.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.33. PG 56,178; E.I.E. 1, p.344.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.31.

¹⁴⁸ PG 63,74, E.I.E. 24, p.416.

¹⁴⁹ PG 53,42-43, E.I.E. 2, pp.86-88.

Chrysostom repeatedly expresses his great respect and reverence for scripture. He calls scripture a great and inestimable treasure,¹⁵⁰ a precious treasure,¹⁵¹ a hidden treasure,¹⁵² a spiritual treasure,¹⁵³ an inexhaustible spring.¹⁵⁴ Thus, he repeatedly exhorts his audience to listen with great willingness¹⁵⁵ and take into account every detail of scripture.¹⁵⁶

At the beginning of the twenty-first Homily on Genesis, Chrysostom commenting on Gen. 5:1-31, argues that even within the record of the descendants of Adam there is a great and inestimable treasure. Then, he declares that there is nothing in scripture without richness of meanings, not a syllable or a jot; and what is needed to understand these meanings is not a human wisdom but a spiritual revelation.¹⁵⁷

Chrysostom's great respect and reverence for scripture is based on the inspired character of scripture. For Chrysostom the real author of scripture is the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit inspired the authors of every book of scripture and that inspiration extended to mere words, making him the defender of verbal inspiration.¹⁵⁸ Commenting on Mat. 26:14-15, in his first Homily on *The Betrayal of Judas*, Chrysostom insists on the meaning of the word 'then.' As he argues, the word 'then' was not written accidentally or without purpose, because it was written under the inspiration

¹⁵⁰ PG 53,175, E.II.E. 2, pp.602-604; PG 53,206-207, E.II.E. 3, p.8-10.

¹⁵¹ PG 54,414,E.II.E. 4, p.124.

¹⁵² PG 59,57,E.II.E. 12, p.708.

¹⁵³ PG 54,523,E.II.E. 4, p.554.

¹⁵⁴ PG 53,32, E.II.E.2, p.50.

¹⁵⁵ PG 54,414,E.II.E. 4, p.124.

¹⁵⁶ PG 53,175, E.II.E.2, pp.602-604.

¹⁵⁷ PG 53,175, E.II.E.2, pp.602-604. Chrysostom repeatedly stresses that one may find richness meanings even from a single word: PG 53,341-342, E.II.E.3, p.534-536; PG 59,203, E.II.E.13, p.342; PG 59,312, E.II.E.14, p.46; PG 60,668, E.II.E.17, p.690; PG 51,187-188, E.II.E.27, pp.20-22.

¹⁵⁸ Origen likewise holds the view of verbal inspiration of scripture. For more details see my previous chapter under the subtitle 'Origen.'

of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁹ Thus, for Chrysostom scripture cannot contain errors because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Regarding the contradictions appearing in the Gospels, he endeavoured 'to find a reasonable means of agreement' tracing these contradictions to 'mere variations which he neither contradicts nor corrects.'¹⁶⁰

In all his life, Chrysostom endeavoured to underline the necessity of studying the scripture. He argues that the purpose of scripture is the correction of human beings,¹⁶¹ scripture is a resource of edification.¹⁶² Declaring that salvation is absolutely impossible without the studying of scripture,¹⁶³ he argues that the frequent study of scripture means company with the saints,¹⁶⁴ conversation with God.¹⁶⁵ Thus he repeatedly points out that the studying of scripture grants endless goods,¹⁶⁶ while the ignorance of scripture is the deeper reason for many evils.¹⁶⁷

In his commentary on Romans, for instance, he argues that even falling into the error of heresy, which he calls a 'plague,' comes from the ignorance of scripture as well as a sinful life. Thus, without delay he exhorts his audience to hold their eyes open to the bright shining of scripture.¹⁶⁸

In this context Chrysostom proceeds to the investigation of the chronology of Paul's letter to the Romans, arguing that it was not written 'as most think, before all the

¹⁵⁹ PG 49,375, E.Π.E.35, p.560.

¹⁶⁰ Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol.1 *Antioch*, p.319.

¹⁶¹ PG 56,313, E.Π.E.1, p.388.

¹⁶² PG 54,686, E.Π.E.7, p.574; PG 53,321, E.Π.E.3, p.456.

¹⁶³ PG 48,993, E.Π.E.25, p.478.

¹⁶⁴ PG 55,521.

¹⁶⁵ PG 51,90, E.Π.E.26, p.280.

¹⁶⁶ PG 63,485, E.Π.E.33, p.252; PG 53,262, E.Π.E.3, p.222; PG 52,397, E.Π.E.33, p.106; PG 49,363, E.Π.E.35, p.492; PG 59,295, E.Π.E.13, p.726.

¹⁶⁷ PG 62,361-362, E.Π.E.22, pp.262-264.

¹⁶⁸ PG 60, 391-392; E.Π.E. 16B, p. 306; *Library of the Fathers*, 8, p.2.

others.’ The consequences which derive from the ignorance of the date of this letter strengthen Chrysostom’s exhortation to the constant studying of scripture.¹⁶⁹

3.4 Chrysostom’s use of allegory and typology: At this stage, it is essential to deal with Chrysostom’s use of allegory and typology, making clear however that Chrysostom does not use these methods extensively in his exegetical writings. As Chase observes, ‘Chrysostom was not proof against a tendency at times to allegorise, and find meanings from which a more systematic exegesis would shrink. But at least he never revelled in the effeminacies of mystical interpretation.’¹⁷⁰

Although Chrysostom does not completely reject ‘allegory,’ he reduces its usage to the bare minimum. In his commentary on Isaiah, he formulates the ‘right’ use of ‘allegory,’ arguing that ‘when scripture allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the allegory.’ Chrysostom’s observation works as an important ‘rule’ in his exegetical system for he repeatedly recalls it when he recognises an allegorical sense in scripture.

In his commentary on Isaiah, for instance, he argues that scripture ensures that a passage will not be interpreted superficially or by the undisciplined desire of the allegorists. This rule seem to work as a controlling fact to avoid the dangerous excesses of ‘allegory:’

Καὶ πανταχοῦ τῆς Γραφῆς οὗτος ὁ νόμος, ἐπειδὴν ἀλληγορεῖ, λέγειν καὶ ἀλληγορίας τὴν ἐρμηνείαν, ὥστε μὴ ἀπλῶς, μηδὲ ὡς ἔτυχε τὴν ἀκόλαστον ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν ἀλληγορεῖν βουλομένων πλανᾶσθαι καὶ πανταχοῦ φέρεσθαι.

This is everywhere a rule in scripture: when it wants to allegorize, it tells the interpretation of the ‘allegory,’ so that the passage will not be interpreted superficially or be met by the undisciplined desire of those who enjoy allegorization to wander

¹⁶⁹ For a deeper analysis of the interesting issue of the chronology of Paul’s letters see below in pp.134-135.

¹⁷⁰ Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.51.

about and be carried in every direction.¹⁷¹

When he analyzes the illustration of the vineyard of the Lord, in his commentary on Isaiah, Chrysostom applies again his rule that ‘when scripture allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the allegory.’ The interpreter is not permitted to ‘apply the words to whatever events or people he chooses,’ because the scripture interprets itself with the words: ‘and the house of Israel is the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth.’¹⁷²

In the same context, Chrysostom quotes other passages from scripture in support of his rule that when scripture allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the allegory. The prophet Ezekiel, he observes, speaking about an eagle ‘with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which came unto Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar,’¹⁷³ explains too who the eagle and who the cedar are. Thus he concludes that the prophet ‘does not leave it to the imagination of the reader to apply it to whatever person he chooses, but he names the King whom he has referred to as a river.’ As he points out, this rule exists throughout the scripture and quotes another example from the book of Proverbs.¹⁷⁴

It is worth noting that Chrysostom, in his comments on Proverbs, places side by side with the primary literal meaning a secondary mystical one. It seems true that Chrysostom seems ‘freer to indulge in allegorical interpretations’ in his comments on Proverbs than elsewhere in his exegetical works.¹⁷⁵ This exception seems to stem from his definition of the term ‘proverb’ as ‘wise sayings, as riddles, which bear one meaning

¹⁷¹ PG 56,60; E.I.E. 8,p.378; Duane Andrew Garrett, *An analysis of the Hermeneutics of John Chrysostom's Commentary on Isaiah 1-8, with an English Translation*, p.110.

¹⁷² PG 56, 60; E.I.E. 8, p. 378; Garrett, *John Chrysostom's Commentary on Isaiah*, p.110.

¹⁷³ Ezekiel 17:3.

¹⁷⁴ PG 56, 60; E.I.E. 8, p.378; Garrett, *John Chrysostom's Commentary on Isaiah*, pp.110-111.

¹⁷⁵ Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.76.

on the surface, but in figure suggest something quite different;’ and as ‘dark words which appear so plain that the reader is annoyed by their lack of meaning and suggestiveness, but which, when they are examined, reveal the thought which lurks in them.’¹⁷⁶

Chase comes to the supposition that ‘it seems more than probable that Chrysostom acknowledged a more literal meaning as the primary one in many, if not in all, cases.’ He grounds his view on the fact that only fragments of Chrysostom’s comments on the book of Proverbs are preserved, and on that ‘it is obvious that the allegorical or mystical portions of his work would most commend themselves to Catenists of a later date.’ As Chase argues, in a few cases the preserved fragments ‘enable us to verify this supposition.’¹⁷⁷

Coming now to Chrysostom’s treatment of the Lord’s parables in the New Testament, one may observe that Chrysostom adheres faithfully to the Antiochene principles of interpretation. Dealing with the parable of the Tares, for instance, Chrysostom supports the view that the parables ‘must not be explained throughout word by word, since many absurdities will follow.’ For this reason the Lord himself is ‘teaching us here in thus interpreting this parable.’¹⁷⁸

Chrysostom seems to follow this principle consistently for he introduces it with the statement ‘as I am always saying,’ and repeats it in his treatment to other parables. It suffices to cite just another example where Chrysostom insists twice in the same context that ‘we must not press the interpretation of the parables to every detail of expression.’¹⁷⁹

Thus it seems correct to conclude that Chrysostom, applying in his commentary on Isaiah the principle that ‘when scripture allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the

¹⁷⁶ PG 56,370; E.II.E. 1, p.552.

¹⁷⁷ Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.78.

¹⁷⁸ PG 58, 482; E.II.E. 10, p.832; Library of the Fathers, 2, p.639.

¹⁷⁹ PG 58, 613; E.II.E. 11, p.526; Library of the Fathers, 3, p.867.

allegory;’ and applying in his treatment to the Lord’s parables the principle that we must not press the interpretation of the parables to every detail of expression, wants to reduce to the bare minimum the usage of allegory, without leaving any limits to the interpreter’s imagination to lead to arbitrary conclusions. Chrysostom does not rigidly exclude allegory from his exegesis, but he usually restricts himself to ‘typology.’

It is worth noting that the starting point for the study of Chrysostom’s ‘typology’ is Gal. 4:24; a passage to which the Alexandrians on the contrary apply ‘allegory.’ The way in which Chrysostom interprets this passage, reveals the different understanding of ‘allegory’ held by Alexandrians and Antiochenes: The Alexandrians apply ‘allegory’ to unhistorical events, whilst the Antiochenes insist on applying it to historical events. Chrysostom, interpreting Paul’s phrase in Gal. 4:24, argues that while Paul used the word allegorization, he did not really interpret this passage allegorically. Καταχρηστικῶς τὸν τύπον ἀλληγορίαν ἐκάλεσεν, ‘contrary to usage, he calls a type an allegory.’ According to Chrysostom, Paul does not deny the historical reality of the events to which he appeals, but he uses these historical events as examples to support his own purposes. He stresses that Paul interprets Sarah and Hagar, who are historical persons, as types of the two Testaments. Thus, as he concludes, Paul does not actually use ‘allegory’ but ‘typology.’ In Chrysostom’s eyes Paul calls a type an allegory, ‘contrary to the usage.’¹⁸⁰

It is worth noting that in Chrysostom’s interpretation of Gal.4:24 one may observe that Chrysostom follows faithfully the Antiochene concept of ‘theory.’¹⁸¹ The history to which Paul appeals, according to Chrysostom, ‘not only declares that which appears on the face of it, but announces somewhat farther, whence it is called an allegory.’ He gives to ‘allegory’ a different concept than the Alexandrians. For him the deeper meaning

¹⁸⁰ PG 61, 662; E.I.E. 20, pp. 338-340; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.69-70. See also Theodore’s of Mopsuestia similar views in this chapter under the subtitle ‘Theodore of Mopsuestia.’

¹⁸¹ See the clarification of the term in pp.68-69.

which emerges from the history of Sarah and Hagar is firmly based on its historical settings. For the Antiochenes in general, the incidents that the scriptures narrate, either teach us something, or predict other events. Especially in the Old Testament, the persons or events turn to types of events or persons of the New Testament.

Chrysostom, interpreting elsewhere Paul's term 'ἀλληγορούμενα' in Gal.4:24, explains that 'the events which happened in the period of the Old Testament were types of the events which happened in the period of grace. As there existed the two women, likewise here the two Testaments. This first indicates the kinship between the New and the Old, for the two women were the types of the two Testaments,' because, as he points out, the 'type must be akin to the truth and not contrary to it.'¹⁸²

Commenting on 1 Cor.11:1-10, Chrysostom describes distinctively the kinship between type and truth which it points out. The passing of the Jews under the leadership of Moses through the Red Sea, as he argues, is a type of Christian baptism. There he observes that type must not be totally estranged from the truth and yet not be equal to truth:

Καὶ ἴδε συγγένειαν τύπου πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἀληθείας ὑπεροχὴν πρὸς τύπον. Οὔτε γὰρ ἀπηλλοτριῶσθαι πάντῃ χρὴ τὸν τύπον τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη τύπος· οὔτε πάλιν ἐξισάζειν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἐπεὶ πάλιν καὶ αὐτὸς ἀλήθεια ἔσται· ἀλλὰ δεῖ μένειν ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκείας συμμετρίας καὶ μήτε τό πᾶν ἔχειν τῆς ἀληθείας μήτε τοῦ παντός ἐκπεπωκέναι.

And see the type's kinship to truth and truth's supremacy to type. Neither should type be totally alien to the truth otherwise it could not be type at all. Nor again should type be equal to truth for then it will be truth, but must stay to its familiar harmony and nor has it all of the truth, nor be it totally inferior to it.¹⁸³

Woollcombe observes that the Alexandrians tend to confuse 'historical typology'

¹⁸² PG 51, 285; E.I.E. 27, p. 330; It is my own translation.

¹⁸³ PG 51, 248; E.I.E. 27, p. 234; It is my own translation.

with ‘symbolic typology’ or ‘allegorism’ and to overlay the search for historical patterns with the search for hidden meanings. Contrary to them, the Antiochenes do not disparage the historical value of the types. Woollcombe argues that in Chrysostom’s comparison of Isaac, carrying the wood for his sacrifice, with Christ, carrying the Cross, ‘the two parts of a type-pair were revelations differing in magnitude of a single matter.’¹⁸⁴ As Woollcombe observes, ‘the Antiochenes were thus preserved from many of the errors of the less historically- minded Alexandrians,’ because they insisted that ‘the identity between the two parts of the type-pair must be real and intelligible.’¹⁸⁵

Thus, it seems correct to conclude that Chrysostom does not rigidly exclude allegory from his exegesis, but he usually restricts himself to ‘typology.’ On the very few occasions when he uses ‘allegory,’ he clearly tries to reduce to nothing the possibilities for leading to arbitrary conclusions, applying his rule that ‘when scripture allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the allegory.’ However, it is not true to think that ‘allegory’ and ‘typology’ represent Chrysostom’s main methods of interpretation for he uses them very seldom.

3.5 Context of Paul’s letters: Chrysostom, starting each of his commentaries on Paul’s letters, used to make a brief introduction in an introductory sermon. In these introductions, Chrysostom deals with several issues related to the further understanding of each letter of Paul.

In his commentary on Galatians, for instance, Chrysostom observes that not only the exordium but also the whole letter is full of a ‘vehement and lofty spirit.’ Thus he finds it necessary to explain in a parenthesis the reason which caused Paul to react in such

¹⁸⁴ PG 59, 459-460; E.Π.E. 14, p. 662-664. Lampe and Woollcombe, *Studies in Biblical Theology: Essays on Typology*, pp.72-73.

¹⁸⁵ Lampe and Woollcombe, *Studies in Biblical Theology: Essays on Typology*, p.73.

an extreme way. Paul's exasperation, he argues, indicates that the cause could not be 'slight and unimportant.' Excluding the possibility that Paul could be exasperated by common matters he turns to the investigation of the historical background of Galatians and Paul's debate with his opponents.¹⁸⁶

Another interesting example of Chrysostom's use of a brief introduction exists in the introductory sermon of his commentary on Romans. In that introduction he attempts to determine the chronology of Paul's letters, appealing to evidence found within these letters. He suggests, for instance, that the letter to the Romans is not the oldest letter of Paul, as most of the people believed, arguing that the letters to the Corinthians were written before that to the Romans. Chrysostom, comparing the internal evidence found in Rom.15:22-26 and I Cor.16:1-4 about Paul's journey to Jerusalem and the delivery of the money for the poor Christians, observes that when Paul wrote to the Corinthians the journey was uncertain, whereas when he wrote to the Romans, it was fixed.¹⁸⁷

Likewise, comparing the internal evidence found in I Thess.4:9 and II Cor.9:2, Chrysostom observes that Thessalonians were the first to whom Paul had spoken to about the charity for the poor Christians. Thus, he concludes, the letter to the Thessalonians was written before that to the Corinthians.¹⁸⁸ In the same context, Chrysostom observes that the letters to the Philippians and to the Hebrews were written from Rome, appealing to the internal evidence from Phil.4:22, Heb.13:24. Appealing to II Tim.4:6, he argues that the letter to Timothy was written from Rome, classifying it as the last of all the Epistles. The letter to Philemon is one of the last Epistles too, but it is classified as to be earlier than that to the Colossians, appealing to Col.4:7. The letter to

¹⁸⁶ PG 61,611-612; E.I.E. 20, pp. 160-162; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.1-2.

¹⁸⁷ PG 60, 392; E.I.E. 16B, pp.306-308; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.2.

¹⁸⁸ PG 60, 392; E.I.E. 16B, p.308; Library of the Fathers, 8, pp.2-3.

the Galatians, he conjectures, without appealing to any internal evidence, was written before that to the Romans.¹⁸⁹

For Chrysostom the investigation of the chronology of Paul's letters is an important issue for it contributes not a little to the later analysis of the meaning of each letter. It is worth noting that for Chrysostom the investigation of the chronology of the letters has a practical application: it helps to understand scriptural passages which seem to be different or contradictory.

Comparing, for instance, the different way which Paul wrote to the Romans and to the Colossians for the same problem, he argues that the only explanation which could be given for these two different statements is the time of their transaction: at first a condescension to the Romans was needful, but afterwards at the time when the letter to the Colossians was written such a condescension was not needful.¹⁹⁰

Chrysostom, moreover, points out that one may find Paul following this custom in many other places in his letters, implying that every reader of Paul, dealing with statements which seem contradictory, should consider these issues. Chrysostom, in his biblical system of exegesis, forms 'condescension' as a principle of interpretation capable in his eyes of solving contradictory passages within the Bible.¹⁹¹

Chrysostom, besides the issue of the date of Paul's letters, puts emphasis on the closely connected issue of the place of Paul's letters. In his introductory sermon on the letter to the Corinthians, for instance, Chrysostom mentions Corinth's ancient reputation for wealth, its trade and the great number of its rhetoricians and philosophers. It does not even escape Chrysostom's mind that Periandrus, one of the seven called wise men, was

¹⁸⁹ PG 60, 393; E.I.E. 16B, p. 310; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.3.

¹⁹⁰ PG 60, 393; E.I.E. 16B, p. 312; Library of the Fathers, 8, pp.3-4.

¹⁹¹ PG 60, 393-394; E.I.E. 16B, pp. 312-314; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.4.

a native of Corinth. Then, he explains that the mention of all these things is useful to the understanding of the argument of the Epistle.¹⁹²

Another feature of Chrysostom's writings is his custom of making short summaries of his previous arguments to his congregation to refresh their memories. Since Chrysostom extensively uses arresting metaphors and striking comparisons and other rhetorical devices throughout his writings, it becomes essential to open a parenthesis quite often to sketch out what he has already said and connect it with what he was about to say. Sometimes Chrysostom heaps up a series of metaphors, which are drawn out at length, making it very difficult for his audience to follow his ideas in every detail.¹⁹³ Starting for instance, with the analysis of the third chapter of Galatians, Chrysostom made a short summary of the previous chapters. In this summary, Chrysostom repeated the main points of Paul's arguments and showed what Paul would argue afterwards, that is a comparison between Faith and Law.¹⁹⁴

3.6 General structure of Paul's letters: Regarding now the general structure of Paul's letters, Chrysostom observes that all the letters conformed to a common type: in the preface of each letter, Paul mentions his name and his apostolic authority with the exception of the letter to the Hebrews.¹⁹⁵

Comparing Paul's custom of putting his name in the preface of his letters with the opposite one of Moses and the Evangelists, Chrysostom sees the cause of that dissimilarity as follows: Moses and the Evangelists were writing to people who were

¹⁹² PG 61, 11; E.I.E. 18, p. 12; Library of the Fathers, 9, p.1.

¹⁹³ For more details about chrysostom's use of metaphors and other rhetorical devices see the beginning of this chapter.

¹⁹⁴ PG 61, 647; E.I.E. 20, p.284; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.48.

¹⁹⁵ PG 60, 395; E.I.E. 16B, p. 318; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.6.

present, while Paul was writing from afar and in a form of a letter, and thus it was necessary for Paul to put his name. Although Chrysostom knew that the letter to the Hebrews was the only exception to this custom, he ascribes it to Paul without dealing with the problem of the real author of that letter.¹⁹⁶ It seems that Chrysostom does not acknowledge the views of other exegetes who had already called into question the authorship of the letter to the Hebrews. This is evident from the fact that while Chrysostom acknowledges that the letter to the Hebrews was the only letter which does not mention the name of the author, he makes his comments on this letter on the presupposition that Paul is the real author of it. Attempting to explain the cause of that exception, Chrysostom argues that Paul wisely avoided mentioning his name because the Jews abhorred Paul and if they heard his name, then they would not listen to him at all.¹⁹⁷

Thus, it is essential to make a parenthesis to investigate the identity of the author of the letter to the Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria, as Eusebius preserves in his *Ecclesiastical History*, acknowledges that the style of the letter to the Hebrews is different than that of the Pauline letters while it is similar to that of Acts. Thus, Clement supports the view that the letter to the Hebrews was written by Paul in Hebrew and translated later into Greek by Luke. Clement, like Chrysostom, suggests that Paul wisely avoids mentioning his name in the preface of the letter, otherwise the Jews would repel Paul.¹⁹⁸ Eusebius also preserves the information that Origen like Clement of Alexandria observes that the style of the letter to the Hebrews is different from that of the Pauline

¹⁹⁶ PG 60, 395; E.I.E. 16B, p. 318; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.6. PG 62, 503; E.I.E. 23, p. 120; Library of the Fathers, 14, p.1.

¹⁹⁷ PG 60, 395; E.I.E. 16B, p. 318; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.6.

¹⁹⁸ In his *Ecclesiastical History*, 6,14,2; PG 20, 549-552; Eusebius *The history of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (translated from the Greek with an introduction by G.A. Williamson; Harmondsworth, Middlesex England: Penguin, 1965), p.254.

letters, while the thoughts are similar. Origen, having no doubts about the authenticity of the letter, argues that the real author is unknown. He acknowledges the existence of certain traditions according to which the author is probably Clement of Rome or Luke, the author of Acts, but he thinks that the real author is unknown. Thus, Origen suggests that the thoughts of the letter to the Hebrews belong to Paul, but the diction and phraseology belong to one who 'remembered the apostolic teachings, and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his teacher.'¹⁹⁹

The generally held view in the fourth century is that the letter to the Hebrews was closely related with Paul even though opposite views did not completely disappear.²⁰⁰ Besides Chrysostom, many other fathers of the Church had accepted the letter to the Hebrews as Paul's.²⁰¹ While the identity of the author remains unclear, it seems correct to accept at least what Origen already suggested: the thoughts of the letter to the Hebrews belong to Paul, but the diction and phraseology belong to one who remembered Paul's teachings and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by Paul.

The main differences between the letter to the Hebrews and the Pauline letters can be summarized as follow: 1) The author of this letter does not mention his name in contrast to Paul's custom of mentioning the name of the sender of each letter and or the name of any other fellow sender. 2) The language and the style of the letter to the Hebrews differs radically from the language and the style of the Pauline letters. 3) The

¹⁹⁹ In his Ecclesiastical History, 6,25,11-14; PG 20,584-585; Eusebius *The history of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, p.266.

²⁰⁰ Clement of Alexandria suggests that it was written in Hebrew and translated into Greek by Luke; Origen acknowledges variant traditions which ascribe it to Clement of Rome or to Luke; and in the West Tertullian ascribes it to Barnabas and later on Luther ascribes it to Apollos. Panagiotis N. Trempeles, *Commentary on the Epistles of New Testament* (in three volumes; Athens: Saviour, 1979), v.3, pp.13-15; Karavidopoulos, *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp.235-236.

²⁰¹ Panagiotis Trempeles points out that this view was widely accepted in the East by Dionysius, Peter, Athanasius, Cyril the bishops of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Theologian, Basil and Cyril of Jerusalem, and in the West by Jerome and Augustine. Trempeles, P. N., *Commentary on the Epistles of New Testament*, v.3, p.14.

references to the Old Testament are always from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew text, and without the introductory phrases γέγραπται or ἡ γραφή λέγει, while in the Pauline letters the references are from the Hebrew text with the above introductory phrases. 4) Certain words which Paul uses frequently as Εὐαγγέλιον (Gospel), Ἰουδαῖος (Jew), Ἕλλην (Greek), περιτομή (circumcision), ἀκροβυστία (foreskin) are missing from this letter although the subject of the letter is the incomparable superiority of Christianity over Judaism.²⁰²

Closing the above parenthesis about the authorship of the letter to the Hebrews, we return to Chrysostom's observations on the general structure of Paul's letters, and particularly to his observing that all the letters conformed to a common type. Regarding Paul's custom of putting his name, Chrysostom observes that Paul, besides his own name, mentions the name of two or three of his companions in some of his letters. In the letter to the Galatians, however, Paul mentions besides his name all the brothers. Chrysostom observes that this was contrary to Paul's usual practice, explaining the reason of this exception: Paul associates with himself all the brethren in order to show that they agree with him.²⁰³ Besides the mention of Paul's name and apostolic authority, Chrysostom observes that all the letters close with a salutation written by Paul's own hand. Dealing with 2 Thess.3:17-18, Chrysostom argues that Paul's salutation works as a great token of the authenticity of each of his letters.²⁰⁴

Chrysostom, moreover, knew the only exception of that custom which exists in the letter to the Galatians: Paul dictated his other letters as, for instance, in the case of the letter to the Romans which was written by Tertius, but wrote the letter to the Galatians,

²⁰² Karavidopoulos, I, *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp.233-234.

²⁰³ PG 61, 616; E.I.E. 20, p. 174; *Library of the Fathers*, 12, pp.6-7.

²⁰⁴ PG 62, 496; E.I.E. 23, p. 100; *Library of the Fathers*, 13, p.508.

himself. Trying, nevertheless, to emphasize the cause which compelled Paul to write the letter to the Galatians with his own hand, and Paul's purpose to refute the widespread slander that Paul preached circumcision elsewhere, but he pretended to the Galatians that he did not preach circumcision, Chrysostom misinterprets the meaning of the word *πηλικοίς*.²⁰⁵ The word *πηλικοίς* does not mean the 'misshapen appearance' but the size of the letters, as Theodore of Mopsuestia correctly observes.²⁰⁶

It seems that in an effort to show that the spread of the Gospel was not due to the abilities or the education of the preacher, but was due to the grace of the Holy Spirit, Chrysostom intentionally underrates Paul's education. He also repeats the same view in his commentary on the letter to the Corinthians. In an effort again to show that the grace of God and not the preacher was the power of the Gospel's spread, Chrysostom concludes with a comparison between Paul and Plato.²⁰⁷

Nevertheless, Chrysostom does not seem to ignore Paul's studies under Gamaliel, because he mentions it in a few cases,²⁰⁸ but without taking it into account. Frederic Henry Chase, dealing with Chrysostom's description of Paul as a petty tradesman²⁰⁹ argues that 'such language is partly due to the preacher's desire to give point to rhetorical contrasts, partly to his remarkable ignorance of Jewish customs.' Although, as Chase observes, Chrysostom notices that Paul on two occasions quotes from heathen poets and insists on his deep knowledge of the Jewish Law, Chrysostom 'overlooks the great distance in culture and social position between Saul of Tarsus and the Lord's

²⁰⁵ PG 61, 678; E.I.E. 20, p. 398; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.93-94.

²⁰⁶ PG 66, 912; Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopcuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, 1, p.107.

²⁰⁷ PG 61, 27; E.I.E. 18, p.74; Library of the Fathers, 9, pp.30-31.

²⁰⁸ PG 63, 9; E.I.E. 24, p.200; PG 62, 512, 513, 565; E.I.E. 23, p.166, 168, 332; PG 61,45; E.I.E. 18, p.142.

²⁰⁹ PG 63, 15; E.I.E. 24, p.218.

personal followers.²¹⁰

Regarding the general structure of Paul's letters, and particularly their conformation to a common type, Chrysostom also observes that all the letters are divided into a doctrinal and a moral part. In Gal.5:13, however, there is an exception: while Paul already has entered the moral part of the letter, he unites it with the doctrinal part.²¹¹

3.7 Motive and Purpose of Paul: Chrysostom's feelings about Paul are an important factor which determined his interpretation of Paul's letters. He felt Paul alive, present to his sight and conversing with him. He thought that he heard Paul's voice, which was so dear to him. Paul's letters were read within the Church's liturgies two or three times per week, and these produced strong feelings in Chrysostom. For Chrysostom, Paul was not an unknown writer. Thus, at the beginning of the commentary on the letter to the Romans, Chrysostom describes his feelings about Paul. Desiring to inspire his congregation to study Paul's letters, and scripture in general, Chrysostom stresses that he is 'grieved and pained' because his congregation do not know Paul, as much as they ought to know him. He asserts that anything he knew was not because of his own intelligence, but because of his continual communication with Paul. Thus for Chrysostom the study of Paul's writings was equal to personal communication with Paul himself.²¹²

Chrysostom's feelings about Paul are closely related with his efforts to identify Paul's purpose and deeper mind in his interpretative sermons on Paul's letters. He observes that Paul always wrote his letters with some particular purpose. On his first

²¹⁰ Chase, *Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, p.152.

²¹¹ PG 61, 669; E.I.E. 20, p.366; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.80.

²¹² PG 60, 391; E.I.E. 16B, pp. 304-306; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.1.

sermon on Romans, for instance, Chrysostom compares the particular purpose which led Paul to write to the Corinthians and the Galatians. Then he tries to find the particular cause which led Paul to write the letter to the Romans.²¹³ Likewise, in his commentary on Galatians, Chrysostom twice stresses the fact that the exordium and the whole letter is 'full of vehement and lofty spirit.' Chrysostom did not restrict himself only to identifying Paul's purpose, but he proceeded to its analysis. After asserting that the whole letter is full of vehemence, he understands it as a distinctive mark of a capable and expert teacher. He argues that Paul varied his discourse according to the needs of his disciples as his master Jesus Christ already had done, quoting four passages from the Gospels where Christ at one time spoke mildly, at another time severely and at another rebukingly. Thus, stressing that Paul is walking here in the steps of Christ, Chrysostom tries to justify the vehement spirit of the letter as a needed pedagogical approach to confront the situation within Galatia.²¹⁴

In the same context, Chrysostom puts besides the argument that the vehemence of the letter is a distinctive mark of a capable and expert teacher, the particular purpose which led Paul to write this letter to the Galatians. Chrysostom finds it necessary to search for that particular purpose of the letter, excluding the possibility that Paul would be exasperated by an unimportant cause. Chrysostom's respect for Paul guides him to search for other possibilities.²¹⁵

It is worth noting that Chrysostom, searching for the particular purpose of the letter to the Galatians, turns to the investigation of the historical background of this letter. Chrysostom's interest in finding out the historical background of Galatians does

²¹³ PG 60, 394; E.I.E. 16B, p. 314; Library of the Fathers, 8, p.4.

²¹⁴ PG 61, 611-612; E.I.E. 20, pp. 160-162; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.1.

²¹⁵ PG 61, 612; E.I.E. 20, p. 162; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.2.

not simply derive from the Antiochene sensibility in searching for the historical background of any scriptural text or event that is interpreted. The historical background of Galatians is a very important issue for Chrysostom, because the situation of Antioch in Chrysostom's times was very similar to that of first-century Galatia.²¹⁶ Chrysostom is at pains to confront the 'serious movement toward Judaism among his Christian flock,'²¹⁷ which existed in fourth-century Antioch. Thus, underlining the similarity between the situation in Antioch in his times with that of first-century Galatia gives to Chrysostom the ability to convince his congregation.

Thus, from the beginning of his commentary on Galatians, Chrysostom argues twice that not only the exordium but also the whole epistle is 'full of a vehement and lofty spirit' and 'breathes an indignant spirit.'²¹⁸ Chrysostom, assuming that Paul's vehemence is not in accord with Paul's character, concludes that Paul's reaction indicates the seriousness of the situation which, as he says, 'must be explained.' As he points out, some Jewish Christians came to the Galatians and preached circumcision, Sabbaths and newmoons, which Paul was trying to abolish.²¹⁹

The investigation of the historical background of the letter to the Galatians, however, is not the only case where Chrysostom finds it necessary to search for the particular purpose of Paul. Chrysostom's policy to search for the particular purpose of Paul's letters and understand his deeper mind forms an important rule throughout his system of interpretation. It was very important, for Chrysostom, to understand the mind of Paul, otherwise, as he argues, the interpreter will fall into wrong conclusions.

²¹⁶ For a detail documentation of that similarity see my introductory chapter 'Paul and the Law: An Introduction.'

²¹⁷ See the conclusion of my introductory chapter 'Paul and the Law: An Introduction' in p.53.

²¹⁸ PG 61, 611-612; E.Π.E. 20, pp.160-162; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.1-2.

²¹⁹ PG 61, 612-613; E.Π.E. 20, p. 162; Library of the Fathers. 12, p.2.

In general terms this rule could be called an impressive rule, but in practice it could equally lead either to a correct understanding or to a misrepresentation of ambiguous scriptural passages. Thus, it seems essential to investigate how Chrysostom applies his own rule to ascertain if it helps him with his system of interpretation. His interpretation of Gal.1:17 is a good case to check the implications of the application of his rule.

Chrysostom argues that Paul's statement in Gal.1:17 'nakedly considered' could be misinterpreted as an expression of an arrogant spirit not proper to Paul's apostolic office. He decisively excludes, however, the possibility that Paul would fall into such an error, because, as he argues, Paul himself had been taught and had admonished others not to be arrogant. In order to support his view, Chrysostom quotes three passages from scripture, two from the Old Testament (from Prov.26:12 and Is. 5:21) and one from the New Testament (from Rom.12:16).²²⁰ The last of the three quotations is not just from the New Testament but from Paul's own writings.

What is missing for a correct understanding of Paul's statement is the cause for which Paul was forced to make that statement. Searching for this cause, Chrysostom forms here his important rule of biblical interpretation: 'it is not the right course to weigh the mere words, nor examine the language by itself, as many errors will be the consequence, but to attend to the intention of the writer.' He insists that a commentator could be led into wrong conclusions if he does not apply this rule.²²¹

It is worth examining how Chrysostom himself applies his rule interpreting Paul's intention in Gal. 1:17. As he argues, Paul's intention was not to disparage the rest of the Apostles, nor to extol himself, but to guard the integrity of the Gospel. The Gospel was threatened by Paul's opponents who undermined Paul's apostolic authority because he

²²⁰ These passages show Chrysostom's extensive knowledge of scripture and his skill in introducing fitting quotations from all parts of scripture, a fact which astonishes every one who studies Chrysostom's works.

²²¹ PG 61, 628-629; E.P.E. 20, p.216; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.22.

forbade 'the Judaizing heresy.' Chrysostom, observing that Paul does not exclude himself from the curse of Gal. 1:8 and that he does not speak of his successes nor of whom or of how many he instructed when he went to Arabia, comes to the conclusion that Paul's motive is obviously not ambition.²²²

Thus, it seems correct to conclude that Chrysostom rejects the interpretation of scripture word by word, which was a distinctive mark of the School of Alexandria, and insists on identifying Paul's intentions. When he finds passages leading to negative conclusions, contrary to the creed of the Church, he applies his rule searching for the hidden intention of the writer. For him the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore for him it is infallible.

3.8 The use of *reductio ad absurdum* and irony: These two literary figures were commonly used by Paul and Chrysostom.

The use of *reductio ad absurdum* εις ἄτοπον ἀπαγωγή: By this method, a commentator leads his argument to an absurdity. Paul, as well as Chrysostom, used this method quite often. Chrysostom used this method in his commentary to the Galatians, desiring to stress that if faith in Christ is weak to justify, then one should come to the conclusion that Christ is the cause of our condemnation. Afterwards he underlined how absurd it was to consider something like this. He also points out that Paul does not say that the Law is evil but weak. Chrysostom espouses Paul's argument and repeatedly insists on this argument in order to impress it upon his congregation.²²³

Chrysostom intentionally insists on showing that it was absurd to consider Christ responsible for sin, just as the 'Judaizers' would probably say. For him, Christ was not

²²² PG 61, 629, 630-631; E.I.E. 20, pp. 218, 222, 224; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.22-23, 24-25.

²²³ PG 61, 643; E.I.E. 20, pp.266-268; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.41-42.

responsible for sin; rather he was the cause of our justification. The method of εἰς ἄτοπον ἀπαγωγή (reductio ad absurdum) becomes a powerful tool at Chrysostom's hands, which he used with great expertise.²²⁴

Concluding his comments on the second chapter of Galatians, Chrysostom applies for the third time the method of εἰς ἄτοπον ἀπαγωγή (reductio ad absurdum). Calling Christ's death a mystery so awful and ineffable, surpassing human reason, Chrysostom stresses that it proves the inability of the Law to justify us. Paul, as Chrysostom says, reflects on the utter absurdity of regarding Christ's death as done in vain, calling in Gal.3:1 the Galatians foolish.²²⁵

The use of Irony: Chrysostom located the use of this method within Paul's writings and repeated it in his own distinctive way, magnifying the impression of Paul's view. Dealing, for instance, with I Cor.4:8-10, Chrysostom argues that the present life is a period of persecution and slander for the apostles; and that the other Christians should expect the same situation and not glories or honours. How it could be possible to think, he argues, that the disciples have already reigned, but their teachers, the apostles, had not tasted it yet; while they must first reign by right. Thus, Chrysostom concludes that Paul speaks to the Corinthians ironically, in order to correct them.²²⁶

Thus, Chrysostom searches for the reason that caused Paul's irony. Paul, he points out, conducts his statement in a 'more striking and less offensive' way. Identifying Paul's intention, he argues that if Paul does not speak ironically, then he should say that the Corinthians were mistaken. They had to seem fools in the world and live with sorrows

²²⁴ PG 61, 644; E.II.E. 20, pp.270-272; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.43.

²²⁵ PG 61, 648; E.II.E. 20, pp.282-284; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.47-48.

²²⁶ PG 61, 107; E.II.E. 18, p.354; Library of the Fathers, 9, p.168.

and contempt like the apostles' life. However, Paul does not follow this, as he observes, since the Corinthians would become more impudent.²²⁷

3.9 Conclusions: Chrysostom's education included rhetoric under Libanius and philosophy under Andragathius.²²⁸ His ability to use the rhetorical devices with dexterity, made him known to posterity as Chrysostom, the Golden-mouth. Thus, every reader of Chrysostom's writings must be careful in identifying what Chrysostom really says beyond the veil of the rhetorical devices he uses.

Regarding Chrysostom's philosophical and spiritual formation, it is worth noting that he rejects the views held by the Anomeans that man is able to have knowledge of God as God has knowledge of Himself, stressing that only the Son and the Holy Spirit know precisely the essence of God. Distinguishing the οὐσία (essence, substance) from the ἐνέργειαι (energies) of God, he stresses that whereas the essence of God is completely incomprehensible to human beings, the energies of God are comprehensible. Chrysostom's point, that 'we have now only the hundredth or the thousandth of the complete knowledge,' reminds us of Plato's basic idea, in his *myth of the Cave*, that 'we know only shadows of reality and shadows of themselves.' It seems correct to say that Chrysostom borrows Plato's terminology, concluding, however, to different thoughts. Throughout his writings, Chrysostom does not seem to espouse any of Plato's views, as for instance, that knowledge is recollection of concepts, which persons had them previously, or that knowledge is innate and it must be evoked by the teacher.

Christ, in Chrysostom, is of the same essence as the Father and had a human body

²²⁷ PG 61, 107-108; E.I.E. 18, p.356; Library of the Fathers, 9, p.169.

²²⁸ Baur support the view, that 'Chrysostom attended no other schools but those of Antioch,' arguing that the stories of George Alexandrinus, a later Byzantine hagiographer, that Chrysostom had been a student at Athens later in his life 'are not true'. Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time, vol.1 Antioch*, pp.25-26.

identical with ours but not sinful. He stresses ‘the complete and perfect divinity of Christ against the Arians, and the complete and perfect humanity against the Apollinarians.’²²⁹ Chrysostom accepts a ‘union’ and not a ‘mixture’ of the two natures, insisting that there is but one Christ.

Regarding Mariology and original sin, Chrysostom never uses the title Θεοτόκος ‘Theotokos’ for the Virgin Mary, neither the titles Χριστοτόκος ‘Christotokos,’ which was used by the Antiochenes, nor the title Ἀνθρωποτόκος ‘Anthropotokos,’ which was used by his teacher, Theodore of Tarsus. As to original sin, Chrysostom repeatedly stresses that the consequences or penalties of the original sin affect not only our first parents, but also their descendants. He rejects, nevertheless, the inheritance of the original sin, because, as he argues, it would abolish the concept of the αὐτεξούσιον ‘free will’ of human beings.

Chrysostom founds his confidence in human moral perfectibility on the concept of the αὐτεξούσιον ‘free will.’²³⁰ As he points out, human beings are not good or bad by nature, but become good or bad by their own free will and volition. Neither God’s acts, nor His foreknowledge, nor the devil violate the free will of human beings. For Chrysostom, only a really free person could become virtuous. Moral perfection is the combination of morals and doctrine, and thus, in Chrysostom, virtue is the precise observance of the Faith’s truths and the proper style of life.

Chrysostom, in formulating his view on moral perfectibility, uses a terminology which is commonplace to the Stoic philosophy. Chrysostom’s expression that only a really free person could become virtuous echoes the Stoic view that it is only the wise man who is truly free, and that the goal of life is virtue. It seems that Chrysostom

²²⁹ Quasten, *Patrology* vol. III, p.475

²³⁰ PG 53,166, E.II.E. 2, p.570; PG 53,132, E.II.E. 2, p.432; PG 63,509, E.II.E. 33, p.320; PG 56,155, E.II.E. 8A, p.476; PG 58,575-576, E.II.E. 11, pp.575-576; Sources Chretiennes v.50,259, E.II.E. 30, p.514.

borrowes the Stoic terminology, concluding, however, to different thoughts. Throughout his writings, Chrysostom does not seem to espouse any of the Stoic views, for instance, that virtue is a matter of making the right judgments, or that a person is either 'wise or foolish, virtuous or nonvirtuous' and 'either has or does not have the capacity to make right judgments.' For Chrysostom, a person is able to come to moral perfection, whereas the Stoics admitted that 'no one truly wise ever actually existed,' presenting the wise person as an ideal.

Thus, it seems correct to say that in Chrysostom's writings 'we catch echoes of the great Stoic commonplaces, which he had inherited from his upbringing. As he expounds them, however, they are almost always interwoven with distinctively Christian themes,'²³¹ and that 'whatever the similarities in Christian and Stoic ethical thought, these instructions are placed in such a fundamentally different worldview as to give them different significance,'²³² and thus, 'conscious borrowings are probably the exception rather than the rule.'²³³

Regarding Chrysostom's extensive knowledge of scripture, it seems that scripture in Chrysostom's hand is a powerful tool. Every reader of his writings is astonished by his extensive knowledge of scripture, his excellent memory in quoting long passages of scripture and his skill in introducing synonymous passages and fitting quotations from all parts of scripture. Chrysostom strongly expresses his great respects and reverence for scripture, supporting its inspired character and extending it to mere words. He is a defender of verbal inspiration of scripture. Thus, repeatedly he exhorts his audience to the necessity of studying the scripture.

²³¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 267.

²³² Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p.346.

²³³ Klauck *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, p.427.

The investigation of Chrysostom's usage of allegory and typology in his writings points to the view that Chrysostom does not rigidly exclude allegory from his exegesis but he usually restricts himself to typology. Chrysostom, applying in his commentary on Isaiah the principles that 'when scripture allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the allegory,' and in his treatment to the Lord's parables that we must not press the interpretation of the parables to every detail of expression, wants to reduce to the bare minimum the usage of allegory, without leaving any limits to the interpreter's imagination to come to arbitrary conclusions. Thus, it seems correct to conclude that the opposition between the school of Antioch and the school of Alexandria regarding their methods of interpretation must be reconsidered. In Chrysostom's writings there is no proof to indicate the existence of any kind of contrast.²³⁴

Regarding the context of Paul's letters, Chrysostom opens his introductory sermon to each of Paul's letters with a brief introduction. In these introductions he deals with several issues related to the further understanding of the letter on which he is going to comment. In his brief introduction to the letter to the Romans, Chrysostom finds it necessary to deal with the chronology of Paul's letters, arguing that this issue contributes no little to the further understanding of the letter to the Romans. In this point, Chrysostom introduces 'condescension' as a principle of interpretation capable of solving contradictory passages from scripture.

Chrysostom is interested to observe in detail issues regarding the general structure of Paul's letters. Thus, he acknowledges Paul's custom of mentioning his name and apostolic authority, except in the letter to the Hebrews. Chrysostom ascribes it to Paul without any comments on the different style of the letter to the Hebrews in regard to rest of the Pauline letters. There is no indication that Chrysostom acknowledges the opposite

²³⁴ More arguments to support this view, besides the case of Chrysostom, can be found in pp. 93-94.

views held by Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian who on the basis of various traditions ascribe it to other persons.²³⁵

Regarding Paul's custom of mentioning his name and apostolic authority, Chrysostom acknowledges the letter to the Galatians as the only exception, where Paul mentions besides his own name all the brothers. He also observes that Paul closes his letters with a salutation, which is, in Chrysostom's eyes, a great token of the authenticity of each letter. The only exception is the letter to the Galatians which is written by Paul's own hand. Chrysostom, however, misinterprets the word *πηλίκους*,²³⁶ intentionally underrating Paul's education.

Chrysostom insists on searching for Paul's purpose and deeper mind, arguing that it is very important to understand the mind of Paul otherwise the interpreter will fall into wrong conclusions. Thus, Chrysostom forms another principle of interpretation, stressing that 'it is not the right course to weigh the mere words, not examine the language by itself, as many errors will be the consequence, but to attend to the intention of the writer.'²³⁷

Chrysostom interrupts his analysis of a scriptural passage when he finds arguments against the heretics. The interpretation of scripture had the priority to provide arguments to confront the christological controversies, and Chrysostom like all his contemporaries is not an exception. Although only a few of his writings deal with doctrinal issues, throughout his writings Chrysostom in a parenthesis deals with these issues. He accuses the heretics that they are 'wilfully deaf to all sublimer' doctrines for they select and

²³⁵ It seems correct to accept Origen's suggestion that the thoughts of the letter to the Hebrews belongs to Paul, but the diction and phraseology belongs to one who remembered Paul's teachings and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by Paul. Cf., pp.137-139.

²³⁶ Theodore correctly observes that the word *πηλίκους* means the size of the letters and not the misshapen appearance of the letters. Cf., p.140.

²³⁷ Chrysostom's interpretation of Gal.1:17 shows how he himself applies this principle of interpretation. Cf., pp.144-145.

interpret certain passages isolating them from the whole scripture.²³⁸

Finally Chrysostom's interest in finding out the historical background of Galatians does not simply derive from the Antiochene sensibility in searching for the historical background of any scriptural text or event is interpreted. The fact that the situation of Antioch in Chrysostom's times was very similar to that of first-century Galatia makes the search for the historical background of Galatia a very important issue for Chrysostom. The investigation, however, of the historical background of Galatians will be concluded within the next part of my thesis, where I will make an effort to clarify Paul's position towards the Law on the basis of the results of modern scholarship in connection with Chrysostom's own understanding of this crucial issue.

Chrysostom's ability to use the rhetorical devices with dexterity, his extensive knowledge of scripture, his skills in introducing fitting quotations from scripture and his constant interest in searching for the literal historical meaning of each quotation he deals with, make him a very good reader of Paul. In part three, I will also try to show that Chrysostom is not only a good reader of Paul but also one who provides a coherent line of thought and makes sense of Paul's views as a whole.

²³⁸ Cf., p.119.

‘PAUL AND THE LAW’
IN
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

PART 3

- 4 JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH**
- 5 THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE LAW**
- 6 ANTI-SEMITISM OR ANTI-JUDAISM?**

4

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

4.1 The Need for a ‘New Direction:’ As has been correctly pointed out by many scholars, although the question of ‘Paul and the Law’ has been discussed in great detail, there are still some questions which need more convincing answers.¹ In spite of the enormous literature which has been produced, however, scholars ‘have thus far reached no consensus but have only succeeded in producing a wide variety of divergent opinions,’² which not only gave unsatisfactory answers, but also produced greater confusion. The evaluation of the results on Paul and the Law varies considerably, intensifying this confusion.

Thus, before dealing once again with the crucial issue of Paul’s position towards the Law, it is essential to look for a new direction. Starting my research from the hypothesis that the situation which Paul confronted in first-century Galatia was possibly not an isolated event, I came to the view that Early Christianity confronted in its history similar circumstances for many centuries. Particularly I believe that I have shown that four centuries afterwards John Chrysostom in Antioch confronted a similar situation. Thus, I proposed to study the situation that Chrysostom confronted in fourth-century

¹ For more details see pp.2-4 in my Introduction.

² Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, p.11.

Antioch which may throw some light upon Paul's position towards the Law.³

The main focus of my thesis is not to quote the views held by modern scholars, accepting some of them and rejecting others,⁴ but rather to investigate Chrysostom's own understanding of Paul's position towards the Law. The results of this investigation will help us to evaluate the views held by modern scholarship by comparing them with Chrysostom's own understanding of Paul's views of the Law. My expectation, in so doing, is not to increase the confusion which exists because of the wide variety of divergent opinions on the subject, but rather to throw some light and, at least, to open a new direction for other scholars to explore.⁵

For the interest of my thesis, I will proceed to the analysis of Paul's views of the Law as they are expressed mainly in Galatians⁶ and secondly in Romans. Galatians is important in order to see how Paul formulates his theology toward the Law, especially in the polemical climax of the letter. Romans interests us in order to check whether Paul retains his views or proceeds to change or develop them.

³ In order to substantiate my proposal I investigated in separate steps the situation of first century Galatia, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in general and the situation of fourth-century Antioch. Summarizing the results of my research I have proved, in my first chapter '*Paul and the Law: An Introduction*,' that Paul confronted in Galatia some Jewish Christians who forced the Galatians to observe circumcision and other Jewish customs. In regard to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, it has been confirmed that Jews were actively involved in proselytizing throughout the Roman Empire and especially in the East; this lasted from the beginnings of Christianity and continued up to the fourth century. From the third part of my research, which investigated the situation in fourth-century Antioch, I have proposed that Chrysostom confronted in Antioch a serious movement toward Judaism among the Christians of Antioch. For the evidence that led me to these conclusions see my introductory chapter.

⁴ Such a thing, I think, was already done by many scholars and thus my work would be seen as yet another repetition of what was already been said, increasing the confusion instead of decreasing it.

⁵ The fact that John Chrysostom is not well known to modern scholars and, or at least, his writings were not taken into account by modern scholars in understanding Paul's position towards the Law, gives to my thesis, indeed, a new direction.

⁶ Besides his homilies on Galatians, Chrysostom also deals with the incident of Antioch with Peter (in Gal.2:11) in a separate homily on Paul's saying 'Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε Πέτρος εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην. The original text can be found in PG 51,371-388, under the Latin title: 'In illud: In faciem ei restiti,' and in E.P.E. 27, pp.514-568. It seems that there is no English translation of this homily. The extent Chrysostom gives to this incident indicates its significance to the correct understanding of Paul's views toward the Law.

The correct understanding of the entire letter to the Galatians and Paul's position towards the Law obviously depends on the way one reads Paul's statement in Gal.2:15-21; 3:15-29. Thus, it is essential at this stage to proceed with the analysis of Gal.2:15-21.

In Gal.2:15-21 Paul explicitly states that 'a person is justified not by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ,' arguing that justification does not 'come through the Law' otherwise 'Christ died for nothing.' Paul's conviction that justification is by faith in Christ and not by the observance of the Law is the main point of Galatians, whereas the entire letter to the Galatians is Paul's arguments in support of his thesis that justification is by faith in Christ.⁷

Thus, the focus of my research is to find out how Chrysostom reads Gal.2:15-21, what answers he proposes to the questions which spring up from the analysis of this passage, and at the end what Chrysostom would contribute to modern scholarship in regard to a better understanding of Paul and the views he held toward the Law.

4.2 The Meaning of νόμος and ἔργα νόμου: Before we proceed, however, to the analysis of Paul's conviction that no one can be justified by the works of the Law, it is essential to clarify the meaning of Paul's expressions νόμος and ἔργα νόμου.⁸

While, among modern scholars, the debate on Paul's view of *what the Law was meant to do* and *what it cannot do* is endless, as Westerholm points out, yet 'little attention has been paid to what Paul meant by the Law.'⁹ Heikki Räisänen argues that

⁷ Besides Gal.2:15-21, the thesis that justification 'is not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ' is repeated twice in Gal.3:11; 5:4 and also appears in Rom.1:17; 3:20-22,28; 5:1.

⁸ Paul uses the expression 'works of the Law' six times in Galatians (three times in verse 2:16, and three times in chapter 3: 2, 5, 10), and three times in Romans (in 2:15, in 3:20 and in 3:28).

⁹ Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1988), p.105.

Paul never defines what he means by this term, presupposing that the readers of his letters understand ‘what he is talking about.’¹⁰ Thus, what meaning Paul gives to the terms νόμος and ἔργα νόμου needs to be defined. One may ask, rendering Paul’s own words of Rom.3:27, ‘by what Law?’ (διὰ ποίου νόμου;) one can be justified.

Räsänen points out that in Paul the term νόμος seems to be identical with the term Torah, and thus it ‘refers to the whole of Israel’s sacred tradition, with special emphasis on its Mosaic centre.’ Räsänen strongly rejects the idea that Paul ‘makes an explicit distinction’ between the moral and the ritual part of the Law.¹¹

Westerholm also rejects the view held in recent studies that the term νόμος sometimes means ‘not the Old Testament Law itself, but its perversion, *legalism*,’ and thus Paul’s polemic is directed ‘against this “legalistic” misunderstanding of God’s Law.’ Such a reading, as Westerholm insists, ‘not only misrepresents Judaism, but also distorts Paul’s arguments as to its shortcomings and renders inaccessible both his doctrine of justification by faith and his understanding of Christian ethics.’ For Westerholm, the error of the scholars who held this view ‘begins already with a failure to define adequately what Paul means by the Law and its works.’¹²

The Hebrew term *Torah* and the Greek term *nomos* denote the first part of the sacred scriptures, the Pentateuch, and Paul most frequently uses the term *nomos* in this sense as well. Paul also uses this term in a narrower sense of a particular collection of divine requirements. As Westerholm points out, ‘the Law which can be “kept,” “done,” “fulfilled” or “transgressed” is clearly the legal parts of the Pentateuch.’¹³ Thus, the

¹⁰ Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.16.

¹¹ Ibid., pp.16, 25, 199.

¹² Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.105-106.

¹³ Ibid., pp.106, 108, 110-111.

expression 'works of the Law' means 'the deeds demanded by the Sinaitic Law code.'¹⁴

J. Louis Martyn argues that the expression 'works of the Law' refers 'simply to observance of God's Law,' pointing to other parallels in the Septuagint, in Jewish traditions and in Jewish Christian traditions.¹⁵

McKnight argues that when Paul says one 'is not justified by observing the Law,' he does not mean 'merit-seeking works done in order to gain favor with God,' but that he is referring to the behaviour of one who is convinced that he has to live 'according to the Law of Moses' as a necessary step for acceptance by God.¹⁶

It remains to find out how Chrysostom understands Paul's usage of *nomos*. Wondering for what reason Paul says in Rom. 3:19 that 'we know that whatever the Law says' instead of 'whatever the prophet says,' Chrysostom proposes that Paul uses it to refer to the whole of the Old Testament as the Law.¹⁷ He also acknowledges that Paul sometimes calls faith a Law, as for instance in Rom.3:27. Asking then, what is the meaning of the expression 'Law of faith,' Chrysostom concludes that it means 'being saved by grace.'¹⁸ Chrysostom also observes that Paul, elsewhere, even used to call sin

¹⁴ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.121.

¹⁵ From the Septuagint, Martyn quotes Exodus 18:20, where *to teach one God's Law* is equal to *make known the way in which one must walk and to make known the works they must do*. From the Dead Sea Scrolls, he quotes 1QS 5:21 (*Rule of the Community*), CD13:11 (*Covenant of Damascus*), where the expression 'works of the Law' is used in Hebrew 'with precisely the same meaning.' J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible, v.33A; New York, London:Doubleday, 1997), p.261.

¹⁶ Paul is against this kind of works and not against 'good works' in general. Paul, as McKnight points out, is not against 'good works' as 'an adequate description of a Christian's moral life,' for he describes 'good works,' in Gal. 5:22-23, as the 'fruit of the Spirit.' Scot McKnight, *Galatians: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), pp. 119-121.

¹⁷ Chrysostom says: ὅτι τὴν Παλαιὰν πᾶσαν νόμον καλεῖν εἴωθεν ὁ Παῦλος. In support of his view, Chrysostom argues that Paul in Gal.4:21-22 after addressing the question 'will you not listen to the Law?' he also adds a quotation from Genesis with the formula 'it is written that.' In the context of Rom.3:13-19, he also observes that Paul ἐνταῦθα τοὺς ψαλμοὺς νόμον ἐκάλεσεν. PG 60,441; E.P.E. 16B, p.508.

¹⁸ PG 60,446; E.P.E. 16B, pp.524-526.

a Law, or to speak of the 'Law of my mind,' which is the 'Law of nature.' Chrysostom suggests that Paul here calls sin a Law because of the 'strict obedience yielded to it by those who comply with sin,' and because of the 'extreme obsequiousness of their subjects' to sin. As he points out, it is the same usage as when it is given the name of master to Mammon (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13), and of god to the belly (Phil. 3:19).¹⁹

Chrysostom's understanding, however, of Paul's usage of *nomos* is explicitly expressed on his comments on Rom. 7:12, where he strongly rejects the view that *nomos* here is not the 'Law of Moses' but the 'Law of nature' or the 'commandment given in Paradise.' Although Chrysostom does not reveal the identity of the persons who held this view, he argues that if Rom. 7:9-12 were said about the 'Law of nature,' then we would be found to be without the natural Law. Paul's expression in v.9 that 'I was once alive apart from the Law,' Chrysostom suggests, does not fit with this view because 'neither Adam, nor anybody else, can be shown ever to have lived without the Law of nature.' Against the view that these verses are said about 'the commandment in Paradise,' Chrysostom points out that it does not appear that Paul or any other writer 'has ever called the commandment in Paradise a Law at all.'²⁰

Chrysostom insists that, in general, Paul's object everywhere is to annul the Law of Moses for the very reason that 'it was through a fear and a horror of this Law that the Jews obstinately opposed grace.'²¹ In short, at least for Chrysostom, it is very clear that in every instance in which Paul attacks the Law, this Law is the Law of Moses and not a part of it or anything else. In Chrysostom there is not even a hint that this Law of

¹⁹ PG 60,511; E.P.E. 17, p.140.

²⁰ PG 60,511; E.P.E. 17, p.140.

²¹ Καὶ μὴν πανταχοῦ σκοπὸς τῷ Παύλῳ τοῦτον ἀναπαῦσαι τὸν νόμον, πρὸς δὲ ἐκείνους οὐδὲνα λόγον ἔχει· καὶ μάλα εἰκότως· τοῦτον γὰρ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι δεδοικότες καὶ φρίττοντες, ἐφιλονείκουν τῇ χάριτι. PG 60,511; E.P.E. 17, p.140.

Moses could be limited to its moral or ceremonial part. The view, then, held by modern scholars, that in Paul the term νόμος means the Law of Moses finds further support in Chrysostom's own understanding of it.

Having defined what Paul means by the terms νόμος and ἔργα νόμου, we proceed now to the analysis of Paul's thesis that justification is by faith and not by observance of the Law.

4.3 Chrysostom's Reading of Galatians 2:15-21: Paul's conviction, in Gal.2:16, that no one can be justified by the means of the Law does not leave any scope for argument because, as Stephen Westerholm points out, it is expressed by Paul 'too frequently and too explicitly.' What, however, is not so readily apparent is the reason why Paul finds 'the righteousness of the Law inadequate.' Modern scholars have suggested a diverse range of explanations regarding the reason that led Paul to this conviction; this produces most of the ambiguity. Westerholm observes that modern scholars tend in general 'towards advocating one of the possibilities while downplaying or excluding the others.' Describing the state of the debate, he concludes that 'it remains unsettled whether Paul saw the righteousness of the Law as something good, bad or indifferent.'²²

The importance of Gal.2:15-21 is generally acknowledged by modern scholars. Hans Dieter Betz argues that Paul's statement in Gal.2:16 is 'a summary of his doctrine of justification by faith,' which is thoroughly Pauline.²³ J. Louis Martyn also suggests that Gal.2:16 is one of the 'most tightly concentrated theological statements in all of Paul's

²² Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.70.

²³ Betz, *Galatians*, p.114.

letters' and also the earliest reference by Paul to the issue of justification.²⁴

In Gal.2:15-21, Paul supports the view that 'a person is justified not by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ,' claiming that this piece of knowledge is shared by all Jewish Christians, particularly by Paul and Peter in Antioch and by Paul and his opponents in Galatia. Betz suggests that this claim held by Paul 'should be taken seriously.'²⁵ The first part of Paul's statement (verses 15-16) seems to be directed against Peter and his opponents, while the second part (verses 17-21) seems to be Paul's response to his opponents.²⁶

For the interest of my research, it is essential to proceed to Chrysostom's reading of Gal. 2:15-21, to find out how he understands Paul's thesis that justification is by faith in Christ and not by the observance of the Law, and what reason he finds behind Paul's rejection of the Law.²⁷

Two general points should be underlined, in order to clarify Chrysostom's reading of Gal.2:15-21. The first one refers to the place given to this passage within the entire letter to the Galatians and the second one to whether this passage is the beginning of a new theological argument or is the continuation of the incident of Antioch.

In regard to the first point, according to Chrysostom, the entire letter to the Galatians is written to support Paul's conviction that justification is by faith in Christ. On

²⁴ Martyn, *Galatians*, p.263.

²⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, p.114.

²⁶ Martyn, *Galatians*, pp.246-247. Scot McKnight considers verses 15-21 as a 'theological reflection' of the incident which took place at Antioch and as a 'theological summary' of what Paul told to Peter at that incident. McKnight also supports the view that Peter 'failed to realize the comprehensiveness and sufficiency of the new covenant in Christ.' McKnight, *Galatians*, pp.115, 117.

²⁷ The focus of this section is on Chrysostom's understanding of Gal.2:15-21. The views held by modern scholars can be found below in this chapter, in pp.201-203 and 205-209, where I discuss two questions that arise from Paul's thesis that justification is by faith: *who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify?* and *why the works of the Law cannot justify?*

the one side, he understands that Paul's mention of the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem (Gal.2:1-10), and in particular the case of Titus, who was not compelled to be circumcised during that Conference (Gal.2:3), and the incident in Antioch with Peter (Gal.2:11-14) play a determinative role in formulating Paul's position towards the Law. On the other side, he understands that the Galatians' own experience (Gal.3:1-5), the case of Abraham and in particular the way Abraham was justified (Gal.3:6-9), God's promises to the Patriarch and the identity of his true descendants who will inherit them (Gal.3:15-18) are in fact Paul's arguments in support of his thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law.²⁸

In regard to the debate among modern scholars as to whether Gal.2:15-21 is the beginning of Paul's theological argument or is the continuation of the incident in Antioch, Chrysostom espouses the first view. Whereas, he argues, Paul's argument in 2:14 is directed to Peter, from v.15 Paul's argument is generalized and addressed to all, including Paul himself, and not only to Peter.²⁹ Paul's point is not to correct Peter, as Chrysostom argues. It seems that Paul's arguments in vv.16-17 were directed to Peter, but they were really directed to the Galatians and to all who fall 'sick with the same disease,' implying the Christians in fourth-century Antioch who continued to observe the Jewish fasts and sabbath. He also understands Paul's argument as hortative in the form of a reproof against the Jews.³⁰ Paul's expression φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι in v.15 is taken to mean by Chrysostom Jews by nature and not proselytes.³¹

²⁸ I intend to deal with all these parts of Galatians below in this chapter, where I will show that they are in fact Paul's argument in support of his thesis stated in Gal.2:16. I also intend to deal with Gal.3:19-29, which deals with the purpose of the Law since it does not save, below in chapter 5.

²⁹ PG 61,642; E.I.E. 20, p.264.

³⁰ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, p.268.

³¹ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, p.266.

What is worth noting is that Chrysostom espouses the view that the whole incident in Antioch was in fact a stratagem for the purpose of instructing the Galatians and not a real debate between Paul and Peter at all.³²

The main purpose of Galatians, as it is understood by Chrysostom, is to substantiate Paul's conviction that justification is by faith. Searching for the cause that forced Paul to write this letter, Chrysostom points out that the entire letter is full of 'a vehement and lofty spirit.'³³ What causes Paul's 'anger' is, as Chrysostom calls it, 'grave and momentous' and was estranging the Galatians from Christ. The cause of this estrangement can be found in Paul's own affirmation in Gal.5:2,4. As Chrysostom argues, it becomes clear from this passage that for the Galatians to let themselves be circumcised means to benefit nothing from Christ; and, to want to be justified by the Law means to cut themselves off from Christ and fall away from grace.³⁴ Paul's real reason for abandoning the Law, according to Gal. 2:16, 21, lies in the fact that the Law is too weak, is unable to justify. Otherwise, if it were necessary to embrace the Law again, then faith in Christ would be powerless to grant justification.³⁵

Searching for the reason which forced Paul to reject the Law, Chrysostom draws the attention of his audience to how 'cautiously' Paul expresses his statement in Gal.2:16: Paul does not say, Chrysostom points out, that they had abandoned the Law as evil but as weak. Then he argues that if the Law does not grant righteousness, then it follows that circumcision is superfluous. This is the conclusion, Chrysostom says, which has emerged so far from Paul's statement in v.16, but Paul's intention is to show later that

³² For a detail discussion of this important view held by Chrysostom see below in this chapter in pp.189-202.

³³ PG 61,611, 612; E.I.E. 20, pp.160, 162.

³⁴ PG 61,613; E.I.E. 20, p.162.

³⁵ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, p.266.

circumcision is not only superfluous but also dangerous.³⁶

What is of great interest to us is the reason for abandoning the Law. And, as it is understood by Chrysostom, it lies in the fact that the Law is too weak, is unable to bring righteousness. Chrysostom strongly insists that Paul rejects the Law because it is unable to grant justification and not because it is 'evil by nature.'³⁷

Chrysostom's insistence that by no means is the Law 'evil by nature' leads us to ask *who ever thought that the Law is evil by nature?* The adversaries, whom Chrysostom here has in view, are the Manichaeans, a Dualistic Gnostic group of the third century, who selectively incorporated in their teaching elements from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Gnosticism and Christianity.³⁸ In the fourth century, Manichaeism³⁹ was very attractive to many Christians including Augustine for many years.⁴⁰ Manichaeism held a strongly anti-Judaic position.⁴¹

The fact that Chrysostom has in view the Manichaeans finds further support on Chrysostom's approach of Rom. 7:7-8: 'What then should we say? That the Law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the Law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the Law had not said, "you shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness.' Chrysostom calls his audience to observe how Paul step by step shows

³⁶ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, p.266.

³⁷ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, p.266.

³⁸ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, 2, p.190.

³⁹ Our sources for Manichaeism are the recently discovered fragments of the writings of Mani, the founder of Manichaeism and the Christian writings against Manichaeism. Most of Mani's writings, which were written in Syrian, the main language of Mesopotamia, are: *Chapters, Alive Gospel, Treasure of Life, Book of Mysteries, Book of Giants and Letters*. These fragments are preserved in their original language or in translations in Persian, Sinitic, Coptic and Greek. Among the Christian writings of the fourth century against Manichaeism are *The Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, *The Acts of Archelaus*, *Panarion* of Epiphanius, the anti-manichean writings of Augustine etc. Christou, *Greek Patrology*, 2, p.188, 190.

⁴⁰ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp.58-59.

⁴¹ Christou, *Greek Patrology*, 2, p.190.

that the Law 'is not an accuser of sin only but in a measure its producer.' However, as Chrysostom argues, Paul 'stops the mouths of the Manichaeans' who accuse the Law, by proving that this happened not from any fault of the Law itself but from that of the 'obstinate' Jews.⁴² Chrysostom insists that, according to Paul, it was sin and not the Law that, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, 'increased the concupiscence and the reverse of the Law's intent was brought about.' This came of weakness and not of any badness from the Law's side. Thus, as Chrysostom concludes, it is true that when we desire a thing and then we are prevented from it, the flame of the desire is increased. And this is what finally had happened. Nevertheless, this did not come of the Law but of sin. The Law attempted to keep us off from it, but sin used what was good for the reverse. For Chrysostom here 'sin' means our 'own listlessness and bad disposition.'⁴³

Thus, it seems clear, that Chrysostom in his effort to confront the Manichaeans⁴⁴ comes to the view that the Law is by no means responsible for the final results. Dealing, for instance with Rom.3:20 where Paul states that 'through the Law comes the knowledge of sin,' Chrysostom says that Paul 'springs upon the Law again, with forbearance however,' because, as he explains, what Paul says here is not an accusation of the Law, but of the listlessness of the Jews.⁴⁵ In the same context, Chrysostom points out that 'the Law accomplished the disclosure of sin to you, but it was your duty then to flee it. Since then you have not fled you have pulled the punishment more sorely on yourself, and the good deed of the Law has been made to you a supply of greater

⁴² PG 60,500; E.Π.E. 17, p.102.

⁴³ PG 60,500; E.Π.E. 17, p.102; PG 60,501; E.Π.E. 17, p.106.

⁴⁴ As Kelly suggests, Manichaeism was widely diffused in Syria as a missionary religion making converts everywhere' and thus Manichaeism 'was to remain a constant target for Chrysostom.' Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp.58-59, 96.

⁴⁵ PG 60,442; E.Π.E. 16B, p.512.

vengeance.⁴⁶ Dealing also with Rom.5:20, where Paul says that ‘the Law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied,’ Chrysostom points out that the particle ἵνα ‘that’ does not assign the cause, but the result, because the Law was given not ‘in order that it might abound’ but ‘to diminish and destroy the offence.’ However, he concludes, it turned out the opposite way, not because of ‘the nature of the Law,’ but because of ‘the listlessness of those who received it.’⁴⁷

Thus, according to Chrysostom, passages like Rom. 7:7-8, 3:20 and 5:20 are not to be understood as accusations held by Paul against the Law, because it is sin and not the Law itself who actually is responsible for the results described in these passages. Paul rejects the Law because it is unable to justify and not because it is ‘evil by nature.’ Thus, Chrysostom concludes that Paul actually fights against sin and not the Law.⁴⁸

Chrysostom’s point of view that for Paul the one who is actually responsible for the negative results (mentioned in specific passages above) is sin and not the Law itself, obviously determines the way Chrysostom reads Gal.2:16-21.

In regard to the antinomy between faith in Christ and the observance of the Law in v.17, Chrysostom gives emphasis of v.17 on the issue of justification rather than on the antinomy itself. It is clear that, for Chrysostom, this antinomy exists precisely on the level of justification and if it is considered separately could be misinterpreted, leading to wrong conclusions. Paul’s point of the antinomy between faith in Christ and the observance of the Law, as Chrysostom understands it, is that the existence of the former implies its necessity in regard to the issue of justification and therefore excludes the latter. If it were necessary, he argues, to embrace the Law again, then faith in Christ would be powerless

⁴⁶ PG 60,443; E.I.E. 16B, p.512.

⁴⁷ PG 60,478; E.I.E. 17, p.24.

⁴⁸ PG 60,502; E.I.E. 17, p.108; PG 60,503; E.I.E. 17, p.112.

to grant justification.⁴⁹

Chrysostom's interest, in regard to v.17, is focused on two points: even before expressing his understanding of Paul's question in v.17, ἄρα Χριστός ἀμαρτίας διάκονος; 'is Christ then a servant of sin?' he attempts to include his own Christian congregation among the addressees to whom v.17 is directed. It seems that Chrysostom wants to draw certain conclusions useful to 'cure' those among his people, who 'are sick from the same disease.'

Taking the view that Gal. 2:15-21 is the beginning of Paul's theological argument rather than the continuation of the incident in Antioch, Chrysostom argues that v.17 seems to be directed to Peter but is actually directed to the 'disciples,' namely the Jewish Christians who were present at the incident in Antioch and to the Galatians to whom Paul sent his letter. It is also directed, he says, not only to them but also to all who 'are sick from the same disease,' alluding to the Christians in Antioch in his own time. In comparison with the situation of first century Galatia, Chrysostom admits that in his time, in fourth century Antioch, only a few of the Christians observed circumcision, but many of them observed the Jewish fasts and sabbath.⁵⁰ Chrysostom assumes that the Christians in his time observe the Jewish fasts and sabbath because they fear the Law and the abandonment of its letter; and they entertain this fear because they disparage faith as weak and powerless to grant justification. In an effort to eradicate this fear from his congregation, Chrysostom argues that they fear the Law as if it were still in force.⁵¹ For Chrysostom the Law is not in force and his following arguments are based on this assumption. Arguing in support of the view that the Law is not in force, Chrysostom

⁴⁹ Chrysostom says that Paul applies here the method of εἰς ἄτοπον ἀπαγωγή 'reductio ad absurdum' in order to support his statement. PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, pp.266-268.

⁵⁰ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, p.268.

⁵¹ PG 61,644; E.I.E. 20, p.270.

suggests that if the Law is to be observed it must be observed as a whole or not at all. He also argues that ‘if we are bound to keep the whole, we are bound to disobey Christ,’ because ‘He annulled the Law as regards these things Himself.’⁵²

What is worth noting is Chrysostom’s understanding of Paul’s intention of the question and the answer he instantly gives to it. Chrysostom supports the view that ‘the Judaizers’ are probably hidden behind these ideas and that Paul’s question and answer in v.17, ἄρα Χριστός ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο ‘is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!’ echoes views held by Paul’s opponents. For Chrysostom, it is of great importance to show that on the one side Paul’s opponents wanted to convince the Galatians that he who did not keep the Law was a transgressor and on the other side Paul wanted to convince the Galatians that he who tried to keep the Law was a transgressor not only of the faith but also of the Law in so far as it was annulled by God.⁵³

Commenting on Paul’s expression ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον ‘for through the Law I died to the Law’ in v.19, Chrysostom suggests that it may be understood in three different ways.⁵⁴ A first possible sense of this expression, he argues, is that Paul here refers to grace as Law, and thus Paul means by it that he died *through grace*. In support of this view, Chrysostom appeals to Paul’s practice sometimes to refer to grace as Law.⁵⁵ Another possible sense of this expression, according to Chrysostom, is that the Law itself taught him not to obey the Law. In support of this view, Chrysostom recalls his audience to Moses’ instructions in Deut. 18:15. Starting from this passage,

⁵² PG 61,644; E.I.E. 20, p.270. Chrysostom observes that Paul uses the rhetorical device of the εἰς ἄτοπον ἀπαγωγή ‘reductio ad absurdum’ in support of his argument. For a detail discussion of the temporal nature of the Law see below in chapter 5.

⁵³ PG 61,644; E.I.E. 20, pp.270-272.

⁵⁴ PG 61,645; E.I.E. 20, pp.272-274.

⁵⁵ Chrysostom argues that Paul does this, for instance, in Rom. 8:2 where he speaks of ‘the Law of the Spirit.’ PG 61,645; E.I.E. 20, p.272.

Chrysostom insists that, according to Moses, all who do not obey that prophet, who Chrysostom identifies as Christ, transgress the Law.⁵⁶ A third possible sense of v.19, as he points out, is that Paul's expression might mean that all have died for no one fulfilled all the precepts of the Law. As Chrysostom puts it, with his own characteristic rhetorical style, 'as it is impossible for a dead corpse to obey the commands of the Law, so also is it for me who have perished by its curse, for by its word am I slain. Let it not therefore lay commands on the dead, dead by its own act, dead not in body only, but in soul, which has involved the death of the body.'⁵⁷ For Chrysostom, Paul's point in v.20 is that 'if I live to God a life other than that in the Law, and am dead to the Law, then I cannot possibly keep any part of the Law.'⁵⁸

Chrysostom understands Christ's crucifixion and not the Law as the source of life. Recalling Paul's statement in Rom. 3:23 that 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,' Chrysostom argues that all of us are dead, 'if not in fact, at least by sentence;' however Christ's advent arrested the wrath of God, and caused us to live by faith.⁵⁹ Dealing with Paul's expression that 'I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' Chrysostom observes that Paul appropriates to himself the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, which are for all of us and not only for Paul.⁶⁰ Chrysostom detects a twofold reason behind the use of this expression: firstly because Paul considered 'the

⁵⁶ According to Deut. 18:15, Moses told the Jews that 'the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.' PG 61,645; E.I.E. 20, p.272.

⁵⁷ Chrysostom, in support to his view, appeals to the following v.20 arguing that when he was alive the Law slew him, whereas when he was already dead Christ through death restored him to life. As he points out, Paul, by his expression that he *crucified with Christ* alludes to the Baptism; by *death* he signifies a death to sin; and *by life* a delivery from sin. PG 61,645; E.I.E. 20, p.274.

⁵⁸ PG 61,646; E.I.E. 20, p.276.

⁵⁹ PG 61,646; E.I.E. 20, p.278.

⁶⁰ Chrysostom addresses rhetorically his words directly to Paul, giving the impression that he disagrees with Paul's statement. However, his disagreement is for rhetorical purposes only, for he uses this seeming disagreement to prepare the ground to introduce the reason for using such a language.

desperate condition of human nature, and the ineffably tender solicitude of Christ, in what He delivered us from.' These considerations, Chrysostom suggests, kindled Paul 'by the yearning of affection towards Him.' And secondly because Paul wanted to stress that 'each individual justly owes a great debt of gratitude to Christ, as if He had come for his sake alone', and that the measure of Christ's love to every one is as great as to the whole world.'⁶¹

Regarding Christ's sacrifice, Chrysostom supports the view that although it was offered for all humankind and was sufficient to save all, the believers only are those who enjoy the blessing. Then, in order to convince his audience, Chrysostom introduces a rhetorical question: 'When God so loved you as to give Himself up to bring you, who were without hope of salvation, to a life so great and blessed, can you, thus gifted, regress to things gone by?'⁶²

After stressing the important role of Christ's crucifixion in relation to justification, Chrysostom turns to v.21, which he understands as Paul's 'vehement asseveration' which functions as a final conclusion to the previous verses: 'I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing.'⁶³ Two interesting points made by Chrysostom must be stressed here. The first one is that even before expressing his comments on the second part of v.21, Chrysostom says that Paul's 'vehement asseveration' applies to those Christians in fourth century Christianity, 'who even now Judaize and adhere to the Law.' The second point, which deals with the interpretation of v.21, is that Christ's death is a plain proof of the inability of the Law to justify; otherwise if the Law could justify, then Christ's death would be superfluous.⁶⁴

⁶¹ PG 61,646-647; E.II.E. 20, pp.278-280.

⁶² PG 61,647-648; E.II.E. 20, p.280.

⁶³ PG 61,648; E.II.E. 20, pp.280-282.

⁶⁴ PG 61,648; E.II.E. 20, pp.280-282.

The first point made by Chrysostom on v.21 is that Paul's statement applies to those who adhere to the Law both in first century Galatia and in fourth century Antioch. This view is a necessary condition of having a better understanding of Galatians, since, as I have already shown in my introduction, Chrysostom confronts in fourth century Antioch a similar situation to that of first century Galatia. Chrysostom seems to confront in Antioch a serious movement toward Judaism. If my conclusions are correct, then Chrysostom's understanding of the situation may offer a key to modern scholarship for a better understanding of Galatians and the important issues which Galatians deals with. The nature of the problem in first century Christianity was whether adherence to the Law or to faith, or even to a mixture of both, were necessary to achieve justification; Paul's response explicitly supported the view that faith in Christ alone and not the Law is the source of justification.⁶⁵

There is a second point that Christ's death is a plain proof of the inability of the Law to justify, for otherwise Christ's death would be superfluous. Chrysostom wonders 'what can be more heinous than this sin?', or 'what more fit to put one to shame than these words?' Christ's death, as he argues, is 'so awful, so surpassing human reason, a mystery so ineffable,' and it is not reasonable to say that it has been done 'heedlessly and in vain.' Verse 21 reflects Paul's point to show 'how utterly out of place' is the idea that 'Christ died for nothing.' and explains the 'violent language' he uses in Gal.3:1.⁶⁶

Chrysostom insists that there are two opposite alternatives, either the inability of the Law to justify or the superfluosity of Christ's death. The idea that 'Christ died for nothing' is, according to Chrysostom, what Paul's opponents' 'conduct came to,' and thus v.21 is to be understood as Paul's counteraction to that idea. Chrysostom proceeds

⁶⁵ See note 3 in p.155 and my Introductory chapter in pp.2-54.

⁶⁶ PG 61,648; E.II.E. 20, pp.280-282.

to argue that v.21 is also directed to those among his congregation 'who even now Judaize and adhere to the Law.'⁶⁷

Thus, in order to outline Chrysostom's own understanding of Gal.2:15-21, it becomes clear that for Chrysostom Paul rejects the Law because it is unable to grant justification and not because it is evil by nature. The antinomy between faith in Christ and the observance of the Law exists precisely on the grounds of justification. Christ's crucifixion is to be understood as a plain proof of the Law's inability to justify, otherwise Christ's death should be considered superfluous.

Thus, the emphasis of Gal.2:16, according to Chrysostom, is not on the rejection of the 'works of the Law' but on the issue of justification. Paul asserts that the observance of the Law does not justify three times in one verse,⁶⁸ stressing an antinomy between the works of the Law and faith in Christ. However, he does not say or even imply that he rejects the works of the Law for any other reason but for justification. For Chrysostom the emphasis is on the issue of justification, and if this antinomy is to be considered separately from justification, then it could be misinterpreted leading to wrong conclusions.

Thus, the meaning of this antinomy, as it is understood by Chrysostom, is that the need of the observance of the Law implies its necessity in regard to justification and therefore excludes the need of faith in Christ.⁶⁹ However, for Chrysostom, Christ's death mentioned in verse 21 confirms Paul's conclusion, in verses 16 and 21, that 'a person is justified not by the works of the Law;' and that 'if justification comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing.' Christ's death is, for Chrysostom, a plain proof of the

⁶⁷ PG 61,648; E.I.E. 20, p.282.

⁶⁸ Gal.2:16 ... 'not by the works of the Law,' ... 'not by doing the works of the Law,' ... 'no one will be justified by the works of the Law.'

⁶⁹ PG 61,643; E.I.E. 20, pp.266-268.

Law's inability to justify; otherwise, if the Law could justify, then Christ's death would be superfluous.⁷⁰ For Paul, thus, Chrysostom concludes, either justification is through faith in Jesus Christ and then there is no need of works of the Law, or justification is by the works of the Law and then there is no need of Christ's death. This is so far what Chrysostom could contribute to modern scholarship in regard to the understanding of justification and its role in Paul's rejection of the works of the Law.

4.4 Who ever Thought that the Works of the Law could Justify?: Having clarified what reason Chrysostom finds behind Paul's rejection of the Law, on the basis of his reading of the decisive passage of Gal.2:15-21, it is essential now to deal with the questions that arise from it. Paul's insistence that no one can be justified by the works of the Law, leads us to ask against whom Paul directed his statement. Has he in mind the Jewish understanding of salvation or that of his opponents in Galatia? In other words, the following questions require an answer: *who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify?*, and more importantly, *why the works of the Law cannot justify?* Thus, at this stage of my thesis, it is essential to find out what answers were proposed to these questions by modern scholars and Chrysostom.

We start with the first question: who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify? Sanders suggests that Paul's statement could be directed against the Jewish understanding of salvation, or against Paul's opponents, or even against both.⁷¹ Westerholm points out that for Judaism at least, 'salvation was not based on works,' and thus 'to distinguish faith (or grace) with works (or Law) as alternative paths to salvation

⁷⁰ PG 61,648; E.II.E. 20, pp.280-282.

⁷¹ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.17.

and suggest that Judaism advocated the latter is to misrepresent the faith of Paul's fathers.⁷²

Sanders, in his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*,⁷³ proposes that all branches of first-century Judaism shared the conviction that 'Israel's standing with God was initiated by God's gracious act in establishing a covenant with his people,' and obedience to the Law 'represents Israel's proper response to God's grace.' For Judaism then, according to Sanders, salvation 'is not earned by human works,' but obedience to the Law 'is necessary if the Israelite's relationship with God is to be maintained.'⁷⁴ Thus, Sanders proposes that 'Paul's criticism of Judaism, rightly understood, does correspond to Judaism' as revealed in its own literature.⁷⁵ Regarding the real reason for Paul's attack on Judaism, Sanders insists that it was rooted 'not in the rejection of works but in his exclusive soteriology and in his concern for the admission of Gentiles to the people of God.'⁷⁶

J. D. G. Dunn espouses Sanders's view that for Judaism 'salvation is not earned by human works' and proposes that Paul 'is wholly at one with his fellow Jews in asserting that justification is by faith.'⁷⁷ According to Dunn the real reason for Paul's attack on Judaism is not 'works' as such but 'reliance on those particular "works of the

⁷² Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.143.

⁷³ Ed Parish Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.420; cf., Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.143.

⁷⁵ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.63, n.142.

⁷⁶ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p.497; Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.47. Cf., Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.143.

⁷⁷ James D. G. Dunn, 'The New Perspective on Paul' in *Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990), pp.97-100.

Law” which served as “identity and boundary markers” for the Jewish people.’⁷⁸

On the other side, Räisänen, although he agrees with Sanders’s view that Judaism ‘was not characterized by legalism,’ proposes that for Paul ‘Judaism was legalism.’ According to Räisänen, in Paul’s view the Jews and some Jewish Christians ‘ascribe saving value to the fulfilment of the precepts of the Law.’ Räisänen thus, concludes that Paul’s view of Judaism is ‘a distorted one,’ and that Paul ‘is wrong’ in ascribing ‘a soteriological function’ to the fulfilment of the precepts of the Law, because the ‘Law never was conceived to be that way.’⁷⁹

Westerholm is convinced by Räisänen’s point that Paul does ascribe a saving value to the fulfilment of the Law.⁸⁰ For Westerholm, the view that the Law ‘was given for life’ is Pauline (Rom.7:10). He insists, however, that when Paul contrasts the righteousness of the Law with that of faith, ‘in neither case does he base his depiction on empirical observation of first century communities,’ but rather Paul finds both principles ‘enunciated in scripture’ (Rom.10:5-13).⁸¹

Räisänen suggests that ‘Paul came to view the Law as Judaism’s path to salvation in his battle with Jewish Christians who tried to exclude uncircumcised Gentile believers from table fellowship.’⁸² Westerholm, however, rejects Räisänen’s suggestion because it leaves out of account Paul’s affirmation that the Law was given for life, which he

⁷⁸ James D. G. Dunn, ‘Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal.3:10-14)’ in *Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990), p.528. As Westerholm puts it, both Sanders and Dunn attribute ‘the view that Paul rejects Judaism because it is based on “works” to “the standard Protestant (mis)reading of Paul through Reformation spectacles.”’ Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.143-144. Cf., Dunn, ‘The New Perspective on Paul’ in *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, p.119.

⁷⁹ Räisänen, ‘Legalism,’ pp.72-73. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, p.144.

⁸⁰ Räisänen says that Paul attacks the Law ‘as a Jewish gateway to salvation,’ because, ‘as Paul implies,’ the Law had a soteriological function. *Paul and the Law*, p.178.

⁸¹ Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.144-145.

⁸² Räisänen, ‘Legalism,’ pp.78-82.

moreover attributes to Moses (Rom. 10:5).⁸³ The quotation of Lev.18:5, as Westerholm points out, is ‘only one of dozens of texts from which Paul could conclude that keeping the Law was Israel’s path to life’ and thus, ‘if Paul is wrong in considering the Law a path to salvation, it is an error he shares with Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Ezekiel.’⁸⁴

In regard to the question, ‘who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify?’ Chrysostom is convinced that, according to scriptures, Judaism understood the works of the Law as a path to salvation. Dealing, in particular, with Rom.10:5, Chrysostom insists that Moses in Lev.18:5 speaks of the righteousness that comes from the Law. As he argues, the righteousness mentioned by Paul in Rom.10:5 τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ‘the righteousness that comes from the Law,’ consists in ‘fulfilling the commandments of the Law.’⁸⁵ For Chrysostom, the Jews failed in their pursuit of the ‘righteousness that comes from the Law’ because they transgressed its commandments.⁸⁶

Chrysostom suggests that Paul’s point in Rom.10:5 that ‘Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the Law,’ means that Moses shows what sort of righteousness it is and whence the righteousness comes which is ‘ensuing from the Law.’ This righteousness, according to Lev.18:5, consisted in ‘fulfilling the commandments’ of the Law. Thus, he concludes, there is no other way of becoming righteous in the Law but by fulfilling all the commandments; and because this has not been possible for anyone,

⁸³ Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.146. For Westerholm, Paul’s point in Rom.10:5-8 is not that ‘Moses was incorrect’ as Sanders suggests, but rather that ‘Paul affirms the basic Old Testament premise, here attributed to Moses.’ Ibid., p.145 note 16.

⁸⁴ Besides Lev.18:5, Westerholm cites Deut.4:1, 5:33, 6:24-25, 8:1, 30:15-18, Ezek.18:19, 20:11 and Neh.9:29. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.146-147.

⁸⁵ PG 60,565; E.Π.E. 17, p.328.

⁸⁶ PG 60,563; E.Π.E. 17, p.318.

this righteousness διαπέπτωκεν 'has failed.'⁸⁷

Thus, at least as it was understood by Chrysostom, the observance of the Law could lead to salvation and the Law's intention was to do so regardless of the final results. Chrysostom's point of view is in agreement with Westerholm's conclusion that Paul considers the Law a path to salvation and that Paul shares this consideration with Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Ezekiel,⁸⁸ and that he 'does not base his depiction on empirical observation of first century communities.'⁸⁹ Since Chrysostom, as I have shown in my Introduction, confronted in fourth century Antioch a similar situation to that of first century Galatia, then his understanding that the Law has a soteriological function should be taken seriously by modern scholars who deal with Paul's position towards the Law.

4.5 Why the Works of the Law cannot Justify?: It remains to deal with our second question. Since the Law is considered by both Paul and the Jews 'a path to salvation,' why then does Paul explicitly affirm that 'no one can be justified by the works of the Law'?

The question 'why Paul holds the view that the Law cannot justify' produces a wide range of answers among modern scholars, more diverse than one would expect.⁹⁰ According to the 'quantitative answer,' Paul asserts that the Law cannot justify, because 'it is impossible to do the entire Law;' or according to the 'qualitative answer' because 'doing the Law is worse than not doing it' and that 'doing the Law itself estranges.'⁹¹

⁸⁷ PG 60,565-566; E.Π.E. 17, p.328.

⁸⁸ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.147.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.145.

⁹⁰ Robert B. Sloan, 'Paul and the Law: Why the Law cannot save' *Novum Testamentum* 33,1 (1991), p.42; Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.17.

⁹¹ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.17.

Hans Hübner combines these two views, the 'quantitative' and the 'qualitative' answer, proposing that the first appears in Galatians and the second in Romans.⁹² As to why Paul affirms that the Law cannot justify, others answer that Paul holds this view because of his 'exclusivist soteriology,' or because of the 'exigencies of the Gentile mission.'⁹³

Sanders, discussing in detail the principal passages dealing with Paul's affirmation that the Law cannot justify,⁹⁴ comes to the conclusion that Paul rejects the Law as a path to salvation because of his 'exclusivist soteriology' and his conviction that the Gentiles are to be saved on the same basis as the Jews.⁹⁵ Since for Paul, according to Sanders, 'salvation comes only in Christ, no one may follow any other way whatsoever.'⁹⁶ Paul rejects the Law 'not because the Law cannot be followed, nor because following it leads to legalism, self-righteousness and self-estrangement.'⁹⁷ God intended that 'salvation be by faith, thus by definition it is not by Law.' God also intended that 'all be saved on the basis of faith.'⁹⁸ Thus Sanders proposes that 'in short, this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity,' and that doing the Law 'is wrong only because it is not faith.'⁹⁹

For Sanders what makes Paul's statements about the Law 'hard to unravel is the general difficulty of distinguishing between the reason for which he held a view and the

⁹² Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), p.24, 83. Cf., Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.91-92; Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.17.

⁹³ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.17.

⁹⁴ Galatians 2-3, 5:3, Romans 3-4 and 9-11 and Philippians 3:9.

⁹⁵ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p.519, 496. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, pp.47-48. Cf., Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.151, 84-85.

⁹⁶ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p.519.

⁹⁷ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.46.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.47.

⁹⁹ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp.552, 550.

arguments which he adduces in favor of it.’¹⁰⁰ And, according to Sanders, modern scholars disagree about ‘why Paul said what he said about the Law’ because ‘reason and argument are not always easy to distinguish.’ Thus, Sanders proposes that ‘the different things which Paul said about the Law depend on the question asked or the problem posed.’¹⁰¹

Sanders’s distinction between real ‘reasons’ and mere ‘arguments’ which forced Paul to reject the Law, as Westerholm points out, is ‘both useful and potentially misleading.’ Sanders’s distinction is useful in reminding us that Paul ‘harbored no serious misgivings about the righteousness based on the Law’ before his Damascus experience, and his criticism against the Law and the explanations he provided in regard to the Law’s purpose ‘cannot be used in any direct way as evidence of how a faithful Jew perceived life under the Law.’ In order to depict Judaism fairly, according to Westerholm, we need to distinguish ‘between Paul’s initial reason for abandoning his former life and the later explanations he supplies as to its shortcomings.’¹⁰² Sanders’s distinction, on the other hand, could become potentially misleading, Westerholm argues, ‘to exclude from an account of “what Paul finds wrong in Judaism” any argument which was not itself the initial cause of his re-evaluation is to exclude from the discussion any thinking Paul may have done to the topic.’¹⁰³

In his discussion of what Paul finds wrong with the Law, Westerholm suggests that Paul’s ‘exclusivist soteriology,’ which Sanders proposes, ‘provokes but does not answer’ the question of the Law’s inability and failure to provide life, because it does not explain

¹⁰⁰ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.4. In support of his proposal, Sanders appeals to the case of 1 Cor 2 where Paul ‘may never state the real reason for his position’ namely that ‘he was Jewish.’

¹⁰¹ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.4.

¹⁰² Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.151-152.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.152.

‘how the Law has failed.’ For Westerholm, although Paul’s conviction that salvation is available only in Christ was a ‘sufficient reason’ for concluding that salvation is not found in the Law, it does not answer the question of the Law’s inability to provide salvation. ‘Nor it is sufficient to say, that Paul thought in black and white terms,’ as Sanders proposes.¹⁰⁴

For Westerholm, Paul’s own explanation as to why the Law does not provide the life it promises is ‘human transgression.’ For Paul the Law promises life to those who obey its commands, but threatens with death those who disobey them. ‘The sanctions of life as well as death, blessing as well as curse, are part of the divine record.’ Paul’s conclusion is clear, Westerholm argues, but the path by which Paul ‘reaches his goal contains a number of surprises,’ and one may ask whether Paul’s argument supports his conclusion.¹⁰⁵ Thus, Westerholm concludes, ‘we cannot rest with the claim that the Law is wrong only because it was not faith.’ The Law failed to provide life, because of human transgressions.¹⁰⁶

Westerholm also argues that Paul was not the first to think that ‘since the Sinaitic covenant had failed through human transgressions, any further dealings of God with his people must be based on God’s character and grace alone.’¹⁰⁷ In support of his view, Westerholm quotes Jer.31:31-32¹⁰⁸ where the Lord speaks of a ‘new covenant’ which He will make with Israel unlike the old one which was broken by their ancestors. Thus, as

¹⁰⁴ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.155. Westerholm refers to Sanders’s view that Paul thinks in ‘black and white’ terms by developing the death / life contrast. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, pp.137-141 and especially p.138.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.156. Westerholm criticizes both Sanders and Räisänen because although they admit that in Romans 1-3 Paul argues for universal sin, they dismissed the tenet to the periphery of Paul’s thought. Ibid., p.160. Cf., Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, pp.35-36; Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, pp.107-109.

¹⁰⁶ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.163.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.164. In support of his view, Westerholm quotes Jer.31:31-32; Hos.1:9.

¹⁰⁸ The quotation in Septuaginta is Jer.38:31-32.

Westerholm concludes, 'Israel is incapable of observing them, yet the future holds out the hope of a new covenant brought about by a new saving act on the part of Israel's God.'¹⁰⁹

This point of view is also stressed by Gerhard von Rad and other scholars.¹¹⁰ According to von Rad, whereas for Deuteronomy God's commandments are given 'for life' and regarded as 'easy to obey,' the earlier prophets spoke of Israel's failure to fulfill them.¹¹¹ For Jeremiah and Ezekiel, however, God's commandments 'have turned into a Law that judges and destroys.'¹¹² Thus, as von Rad concludes, according to the prophetic message Israel could only hold on to 'a new historical act on the part of Jahweh' in some future event.¹¹³

Having shown what is proposed by modern scholars to the question, *why the works of the Law cannot justify?*, it is essential to find out what is proposed by Chrysostom to it. For Chrysostom, as it is already shown, the observance of the Law was intended to lead to salvation regardless of the final results. Although the Law became unable to justify,¹¹⁴ Chrysostom insists that the purpose of the Law, the 'end' of the Law, is 'to make man righteous.' And to this end, he insists, the Law 'looked throughout, and for this all its parts were made, its feasts, and commandments, and sacrifices, and all besides, that man might be justified.' The Law, however, failed to make man righteous, because 'no one fulfilled it.'¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.163-164.

¹¹⁰ Besides the work of Gerhard von Rad, Westerholm mentions Zimmerli's *Law* p.76, Ridderbos' *Paul* p.157 and Stuhlmacher's *Reconciliation*, p.114 in support of his view.

¹¹¹ Gerhard von Rad *Old Testament Theology* (in 2 vols. translated by D. M. G. Stalker; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962-1965), vol.2, p.398.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.269.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.117.

¹¹⁴ Cf., Chrysostom's comments on Gal.2:16 cited above in this chapter in pp.163-164.

¹¹⁵ PG 60,565; E.I.E. 17, p.328.

Dealing with the purpose of the Law in regard to Paul's statement in Rom.5:20, Chrysostom supports the view that the conjunction *iva* 'so that' 'does not assign the cause but the result.' There is no doubt that for Chrysostom, the Law was given 'to diminish and destroy the offence and not to make it 'abound.' The giving of the Law resulted the opposite way, but it is not the nature of the Law which is responsible for these results but rather 'the listlessness of those who received it.'¹¹⁶ For Chrysostom it seems very clear that the Law has failed to provide the life it promises because of the 'listlessness of those who received it.' What is essential to underline, however, is that Chrysostom does not leave any space for pessimism in his understanding of Paul. In the same context he exhorts his congregation not to be afraid because this does not happen in order that the punishment might be greater but that 'the grace might be seen to be greater.'¹¹⁷ The view that the Law cannot justify in spite of its intention to do so because of the 'listlessness' of the Jews, is repeated by Chrysostom when he comments on Rom.7:7-8.¹¹⁸

Thus, the 'listlessness' of the Jews to fulfil the commandments of the Law is the cause, according to Chrysostom that answers our second question *why the works of the Law cannot justify?* Chrysostom's understanding again is in agreement with Westerholm's conclusion that the Law failed to provide life, 'because of human transgressions.'¹¹⁹ Chrysostom, however, does not share Westerholm's view that while Paul's conclusion is clear, the path by which Paul 'reaches his goal contains a number of surprises,' such that one may ask whether Paul's argument supports his conclusion.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ PG 60,478; E.II.E. 17, p.24.

¹¹⁷ PG 60,478; E.II.E. 17, p.24.

¹¹⁸ PG 60,500; E.II.E. 17, p.102; PG 60,501; E.II.E. 17, p.106.

¹¹⁹ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.163.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.156.

4.6 Paul's Arguments in Support of Justification by Faith: In regard to a better understanding of Paul's position towards the Law, it is essential to notice the way Chrysostom treats the entire letter to the Galatians. For Chrysostom, Gal.2:16 records Paul's conviction that justification is by faith, while the rest of Galatians provides Paul's arguments in support of his thesis. Thus, we are going to deal, firstly with incidents mentioned by Paul that seem to play a determinative role in formulating his position towards the Law, and secondly with Paul's arguments in support of his thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law.

Outlining in general the background of Galatians,¹²¹ Chrysostom observes that not only the exordium but also the whole letter is full of a vehement and lofty spirit. Searching for the reason that forced Paul to react in such a way, Chrysostom suggests that some Jewish Christians¹²² came to the Galatians and taught them that the observance of circumcision, sabbaths and new moons was necessary, and that Paul who abolished these things was not to be tolerated.¹²³

These Jewish Christians, as Chrysostom presumes, held the view that the apostles Peter, James and John did not forbid circumcision, sabbaths and new moons. Admitting that indeed the other apostles did not forbid these Jewish customs, Chrysostom argues however, that the apostles did that not by way of delivering a positive doctrine but in condescension to the weakness of the Jewish believers.¹²⁴

Paul's opponents, according to Chrysostom, besides stressing this supposed opposition between Paul and the apostles in Jerusalem, called into question Paul's

¹²¹ For an analysis of the situation in Galatians, see my introduction.

¹²² Chrysostom admits that these Jewish Christians desired to obtain the office of teachers and called their preaching a gospel. PG 61,613,621; E.II.E. 20, pp.162, 190.

¹²³ PG 61,613; E.II.E. 20, p.162.

¹²⁴ PG 61,613; E.II.E. 20, p.164.

apostolic office and accused him of hypocrisy, arguing that Paul elsewhere preached circumcision.¹²⁵ Taking always Paul's side, Chrysostom concludes that Paul's opponents, whom he calls *deceivers*, induced the Galatians to adhere unseasonably to the Law.¹²⁶

For Chrysostom, the remembrance of the benefits of the cross and resurrection contributes a lot towards the entire case of Galatians. Paul's statement in Gal. 1:1b that 'God the Father raised Christ from the dead' is very important. From the beginning of his letter, as Chrysostom argues, Paul mentions the benefit granted to all through Christ's cross and resurrection, whereby all the need of the Law is excluded. Paul's point is to 'scatter traces of the mercy of God' throughout his letter in order to change the fact that the Galatians were fearful to be punished if they abandoned the Law.¹²⁷

Commenting on Gal.1:7b where Paul says that some 'want to pervert the gospel of Christ,' Chrysostom admits that Paul's opponents in fact had only introduced one or two commandments such as circumcision and the observance of days. Paul's point hidden behind this verse, according to Chrysostom, is to show that a 'slight adulteration vitiates the whole.' In order to support the view that even a 'slight adulteration of the gospel of Christ vitiates the whole,' Chrysostom appeals to the conditions that would make a royal coin genuine or spurious. If one pares away even a small part of the image on a royal coin, this act makes it spurious. Likewise, he argues, if one perverts ever so little from the pure faith corrupts it entirely.¹²⁸

Having outlined Chrysostom's understanding of the general background of Galatians, it is essential, at this stage, to find out how Chrysostom understands Paul's

¹²⁵ PG 61,613; E.Π.E. 20, p.164.

¹²⁶ PG 61,613; E.Π.E. 20, p.166.

¹²⁷ PG 61,615; E.Π.E. 20, pp.172.

¹²⁸ PG 61,622; E.Π.E. 20, p.194.

reference to the case of Titus, who was not compelled to be circumcised during the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem (Gal.2:1-10), and the incident in Antioch with Peter and Paul's relation with the other apostles in general (Gal.2:11-14). The focus of my interest would be on the role these incidents seem to play in formulating Paul's views about the Law. At a second stage, it is essential to find out what arguments in support of Paul's thesis Chrysostom finds from the Galatians' own experience (Gal.3:1-5), the case of Abraham and in particular the way Abraham was justified (Gal.3:6-9), God's promises to the Patriarch and the identity of his true descendants (Gal.3:15-18).

4.6.1 The Test-Case of Titus (Gal.2:1-10): Paul argues in Gal.2:3 that ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Τίτος ὁ σὺν ἐμοί, Ἕλλην ὢν, ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι 'but even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.' Richard N. Longenecker suggests that this statement of Paul 'has within it a certain ambiguity, and so has been variously understood.' Most scholars understood it as 'a direct affirmation' that Titus was not circumcised, whereas some scholars understood it as meaning that Titus was circumcised 'voluntarily or at Paul's suggestion,' but not because of any kind of compulsion.¹²⁹

In support of the latter view, George Simpson Duncan argues that 'while agreeing in the circumstances to having Titus circumcised, Paul insisted that the concession made in this one case was in no sense a sacrifice of principle.' According to Duncan, Paul's point is that though having agreed to Titus' circumcision, the case of Titus 'was not a case of compulsion, of bowing to a superior authority, of acceptance of a general rule.' Nevertheless, as Duncan points out, Titus' circumcision could not be anything else than

¹²⁹ Lightfoot, Ramsay, Burton, Betz and Bruce held the view that Titus was not circumcised. Burkitt and Duncan held the view that Titus was circumcised voluntarily. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.50.

a 'sacrifice of principle.'¹³⁰ Burkitt, who also supports the view that Titus was circumcised, wonders 'who can doubt that it was the knife which really did circumcise Titus that has cut the syntax of Gal.2:3-5 to pieces?'¹³¹

The scholars, who support the view, that Titus while not being compelled to be circumcised did so voluntarily, as Longenecker notes, lay stress on the word ἡναγκάσθη 'compelled.' instead of the word οὐδὲ 'not even.' However, as Longenecker argues, there is no syntactical reason to take ἡναγκάσθη as being emphatic and, thus, to conclude that Titus was circumcised but not because of any external compulsion.¹³²

Betz, who supports the view that Titus 'was not forced to submit to circumcision,' argues that Paul took Titus with himself to Jerusalem as 'a living evidence,' since Titus was a Greek and an uncircumcised Christian. Betz concludes that while the 'false brothers' had demanded Titus' circumcision, their demand was rejected by the apostles and the other Jewish Christians. He insists, moreover, that the interpretation of Paul's statement that Titus 'was not forced' as meaning 'he did it voluntarily' is 'an artificial construction' of Paul's statement.¹³³ Burton, who also suggests that Paul's expression οὐδὲ ἡναγκάσθη 'denies not the attempt to compel but the success of the attempt,' concludes that the context clearly implies that the attempt 'was unsuccessfully made.'¹³⁴

Colin G. Kruse, who notes that Paul's statement in Gal.2:3 is ambiguous, suggests that it could mean either that Titus was not circumcised, or that Titus, 'while not being compelled to submit to circumcision, did so voluntarily.' Kruse points out, however, that

¹³⁰ George Simpson Duncan, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934), pp.42-43.

¹³¹ Francis C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings* (London: University of London, 1924), p.118.

¹³² Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.50.

¹³³ Betz, *Galatians*, pp.88-89. Longenecker also says that such an interpretation 'rightly deserves to be called "an artificial construction."' Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.50.

¹³⁴ Ernest De Witt Burton, *A critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), p.76.

the context is clearly in favour of the view that Titus was not circumcised. As he argues, 'the thrust of Paul's argument would be undercut if Titus were circumcised (albeit voluntarily) to appease the false brothers, and if that became known in Galatia.'¹³⁵

For Chrysostom, however, Paul's statement in Gal.2:3 that ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Τίτος ὁ σὺν ἐμοί, Ἕλλην ὢν, ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι, is by no means ambiguous. On the contrary, for him it seems quite clear that Titus was not compelled by the apostles to be circumcised. The case of Titus is of great importance, because as Chrysostom points out, it is 'a plain proof' that the apostles in the Jerusalem Conference did not condemn Paul's doctrine or his practice. Chrysostom also underlines the fact that even the urgent representation of the 'false brothers' did not oblige the apostles to enjoin circumcision.¹³⁶

Chrysostom, thus, does not share the views of some modern scholars who held the view that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised but did so voluntarily. Rather, his understanding of the case of Titus is in accord with Betz's view that Paul took Titus with himself to Jerusalem as 'a living evidence,' to prove that while the 'false brothers' had demanded Titus' circumcision, their demand was rejected by the apostles.

Although for Chrysostom Paul's statement does not seem ambiguous, what is worth noting is that Chrysostom focuses his interest to compare the practice of the apostles with that of the 'false brothers.' He does so, in order to answer an objection, raised probably by the 'false brothers,' that the 'false brothers,' who enjoined circumcision, were in accord with the apostles who permitted circumcision.

Comparing the practice of the apostles with that of the *false brothers* Chrysostom detects two great differences: firstly it is not the same thing to command an act to be

¹³⁵ Colin G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law and Justification* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), p.65, n.25.

¹³⁶ PG 61,634-635; E.Π.Ε. 20, p.236.

done and to allow it after it is done; and secondly the apostles so acted in Judea where the Law was in force whereas the false brothers so acted everywhere.¹³⁷

These two issues, mentioned above, play a determinative role in formulating Chrysostom's understanding of the situation in Galatia, and thus, it is essential to look at them in detail. We start with the first one: it is not the same thing, Chrysostom argues, to command an act to be done and allow it after it is done. As he puts it, the person who commands an act does it with zeal as necessary and of primary importance. However, the person who does not command it but allows others who want to do it, permits it not as necessary but in order to accomplish a purpose. The apostles, by allowing circumcision, make a concession not as imposing the Law, but as condescending to the infirmities of Judaism. If the apostles, Chrysostom argues, intended to impose circumcision they would not have preached to the Jews in one way and to the Gentiles in another.¹³⁸ The apostolic decision, derived from the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem, that is not to harass the Gentiles on circumcision, makes it evident, as Chrysostom points out, that the apostles permitted circumcision to the Jews by way of condescension.¹³⁹ Dealing with the apostles' intention in regard to the second difference between the apostles and the *false brothers*, Chrysostom insists that it differs from that of the *false brothers*: the apostles made a concession permitting circumcision that they might gradually release them from their slavery.¹⁴⁰ Chrysostom suggests that Paul 'wisely' does not write the actual reason why the apostles act by way of condescension; for otherwise, as he argues, the Galatians

¹³⁷ PG 61,635; E.P.E. 20, p.238.

¹³⁸ In order to strengthen his argument, Chrysostom appeals to Paul's instructions to the Corinthians regarding sexuality in I Cor. 7:6, where Paul clarifies that he gives these instructions 'by way of concession, not of command.' Cf., Margaret Mitchell, 'Pauline Accommodation and "Condescension" (sugkatabasis): I Cor.9:19-23 and the History of Influence,' in Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul Beyond the Judaism / Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), pp.201-214.

¹³⁹ PG 61,635; E.P.E. 20, p.238.

¹⁴⁰ PG 61,636; E.P.E. 20, p.240.

would have been injured.¹⁴¹ It is worth noting that Chrysostom forms here a general principle of interpretation: ‘for those who are to derive a benefit from a scheme of συγκατάβασις (condescension) should be unacquainted with the design of it; all will be undone, if this appears. Thus, he who is to take part in it should know the drift of it; those who are to benefit by it should not.’¹⁴²

Thus, for Chrysostom, the case of Titus is of great importance: the fact that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised during the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem is a plain proof that the apostles did not condemn Paul’s teaching. The decision of the Apostolic Conference not to harass the Gentiles on circumcision makes it evident that the apostles, contrary to the *false brothers*, permitted circumcision by way of condescension and not as imposing a Law.

4.6.2 The Incident in Antioch (Gal.2:11-14): Paul, before declaring his thesis that justification is ‘by faith in Christ and not by doing the works of the Law,’ narrates in Gal.2:11-14 an incident which took place at Antioch. Peter’s withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentile Christians after certain people from James came in Antioch, led Paul to rebuke Peter. In particular, Paul accused Peter, and even his companion Barnabas, of ‘not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel,’ calling Peter’s withdrawal as an act of hypocrisy. The effect of Peter’s withdrawal from table fellowship with the Gentiles Christians, according to Paul, was ‘to compel the Gentiles to live like Jews.’¹⁴³

The incident in Antioch is of great importance not only for its implications on

¹⁴¹ Οὐ γὰρ λέγει τὴν οὕσαν αἰτίαν, οἷον ὅτι συγκαταβάσεως ἕνεκεν καὶ οἰκονομίας τοῦτο ἐποιοῦν οἱ ἀπόστολοι. PG 61,636; E.P.E. 20, p.242.

¹⁴² PG 61,636; E.P.E. 20, p.242.

¹⁴³ Gal.2:11-14.

justification and the role of the Law in Christian life, but also for its effect on the development of early Christianity and especially the unity of Christianity. Unfortunately we do not have parallel accounts of the incident of Antioch from Peter and Barnabas to compare them with Paul's own account of it.¹⁴⁴ Paul says nothing about the situation of the Antioch church before the incident, 'what led up to it and what its sequel was,' and 'who really "won" in the dispute,' as Longenecker points out.¹⁴⁵

The patristic interpretations of the incident at Antioch, to start with, are 'painfully instructive,' because, as Lightfoot argues, it became a 'controversial weapon,' at the hands of the Ebionites and Gnostics.¹⁴⁶ The Ebionite author of the *Clementine Homilies* made the incident of Antioch a 'ground for a personal attack on Paul,' whereas the Gnostic Marcion used it to attack Peter and to 'prove the direct antagonism of Christianity to Judaism.' Celsus and Porphyry also availed of it 'as an engine to assault Christianity.'¹⁴⁷

In an effort to confront these diverse attacks, two main solutions were proposed by Clement of Alexandria and Origen respectively. Clement of Alexandria proposed that the *Cephas*, whom Paul rebukes in Gal.2:11-14, was 'not the apostle Peter, but one of the seventy disciples,' who bore the same name with Peter. Origen, on the other side, proposed that the dispute between the two apostles was 'simulated,' in order that Paul might more effectively 'condemn the Judaizers.' Origen's solution, as Lightfoot notes, 'in fact substituted the much graver charge of dishonesty against both apostles,' and

¹⁴⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp.78-79. Cf., Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p.133.

¹⁴⁵ Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.64.

¹⁴⁶ Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p.129.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.129, 61, 111, 113. Cf., Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.64.

exculpated Peter from the offence of 'moral cowardice and inconsistency.'¹⁴⁸

Lightfoot supports the view that the majority of the fathers of the early church, in their effort to meet these diverse 'attacks of heretics and unbelievers,' 'fell into the snare,' resisting all temptations to 'wrest the plain meaning of the passage.'¹⁴⁹

What is also worth noting, from the patristic period, is the controversy between Jerome and Augustine about the understanding of the incident of Antioch.¹⁵⁰ Jerome, in his Commentary on Galatians, defends Origen's view that the dispute between Peter and Paul was simulated in order that Paul 'might more effectually condemn the Judaizers.'¹⁵¹ For Augustine, however, 'to admit that the two leading apostles conspired to act a lie, was in fact to undermine the whole authority of scriptures.'¹⁵² He interpreted thus the incident in Antioch as 'a case of the higher claims of truth over rank and office,' that is, 'of Peter's error despite his primacy, of Paul's rightful rebuke and defense of the gospel, and of Peter's humility in accepting correction from an inferior in both age and standing,' as Longenecker puts it.¹⁵³

At this stage, it is essential to deal with Chrysostom's understanding of the incident of Antioch in relation to the views held by his contemporaries. It seems very clear that Chrysostom has knowledge of the two main solutions proposed by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, rejecting the former's proposal and espousing the latter's.

¹⁴⁸ Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, pp.129-131. Cf., Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p.133.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.129. Chrysostom's own understanding of the Antioch incident seems to verify the correctness of Lightfoot's view.

¹⁵⁰ For a summary of the main points held by Augustine and Jerome see Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on Galatians and the correspondence between them. (Augustine's epistles 28:3; 40:3f.; Jerome's epistle 112:4f).

¹⁵¹ Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p.130.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp.130-131.

¹⁵³ Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.64.

Clement's view that the *Cephas* whom Paul rebukes was not the apostle Peter, but one of the seventy disciples'¹⁵⁴ was strongly rejected by Chrysostom though he does not mention Clement by name. Chrysostom rejects the view that the person whom Paul rebukes was not Peter the great apostle but another one 'insignificant and scornful and one among the many.'¹⁵⁵ As he argues, Paul's statement that he *opposed him to his face* points rather to the view that Paul considers that person as someone great and important. If that person were not Peter the great apostle, his change could not have any power to 'mislead the rest of the Jews.'¹⁵⁶

Origen's view that the dispute between Peter and Paul was simulated in order that Paul 'might more effectively condemn the Judaizers,'¹⁵⁷ was espoused by Chrysostom enforcing it with many arguments. Giving to the incident in Antioch a determinative role in formulating Paul's views towards the Law, Chrysostom widely deals with it, in his commentary on Galatians and in a separate Homily with the title Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε Πέτρος εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην.¹⁵⁸

What is worth noting is that Chrysostom repeatedly stresses that for him it makes no difference to show that one of the two apostles, Paul and Peter, is correct and the other wrong.¹⁵⁹ His intention, thus, as Chrysostom himself clearly expresses it, is to refute the accusations made by the 'pagans and the enemies of faith' against both the apostles.

¹⁵⁴ Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, pp.129-130. Cf., Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p.133.

¹⁵⁵ PG 51,383; E.I.E. 27, p.552.

¹⁵⁶ PG 51,383-384; E.I.E. 27, pp.552-554.

¹⁵⁷ Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p.130.

¹⁵⁸ This homily can be found in PG 51,371-388 under the latin title: 'In illud: In faciem ei restiti,' and in E.I.E. 27, pp.514-568.

¹⁵⁹ PG 51,374; E.I.E. 27, p.518; PG 51,378; E.I.E. 27, p.532; PG 51,384; E.I.E. 27, p.554. This is the starting point of Chrysostom's approach to the incident in Antioch. Obviously, Chrysostom's respect to both the apostles does not leave to him any scope to think that any one of the two apostles could be wrong. This position of Chrysostom could be called as one of his shortcomings, speaking in modern terms. Nevertheless, Chrysostom, showing his exegetical skills, supports this view with series of arguments.

For Chrysostom the only acceptable explanation of the incident is the one that stresses the harmony and the love between the two great apostles.¹⁶⁰

Chrysostom's intention in fact verifies Lightfoot's view that most of the fathers of the early church in their effort to confront the 'diverse attacks of heretics and other unbelievers' 'fell into the snare,' resisting all temptations to 'wrest the plain meaning of the passage.' Chrysostom, like most of the fathers of the early church, worked out a solution capable of confronting the diverse attacks made by the Ebionite author of the *Clementine Homilies*, Marcion, Celsus and Porphyry.¹⁶¹

Although Chrysostom wrongly excludes the possibility of a real contrast between the two apostles, he is well to fight in support of his view. His arguments are almost convincing. An outline of his arguments is sufficient to show his ability to support his view.

Dealing with the incident of Antioch, in his commentary on Galatians, Chrysostom applies the principle of *συγκατάβασις* 'condescension,' as he does in the case of Titus.¹⁶² He admits that Paul's sayings might be taken by those 'who read superficially this passage'¹⁶³ to accuse Peter of hypocrisy.¹⁶⁴ Paul's sayings, however, as Chrysostom insists, are in pursuance of his plan of condescension and not from anger.¹⁶⁵ The accusation of hypocrisy is rejected by Chrysostom on the basis of Peter's boldness.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ PG 51,373; E.I.E. 27, p.518.

¹⁶¹ For Lightfoot's views and an outline of the views held by Ebionites, Gnostics, Celsus and Porphyry see above in this chapter in p.190.

¹⁶² For the definition of this principle, see above in p.189 of this chapter.

¹⁶³ Gal.2:11-14.

¹⁶⁴ PG 61,640; E.I.E. 20, p.254.

¹⁶⁵ PG 61,641; E.I.E. 20, p.258.

¹⁶⁶ Posing series of rhetorical questions, Chrysostom wonders how could Peter ever dissemble, he who when scourged and bound in Jerusalem, where there was so much danger, would not bate a jot of his courage; how could he, long afterwards in Antioch, where no danger was at hand, and he had received lustre from the testimony of his actions, feel any apprehension of the believing Jews? PG 61,640; E.I.E. 20, p.256.

Chrysostom forms his understanding of the incident in Antioch by investigating Peter's behaviour throughout his life and not his specific behaviour in the incident.

In an effort to unfold the 'reason of these expressions,'¹⁶⁷ Chrysostom suggests that the apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem because an abrupt severance from the Law was not practicable. When, however, the apostles came to Antioch, they no longer continued this observance, but lived indiscriminately with the Gentile Christians. Peter, in Antioch was also living indiscriminately with the Gentile Christians, but when some Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem he no longer did so fearing to perplex them. Then Peter changed his course, with two objects secretly in view, both to avoid offending those Jewish Christians, and to give Paul a reasonable pretext for rebuking him.¹⁶⁸

The cause of Peter's fear in Gal.2:12, as Chrysostom argues, was the defection of the Jewish Christians from faith and not his own danger. He again excludes the latter possibility, arguing that, if Peter did not fear in the beginning, much less would he do so then. The fear of death was nothing to the apostles, Chrysostom says, but the fear that the disciples should perish agitated them.¹⁶⁹

Chrysostom also understands the designation of hypocrisy against Barnabas in v.13 as part of the whole scheme of condescension (συγκατάβασις) applied in Gal.2:11-14: Paul again is unwilling to disclose the true state of the case.¹⁷⁰ Chrysostom, although he is not unaware of the fact that Paul and Barnabas split up afterwards, wrongly rejects the possibility that Paul and Barnabas split up because of their disagreement in regard to the

¹⁶⁷ In Gal. 2:11-14.

¹⁶⁸ In regard to the actual reason hidden behind the incident, Chrysostom suggests that: 'wherefore Paul rebukes, and Peter submits, that when the master is blamed, yet keeps silence, the disciples may more readily come over. Without this occurrence Paul's exhortation would have had little effect, but the occasion hereby afforded of delivering a severe reproof, impressed Peter's disciples with a more lively fear.' PG 61,640-641; E.II.E. 20, pp.256.-258.

¹⁶⁹ PG 61,641; E.II.E. 20, p.260.

¹⁷⁰ PG 61,641; E.II.E. 20, p.260.

Gentile admission to Christianity.

On the basis of Acts 15:39 that ‘the disagreement became so sharp that they parted company,’ ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, Chrysostom insists that the split of the two apostles is in fact ‘a plan of the Divine Providence,’ because from that split does not take place anything bad but on the contrary something very good, that is the so rapid progress of the gospel.¹⁷¹ Chrysostom also argues that the Cyprians needed the ‘more tender and indulgent’ character of Barnabas whereas the Antiocheans the ‘more strict and austere’ character of Paul.¹⁷² He is correct, however, to observe that the two apostles did not split up in enmity, for Barnabas continues to receive ‘many encomiums from Paul in his epistles.’ Insisting on the literal meaning of the text, Chrysostom points out that between the two apostles ‘there was sharp contention, not enmity nor quarrelling.’¹⁷³

Chrysostom also deals with the incident of Antioch in a separate homily with the title Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε Πέτρος εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην,¹⁷⁴ in which he also excludes the possibility of a real contrast between the two apostles. In this homily, Chrysostom admits that Paul’s sayings might be taken to constitute an accusation against Peter, if we do not catch the real meaning hidden in Paul’s sayings.¹⁷⁵

Thus, in two stages, he deals with the ‘alleged accusation’ against Peter, that ‘he was faint-hearted and a coward;’ and finally with the possibility that Paul is rebuking Peter inconsiderately and that the dispute between the two apostles is a ‘result of Paul’s

¹⁷¹ PG 60,245; E.P.E. 16A, pp.298-300; PG 60,250; E.P.E. 16A, p.318.

¹⁷² PG 60,245; E.P.E. 16A, pp.298-300.

¹⁷³ PG 60,246; E.P.E. 16A, pp.302-304.

¹⁷⁴ This homily can be found in PG 51,371-388 under the latin title: ‘In illud: In faciem ei restiti,’ and in E.P.E. 27, pp.514-568.

¹⁷⁵ PG 51,374; E.P.E. 27, p.520.

vanity and quarrel.’ However, Chrysostom is at pains to absolve both the apostles of such accusations,¹⁷⁶ and proceeds exhorting his congregation to search for the actual reason for which Paul seems to rebuke Peter.¹⁷⁷

The solution that Chrysostom proposes is in terms of the different nature of the mission of the two apostles. Jesus Christ had sent Paul to the Gentiles whereas Peter was sent to the Jews. However, as Chrysostom argues, Paul was not leading the Gentiles to the faith in the same way as Peter was leading the Jews, nor in the same manner. Both, Paul and Peter, were preaching that Jesus Christ is God, that He was crucified and buried and risen from the dead and all the rest. The difference between the way they were leading the Gentiles and the Jews, as Chrysostom clarifies, lies in the distinction of food, circumcision and the other Jewish customs.¹⁷⁸

Reconstructing the position held by the two apostles, Chrysostom supposes that Peter fears to say clearly and explicitly to his disciples that they should withdraw from these Jewish customs forever. He fears that to eradicate these customs too soon would risk eradicating the faith in Christ from their souls, because the Jews would not be able to tolerate to hear these things.¹⁷⁹ For that reason, Chrysostom argues, Peter allowed the Jewish Christians to Judaize, waiting first for the strengthening of faith to their hearts, so that after the faith had taken root, he would be able to safely destroy every ‘Judaic superstition.’¹⁸⁰ Paul, on the contrary, as Chrysostom points out, did not do the same

¹⁷⁶ Chrysostom refutes the accusations against Peter by reminding his audience of instances in Peter’s life which reveal his ‘true character.’ PG 51,375-377; E.I.E. 27, pp.524-532. He also refutes the accusations against Paul. PG 51,378; E.I.E. 27, pp.532-536.

¹⁷⁷ PG 51,379; E.I.E. 27, p.536.

¹⁷⁸ PG 51,381; E.I.E. 27, p.544.

¹⁷⁹ PG 51,381; E.I.E. 27, p.544.

¹⁸⁰ Chrysostom, introducing an image from agricultural life, says that Peter resembles to an excellent farmer who does not dare or accept to eradicate the aged tree because he fears that along with it he will also eradicate the newly planted one. Thus the farmer waits until the newly planted tree takes roots deeply in the ground and thereafter he safely eradicates the aged one. PG 51,381-382; E.I.E. 27, pp.544-546.

because he was free from this necessity for he was preaching to Gentiles, people who never had the Law and had never heard about Jewish distinctions.¹⁸¹ Thus, the behaviour of the two apostles, Paul rebuking Peter and Peter remaining silent, was intended to give a 'great lesson' to the Jewish Christians not to keep the Jewish customs.¹⁸²

Since Chrysostom has wrongly rejected the possibility of a real contrast between the two apostles in order to confront the accusations made by the 'pagans and the enemies of faith' against either Peter or Paul, the only way to succeed in this target is to espouse the theory of condescension. The two apostles did all these things due to the weakness of the disciples and not because of a contrast which existed between them. In support of his view, Chrysostom argues that when it was time for condescension even Paul was behaving like a Jew,¹⁸³ but when it was not time for condescension but to formulate doctrines and enact Laws even Peter delivers clear doctrines.¹⁸⁴

Before coming to final conclusions about the actual situation in Antioch, it is essential to find out the views held by modern scholars in regard to the incident of Antioch. There is no consensus of opinion among modern scholars on the actual situation of the incident of Antioch but only divergent opinions. This is due to the fact that we do not have parallel accounts of the incident from Peter and Barnabas, but only Paul's own account,¹⁸⁵ which contains, according to Nicholas Taylor, 'unreliable aspersions.'¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ PG 51,382; E.I.E. 27, p.546.

¹⁸² PG 51,388; E.I.E. 27, p.566.

¹⁸³ Chrysostom refers to the event, described in Acts 21:20-26 where Paul went through the rite of purification.

¹⁸⁴ Chrysostom refers to the Apostolic Conference described in Acts 15:10-11.

¹⁸⁵ Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp.78-79. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, p.133.

¹⁸⁶ Nicholas Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: a Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), p.138.

Taylor supports the view that the immediate consequence of the incident is that Paul 'was quite clearly isolated in and through his confrontation with Peter and resistance to the authority of the Jerusalem church,'¹⁸⁷ and that his confrontation with Peter 'ended up in defeat and isolation for him.'¹⁸⁸ Thus, Taylor comes to the conclusion that Paul failed to convince Peter, Barnabas and the Antiochene Christians to reverse their decision to withdraw from table fellowship with Gentile Christians.¹⁸⁹ Paul's action, as he points out, 'was evidently motivated by theological considerations,' because he saw 'the feasibility of the Christian mission as in peril, and with it the integrity of the gospel he preached.'¹⁹⁰

The fundamental difference between Paul on the one side and Peter, Barnabas and James on the other, as Taylor defines it, is that 'Paul took his stand on principle in a matter on which James, Peter and Barnabas exercised pragmatism rather than dogma.'¹⁹¹ Taylor is correct to argue that since Barnabas was, according to Acts 13:1, the 'most eminent of the leadership' in Antioch, it is more likely that he had played a more active role in determining 'what action would have been taken by the Christians in Antioch to resolve the dilemma.' And Barnabas's decision (to withdraw from table fellowship with Gentile Christians), as Taylor argues, was motivated by the consideration of the scruples of the visitors from Jerusalem, as Bauckham suggests, or by the consideration of courtesy and hospitality rather than change of principle as Bruce suggests.¹⁹²

Similarly James D. G. Dunn argues that the fact that Paul does not say that Peter

¹⁸⁷ Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*, p.135.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.137.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 137, 138.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.135-136.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., pp.135-136.

¹⁹² Ibid., p.134.

resumed of his former practice implies in fact that 'Peter did not accept or heed his rebuke, and that Paul received no real backing from the rest of the Antioch Christians.'¹⁹³ In all probability, he concludes, the conflict in Antioch led Paul to a triple breach with Jerusalem, Barnabas and Antioch, though these breaches 'were not equally deep or permanent.'¹⁹⁴

Longenecker also points out that, though Paul was right in his rebuke of Peter, he does not say how Peter, Barnabas and the church of Antioch actually reacted. This means that 'actually Paul lost and Peter triumphed at Antioch, and that when Paul was writing his letter to the Galatians the church of Antioch 'was siding more or less with Peter rather than Paul.' This, however, does not continue to be true for long.¹⁹⁵

Longenecker suggests that Peter himself 'had no theological difficulties' with table fellowship with Gentile Christians but he had become confused 'when confronted by the practical concerns of James and the delegation he sent.' In his effort, however, to deal with these practical concerns Peter 'took a course of action that in effect had dire theological consequences: that there could be no real fellowship between Jewish believers and Gentile believers in Jesus unless the latter observed the dietary Laws of the former.' Peter, however, seems not to have realized the implications of his action 'for the proclamation of the gospel to Gentiles,' because he was more conscious of 'the Jewish zealot pressures on the Jerusalem church and its mission to the Jews.'¹⁹⁶

George Howard, however, has a quite different understanding of the situation in Antioch. He argues that 'there are strong reasons to believe that not only were Peter's

¹⁹³ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), p.130.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 130-131.

¹⁹⁵ Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp.79-80.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.75.

actions called into question but his theology as well.’¹⁹⁷ Peter’s hypocrisy was not that he withdrew from table fellowship with Gentiles ‘although his convictions told him that this was wrong,’ but that he ‘did one thing for a while and later changed and did the opposite.’ Whatever position actually represented Peter’s personal convictions, as Howard points out, ‘it is hard to escape the conclusion that he was convinced on both occasions that he was right.’¹⁹⁸ Thus, Howard comes to the conclusion that Peter’s hypocrisy was not ‘a simultaneous action of doing one thing while being convinced that it was wrong, but rather of doing one thing for a while and later doing the opposite.’¹⁹⁹ In support of his view, Howard argues that Peter in fact ‘withdrew from the Gentiles out of the frightful suspicion that what he was doing was not right,’ and that Barnabas went with him because ‘Peter had convinced him that association with uncircumcised Gentiles was wrong.’ The surprising thing, as Howard admits, is that Peter’s waverings on this matter ‘were apparently confined to this general time-period,’ because ‘we hear of no other such crisis in the church.’²⁰⁰

In regard to the final effect of Paul’s rebuke of Peter, Howard concludes that in the subsequent history of early Christianity there is no continual struggle between the two apostles, and that Paul’s rebuke ‘was enough eventually to bring Peter around.’²⁰¹

The above divergent opinions show the difficulty in reconstructing the incident of Antioch, which is due to the lack of any other parallel account of the incident to that of

¹⁹⁷ George Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia. A study in Early Christian Theology* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), p.24.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.43.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.43.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.45; 43.

Paul's in Galatians. These opinions necessarily are based on speculation.

The scholars who support the view that Paul failed to convince Peter and Barnabas and the Antiochene Christians to adopt his position might rightfully wonder: if it were true that Paul had finally convinced Peter, why then did he pass over such a victory in silence? Nevertheless, if it were true that Paul had failed and he was the loser, why then did he even choose to mention an incident the result of which seems to refute rather than strengthen his overall argument that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law. The place Paul has chosen to introduce the Antioch incident in his letter to the Galatians, makes it crucial in establishing his thesis that justification is by faith.

The scholars, who support the view that Paul finally convinced Peter and the others, might rightfully argue that we hear of no other such crisis in early Christianity. To the question, why then Paul does not clearly mention that he had finally convinced Peter, various answers could be offered. It is more likely that the receivers of his letter knew the outcome of the incident at Antioch and Paul was interested to show it as supportive to his thesis that justification is by faith.

None of the above questions can be answered with certainty. I agree with Taylor's view that the data we have about the incident 'makes reconstructing the incident at Antioch very difficult,' and that 'while the main parties can be easily identified, their actions and motives are a matter of speculation.' Taylor's view that Paul's account contains 'unreliable aspersions' seems too extreme. We should have in mind that, though we do not know what really happened in Antioch, certainly Paul's contemporaries and especially the Christians in Antioch and Galatia knew very well and it seems unthinkable that Paul could resort to a false presentation of an incident well known to the receivers of his letter.

Thus, to conclude, the dispute between Paul and Peter was a real one, though

Chrysostom wrongly argues for the opposite in his effort to work out a solution capable of confronting the diverse attacks made by the pagans and the enemies of faith. Probably after the incident and for a short period of time Peter was not convinced and there was no table fellowship with Gentile Christians and even to some extent Paul was isolated in Antioch, but not for long. The fact that we do not hear of a similar crisis within early Christianity points to the conclusion that Paul's position was soon adopted by Peter and the other apostles.

However, the reconstruction of the incident is a very difficult task because we do not have a parallel account of it from Peter or Barnabas, and thus, whatever it is said it is based on speculations. What seems clear, and is very crucial for my thesis, is that Paul refers to this incident, along with the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem and the case of Titus, as evidence to support his conviction that justification is by faith. And this precise point, is correctly stressed by Chrysostom.

We turn now to Paul's arguments in support of his thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law, from Galatians' own experience (Gal.3:1-5), the case of Abraham and in particular the way Abraham was justified (Gal.3:6-9), God's promises to the Patriarch and the identity of his true descendants (Gal.3:15-18).

4.6.3 Galatians' Own Experience (Gal.3:1-5): In order to support his thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law, Paul starts his arguments, in Gal.3:1-5, with an appeal to the Galatians' own experience.

Collin Kruse points out that Gal.3:1-4:31 contains a number of theological arguments, which 'are crucial for our understanding of Paul's teaching about the Law

and justification.²⁰² Paul's point is to show that 'both justification and progress in the Christian life are independent of works of the Law.' In order to achieve his point, Paul makes the Galatians 'face up to the implications of their own conversion and ongoing experience as believers before the arrival of the Judaizers.'²⁰³

Kruse argues that Paul's point, by asking in v.2 whether the Galatians had received the Spirit by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith, is to show that 'the legalistic demands of the Judaizers are unnecessary.'²⁰⁴ Thus, Kruse comes to the conclusion that the primary thrust of Paul's argument is that the Galatians 'should recognize that justification is received without the works of the Law.'²⁰⁵

Paul knew that 'works of the Law had had no part in the Galatians' initial experience of the Spirit,' and thus, as James D. G. Dunn argues, Paul can ask the question of v.2 in full confidence.²⁰⁶ However, Paul in v.5 reminds the Galatians that their reception of the Spirit was not simply a single event of the past, but that the 'supplying of the Spirit was a sustained and continuing action of God for the Galatians.'²⁰⁷

Chrysostom detects that from chapter three Paul shifts to another subject. After having established his apostolic office and his authority as a teacher, Paul proceeds to discourse on his subject more confidently, drawing a comparison between faith and Law.²⁰⁸ Paul calls the Galatians 'foolish'²⁰⁹ only after he had shown that they 'rejected the faith, and made the death of Christ to be without a purpose,' and in a way, the

²⁰² Kruse, *Paul, the Law and Justification*, pp.72-73.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.73.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.75.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.77.

²⁰⁶ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p.154.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.157-158.

²⁰⁸ PG 61,647; E.I.E. 20, p.284.

²⁰⁹ Gal.3:1.

reproof is held by these evidences and proofs rather than by Paul himself.²¹⁰

Paul's expression that 'Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified' before the Galatians' eyes, is understood as meaning that the Galatians 'by the eye of faith' saw Christ crucified. Paul's point, as Chrysostom argues, is to show the power of faith to see events which are at a distance. The Galatians by the eye of faith saw more distinctly and more clearly than some who were eye-witnesses of Christ's crucifixion.²¹¹

Paul appeals to the Galatians' own experience by posing a rhetorical question: 'Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the Law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), or by believing what you heard (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως)?' Paul appeals to the Galatians' own experience in order to 'convince them by concise arguments and a summary method of proof,' because, as Chrysostom argues, the Galatians were not willing to attend to long discourses, or to contemplate the magnitude of Christ's crucifixion, and because of their extreme ingratitude.²¹²

Paul's point is not to ask whether or not the Galatians received 'the Spirit,' but rather how they received it: 'by doing the works of the Law or by believing what they heard?' Chrysostom argues that the Galatians, by receiving 'the Spirit' have 'effected miracles in raising the dead, in cleansing lepers, in prophesying, in speaking with tongues.' Thus, according to Chrysostom, Paul's point is to ask the Galatians who had conferred upon them this great power to accomplish such miracles. And since the Galatians did not perform miracles before they 'received the Spirit,' the obvious answer to this question, Chrysostom argues, is that it is not the Law but rather faith which gave

²¹⁰ Chrysostom also observes that Paul's reproof is less severe than they merited, and that Paul moderates his reproof by the expression 'who has bewitched you,' which follows the designation 'foolish.' It is worth noting that according to Chrysostom this expression contains in some measure a praise to the Galatians for it implies that they had shown previously praiseworthy deeds. PG 61,647-648; E.P.E. 20, p.286.

²¹¹ PG 61,648-649; E.P.E. 20, p.288.

²¹² PG 61,649; E.P.E. 20, pp.288-290.

such a power to the Galatians. Thus, Chrysostom concludes, it is ‘the height of madness for these who have received such benefits from faith, to abandon it, and desert back to the Law, which can offer the Galatians nothing of the same kind.’²¹³

Thus, Paul’s intention in v.2 is to remind the Galatians that their own experience stands as a proof of what he assured them in Gal.2:15-21. Paul, by drawing a comparison between faith and the Law, underlines the benefits faith granted to the Galatians.

Commenting on v.5, where Paul repeats his argument with another question similar to that of v.2, Chrysostom suggests that Paul’s argument is in fact a response to his opponents’ message. Paul’s opponents, according to Chrysostom, support the view that ‘apart from the Law faith had no force,’ whereas Paul insists that faith no longer avails when the commandments of the Law are added, because faith has efficacy only when ‘there is no addition from the Law.’ In support of this understanding, Chrysostom points to Paul’s statement in Gal.5:4 where ‘Paul’s language grows bolder.’ Paul’s point is to show that the Galatians received the Spirit and wrought miracles when they ‘obeyed faith and not the Law.’²¹⁴

Thus, it seems clear both to modern scholars and Chrysostom that Paul appeals to the Galatians’ own experience in order to support his conviction, stated in Gal.2:16, that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law.

4.6.4 The Case of Abraham: Besides the Galatians’ own experience, Paul also appeals to the case of Abraham and in order to show how Abraham was justified and who are his true descendants who are to inherit the promises made to him. It seems that Paul’s opponents succeed in attracting the Galatians’ attention to their preaching by

²¹³ PG 61,649; E.I.E. 20, p.290.

²¹⁴ PG 61,650; E.I.E. 20, pp.292-294.

appealing to the case of Abraham and Paul appeals to the case of Abraham in response to his opponents' argument.²¹⁵

Paul appeals firstly to Gen.15:6, which refers to the two main topics in the debate with his opponents: Abraham and justification.²¹⁶ J. Louis Martyn argues that Paul starts with Gen.15:6, which is his own selection, and then turns to Gen.12:3, to which his opponents appeal.²¹⁷ Taking γινώσκετε ὅρα of Gal.3:7 as indicative, meaning 'you know, therefore,' Martyn suggests that in this passage Paul is 'drawing out the meaning of Gen. 15:6.' It is Paul himself who introduces the expression about Abraham's descendants and raises the question as to 'who is it who can be truly be said to be the children of Abraham?' because, he points out, these issues are 'not found in the text' itself.²¹⁸

The fact that Paul focuses his arguments on the person of Abraham and not on the person of Christ indicates that Paul's opponents were not questioning the 'necessity of faith in Christ for both Jews and Gentiles,' but specifically the 'sufficiency of faith in Him' for the Gentiles.' Making an appeal to scripture, Paul's opponents seem to argue that 'righteousness before God can be attained only through abiding by the Law God gave through Moses to Abraham's children,' and mainly by accepting circumcision.²¹⁹

Paul's second quotation from scripture, in Gal.3:8 is from Gen. 12:3. It is worth noting that although the text in the Septuagint actually reads πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς 'all the families of the earth,' Paul quotes πάντα τὰ ἔθνη 'all the nations / Gentiles.' Echoes of the latter expression we also find in Gen. 18:18 and 22:18, but it seems clear that Paul

²¹⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, p.296; Tarazi, *Galatians*, p. 107; Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 109.

²¹⁶ Tarazi, *Galatians*, p. 107.

²¹⁷ Martyn, *Galatians*, pp.297, 300.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp.299-300.

²¹⁹ Tarazi, *Galatians*, p. 107.

quotes here Gen. 12:3.²²⁰ In support of this view, Tarazi argues that a) ‘it is only in Gen.12:3 that we find the express promise of God (unlike 18:18) and only there do we find it addressed to Abraham himself (unlike 22:18)’, and b) Gen.12:3 occurs before the first mention of Abraham which appears in Gen.17.²²¹

Paul, in support of his conviction in Gal. 2:16 that justification is by faith, quotes Gen. 15:6, in Gal. 3:6 in order to show that Abraham was reckoned righteous by God when he did not yet know the Law. In terms of justification Paul says that for the Jewish Christians it comes ‘not by the Law’ (Gal. 2:16), for the Gentile Christians it comes ‘without the Law’ (Gal. 2:2, 5), and for Abraham ‘before the Law’ (Gal. 3:6), developing a parallelism between the Gentile Christians in Galatians and Abraham. Refuting his opponents’ main argument as to who are the children of Abraham, Paul concludes, in v.7 that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως ‘those of faith,’ that is, the Christians²²² are precisely the true children of Abraham.²²³

It is worth noting that Gen. 15:6 mentions Abraham’s faith in the context where Abraham was questioning the promise of God, because he had no posterity. Thus, the nature of Abraham’s faith is precisely his trust in God’s promise (in Gen. 12:3) ‘without having received any evidence or guarantee of its reliability besides the very words God spoke to him.’ God’s promise in Gen. 12:3 ‘functions as a kind of “gospel,”’²²⁴ whereas Abraham’s trusting response in Gen. 15:6 constitutes his faith in this gospel. Thus, it is

²²⁰ Martyn, *Galatians*, p.301; Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp. 113-114; Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 115.

²²¹ Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp. 113-114.

²²² The expression οἱ ἐκ πίστεως ‘those of faith,’ which occurs only in Galatians (3:7, 9), refers to the members of the community of faith, that is, to the Christian community, like the parallel expression, used by Paul in Gal.2:12 οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς ‘those of circumcision’ which refers to the community of Jews. Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp. 110-112.

²²³ The expression υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ ‘children of Abraham’ occurs nowhere else in Paul’s letters, and as Martyn suggests Paul takes this expression from his opponents’ vocabulary. Martyn, *Galatians*, p.299.

²²⁴ Cf., Paul’s use of the verb προεγγεγλίστο ‘preached the gospel beforehand’ in Gal.3:8 which is unique in the whole New Testament.

Abraham's faith in this gospel that 'is reckoned to him as righteous.'²²⁵

Paul, thus, in disagreement with his opponents, points out that 'the inclusion of Abraham himself in this blessing was "through faith," not through circumcision.'²²⁶

Chrysostom, in agreement with modern scholars, also supports the view that Paul from Gal.3:6 introduces the case of Abraham as an example to support his thesis that justification is by faith. Paul's appeal to the case of Abraham is to be understood as a response to his opponents' argument. Noting that Paul's opponents 'made great account of the Patriarch,' Chrysostom argues that Paul introduces 'opportunely' the case of Abraham as part of his argument in order to show that Abraham, like the Galatians, was justified by faith.²²⁷

Outlining the importance of Abraham, Chrysostom declares that if Abraham, who was before grace, was justified by faith' then how much more we, who are after grace, can be justified by faith. In order to convince his audience, Chrysostom introduces a rhetorical question to which he provides instantly the answer: 'For what loss was it to him, not being under the Law? None, for his faith sufficed unto righteousness.' Paul's point, as Chrysostom argues, is to disprove the need of the Law, and in doing so Paul introduces Abraham who was justified before the Law. Chrysostom connects the case of Abraham with that of the Galatians and that of the Christians in his own time, underlining their position regarding the Law: 'the Law did not then exist, neither does it now exist any more than then,' and 'for as then the Law was not yet given, so now, having been given, it was abrogated.'²²⁸

²²⁵ Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp. 115-116.

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 119.

²²⁷ PG 61,650; E.P.E. 20, p.294.

²²⁸ PG 61,650; E.P.E. 20, p.294.

Chrysostom also acknowledges that the identity of the true descendants of Abraham was the central point of the controversy between Paul and his opponents. The fear among the Galatians, he points out, was whether by abandoning the Law they would also lose their kinship to Abraham. In reply to his opponents' message Paul argues that it is faith and not the Law that maintains their kinship with Abraham.²²⁹

Paul's argument in Gal.3:7 that 'those who believe are the descendants of Abraham' is repeated, as Chrysostom observes, more at length in Romans, chapter 4. As Chrysostom points out, the true sons of Abraham according to Gal.3:7 were those who follow his faith and not those who were related to him by blood, because, as he argues, it is evident from Gal.3:8b that 'all the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.'²³⁰

Chrysostom argues that Paul's intention is to show that faith was prior to the Law and he does so because among the Galatians there was a suspicion that the Law was older than faith. From Abraham's case, as Chrysostom concludes, it is evident that faith is prior to the Law since he was justified before the giving of the Law.²³¹ Although Chrysostom does not say who spread the notion in Galatia that the Law is older, the source of such a view was probably Paul's opponents, and thus Paul's statement in v.7 is in fact his response to their message. That this notion affected the Galatians is evident from the verb ἐθορύβει 'was perplexed' which Chrysostom uses to describe the situation.²³²

Chrysostom argues that Paul's point in v.8 is to show that God, who is the giver

²²⁹ PG 61,650-651; E.Π.E. 20, pp.294-296.

²³⁰ PG 61,651; E.Π.E. 20, p.296.

²³¹ PG 61,651; E.Π.E. 20, p.296.

²³² This view is in accord with Paul's general statement in Gal.1:6 that he was astonished from the fact that the Galatians so quickly were 'turning to a different gospel.' What new is added by Gal.3:7 is that Abraham's case and the way he was justified was an important part of Paul's opponents' message to the Galatians; and the clarification to whether or not faith is prior to the Law becomes of great importance, for is determinant to whose message will the Galatians espouse at the end.

of the Law, had decreed, before He gave it, that the Gentiles should be justified by faith. He also points out that the use of the verb προεγγερίσαστο ‘declared the gospel beforehand’ instead of the verb ἀπεκάλυψεν ‘revealed’ signifies that ‘the patriarch was in joy at this method of justification, and in great desire for its accomplishment.’²³³

In the Allegory of Hagar and Sarah, in Gal.4:21-31, as Chrysostom argues, Paul returns to the case of Abraham because the patriarch’s fame among the Jews was great, in order to show that the types had their origin from that time and the present events were pictured formerly in Abraham. What is new in Paul’s argument²³⁴ is that Abraham’s sons ‘were not of equal dignity, one being by a bondwoman, the other by a free woman.’ Thus, as Chrysostom understands it, Paul’s point is to show that the Galatians were not only Abraham’s sons but ‘sons in the same sense as he who was freeborn and noble.’²³⁵

Thus, Paul’s appeal to the Galatians’ own experience is understood by both modern scholars and Chrysostom as an argument in support of Paul’s thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law. Paul also appeals to the case of Abraham, as both modern scholars and Chrysostom argue, in response to his opponents’ argument. Paul can argue, on the basis of Gen.15:6 and 12:3, that Abraham was justified by faith. Thus, the true descendants of Abraham, another central point of the controversy between Paul and his opponents, are those who follow Abraham’s faith (Gal.3:7; Rom 4).

4.7 Conclusions: In spite of the enormous literature which has been produced on Paul’s position towards the Law, modern scholars ‘have thus far reached no consensus

²³³ PG 61,651; E.I.E. 20, pp.296-298.

²³⁴ Previously, as Chrysostom points out, Paul had shown that the Galatians were sons of Abraham. See also Chrysostom’s understanding of Gal.3:7 in p.209.

²³⁵ PG 61,661; E.I.E. 20, p.336.

but have only succeeded in producing a wide variety of divergent opinions.²³⁶ Looking, thus, for a ‘new direction,’ I proposed in my Introduction to study the situation in first-century Galatia and compare it with that of fourth-century Antioch. All the evidence points to the conclusion that the situation in Antioch in the fourth century is very similar to that in Galatia in the first century. Thus, I focused my research on the evaluation of the views held by modern scholars by comparing them with Chrysostom’s own understanding of the situation.²³⁷

Before dealing with Paul’s conviction that ‘a person is justified not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ,’²³⁸ it was essential to clarify the meaning of νόμος ‘Law’ and ἔργα νόμου ‘works of the Law’ in Paul. Νόμος and ἔργα νόμου in Paul, particularly in statements where Paul attacks this Law, are to be understood as referring to the Law of Moses as a whole and the deeds demanded by it. While the views held by modern scholars are variant and divergent, Chrysostom very clearly insists that in every instance in which Paul attacks the Law, this Law is the Law of Moses and not a part of it or anything else.²³⁹

Having defined what Paul means by the terms νόμος and ἔργα νόμου, I turned to Chrysostom’s reading of Gal.2:15-21.²⁴⁰ The whole letter to the Galatians is written, as Chrysostom argues, in order to substantiate Paul’s conviction that justification is by faith. What is Paul’s real reason for abandoning the Law? As Chrysostom insists, Paul rejects

²³⁶ Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, p.11.

²³⁷ For a detail analysis of the situation in Galatia and Antioch, as well as the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, see my Introduction.

²³⁸ This principle is stated in Gal.2:16 and repeated by Paul ‘too frequently and too explicitly,’ as Westerholm points out, leaving no scope for argument. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, p.70.

²³⁹ For the views held by modern scholars and Chrysostom see above in pp.156-160. In support of his view, Chrysostom argues that Paul’s object everywhere is to annul the Law of Moses, because ‘it was through a fear and a horror of this Law that the Jews obstinately opposed grace.’ PG 60,511; E.I.E. 17, p.140.

²⁴⁰ The importance of it is correctly stressed by many modern scholars and by Chrysostom as well. Cf., above in p.160.

the Law because it is too weak and unable to justify, and not because it is 'evil by nature.'²⁴¹ Chrysostom, in his effort to confront the Manicheans, a dualistic group of the third century, comes to the view that it was sin and not the Law that by seizing an opportunity in the commandment, 'increased the concupiscence and the reverse of the Law's intent was brought about.'²⁴² Thus, Chrysostom argues, passages like Rom.3:20, 5:20 and 7:7-8 are not to be understood as accusations against the Law. Chrysostom comes to the conclusion that for Paul the one who is actually responsible for the negative results mentioned in these passages is sin and not the Law itself.²⁴³

Thus, according to Chrysostom, Paul rejects the Law because it is unable to justify and not because it is evil by nature. The antinomy between faith in Christ and the observance of the Law (Gal.2:17) exists precisely on the grounds of justification and if it is considered separately could be misinterpreted, leading to wrong conclusions. Christ's crucifixion and not the Law is the source of life (Gal.2:20), and more importantly, Christ's death is a plain proof of the inability of the Law to justify, for otherwise Christ's death would be superfluous (Gal.2:21). There are two opposite alternatives, Chrysostom concludes, either the inability of the Law to justify, or the superfluousness of Christ's death.²⁴⁴

One may ask, against whom Paul directs his thesis that justification is not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ? Has he in mind the Jewish understanding of salvation? Or his opponents in Galatia? Paul's insistence that no one can be justified by the works of the Law leads, thus, one to ask, *who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify?* and more importantly, *why the works of the Law cannot justify?*

²⁴¹ PG 61,643; E.II.E. 20, p.266.

²⁴² PG 60,500; E.II.E. 17, p.102.

²⁴³ Cf., above in p.165.

²⁴⁴ Cf., above in pp.165-173.

J. D. G. Dunn and Räisänen agree with Sanders' proposal that in all branches of first-century Judaism salvation 'is not earned by human works,' but they disagree over the real reason for Paul's attack on Judaism. The reason, according to Sanders, is not the rejection of the works, but Paul's 'exclusive soteriology;' according to Dunn, is not against the works as such, but reliance on those particular works of the Law that served as identity and boundary markers for the Jewish people. Räisänen, however, argues that Judaism was not characterized by legalism whereas Judaism, as depicted by Paul, was legalism, and thus, Paul's view of Judaism is 'a distorted one.' Westerholm agrees with Räisänen's view that Paul ascribes 'a saving value to the fulfilment of the precepts of the Law,' but he points out that when Paul contrasts the righteousness of the Law with that of faith, he does not base his depiction on empirical observation of first-century communities, but rather finds both principles enunciated in scripture.²⁴⁵

What has Chrysostom to say in regard to the above divergent opinions? Chrysostom is convinced that according to the scriptures, Judaism understood the works of the Law as a path to salvation, quoting Rom.10:5 and Lev.18:5 in support of his view. The observance of the Law could lead to salvation and the Law's intention was to do so regardless of the final results. Thus, Chrysostom's view stands in agreement with that of Westerholm.²⁴⁶

If the Law was indeed 'a path to salvation' for both Paul and Judaism, why then does Paul affirm that 'no one can be justified by the works of the Law'? and thus, ask *why the works of the Law cannot justify?* In regard to this crucial question, modern scholars provided a wide range of answers, more diverse than one would expect.

Westerholm argues that for Paul the Law promises life to those who obey its

²⁴⁵ Cf., above in pp.173-176.

²⁴⁶ Cf., above in pp.176-177.

commands, but threatens with death those who disobey them, and Paul's own explanation as to why the Law does not provide the life it promises is human transgressions. However, as Westerholm points out, Paul was not the first to think that 'since the Sinaitic covenant has failed through human transgressions, any further dealings of God with his people must be based on God's character and grace alone,' quoting Jer.31:31-32, Hos.1:9, in support of his view. Chrysostom likewise supports the view that the Law failed to provide the life it promises, because of the 'listlessness' of the Jews.²⁴⁷

It is worth noting the way Chrysostom treats the entire letter to the Galatians. For him, Gal.2:16 records Paul's conviction that justification is by faith, while the rest of Galatians provides Paul's arguments in support of his thesis. Paul's reference to the case of Titus, and to the incident of Antioch, for instance, are understood as evidence that support Paul's thesis.

The case of Titus, who was not compelled to be circumcised during the Apostolic Conference in Jerusalem (Gal.2:1-10), and especially Paul's expression 'was not compelled' has been variously understood by modern scholars. Most of them understood it as 'a direct affirmation' that Titus was not circumcised, whereas some others understood it as meaning that Titus was circumcised 'voluntarily or at Paul's suggestion.'²⁴⁸ For Chrysostom Titus was not circumcised and he understood the case of Titus as 'a plain proof' that the apostles in the Jerusalem Conference did not condemn either Paul's doctrine or his practice. Giving to the case of Titus great importance, he concludes that the decision of the Apostolic Conference not to harass the Gentiles on circumcision, makes it evident that the apostles, unlike Paul's opponents, permitted

²⁴⁷ Cf., above in pp.179-182.

²⁴⁸ Cf., above in pp.185-189. Burton is right in arguing that Paul's expression 'was not compelled' 'denies not the attempt to compel but the success of the attempt.' Cf., above in p.186.

circumcision by way of condescension and not as imposing a Law.²⁴⁹

The incident in Antioch is also of great importance not only for its implications on justification and the role of the Law in Christian life, but also for its effect on the development of early Christianity. The reconstruction of the incident is a very difficult task because of the lack of any parallel account of it to that of Paul's.

The patristic interpretations of the incident, including that of Chrysostom, proposed two main solutions in an effort to confront the diverse 'attacks of heretics and unbelievers.' According to the first one, proposed by Clement of Alexandria, the *Cephas* whom Paul rebukes was 'not the apostle Peter but one of the seventy disciples,' who just bore the same name with Peter. According to the second solution, proposed by Origen, the dispute between the two apostles was 'simulated,' in order that Paul might more effectively 'condemn the Judaizers.' Chrysostom rejects Clement's solution and espouses that of Origen. Origen's proposal is also espoused by Jerome. In the controversy between Jerome and Augustine, the latter correctly rejects Origen's proposal and interprets the incident of Antioch as 'a case of the higher claims of truth over rank and office,' that is, 'of Peter's error despite his primacy, of Paul's rightful rebuke and defense of the gospel, and of Peter's humility in accepting correction from an inferior in both age and standing.' The majority of the fathers of the early church, including Chrysostom, as Lightfoot correctly points out, in their effort to meet the diverse attacks of heretics and unbelievers, 'fell into the snare,' resisting all temptations to 'wrest the plain meaning of the passage.'²⁵⁰

There is no consensus of opinion among modern scholars in regard to the actual situation in Antioch. Some scholars support the view that Paul failed to convince Peter

²⁴⁹ Cf., above in pp.187-189.

²⁵⁰ Cf., above in pp.189-192.

and Barnabas to adopt his position. Nicholas Taylor argues that Paul's confrontation with Peter 'ended up in defeat and isolation for him.' Dunn agrees with Taylor in that the conflict in Antioch led Paul to a triple breach with Jerusalem, Barnabas and Antioch. Longenecker argues that though Paul was right in his rebuke of Peter, he failed to convince him, but this does not continue to be true for long. Howard, on the other side, supports the view that Paul's rebuke 'was enough to bring Peter around,' calling into question not only Peter's actions but also his theology. Whatever position actually represented Peter's personal convictions, Howard argues, 'it is hard to escape the conclusion that he was convinced on both occasions that he was right.'²⁵¹

The above divergent opinions held by modern scholars show the difficulties in reconstructing the incident of Antioch, which are mostly based on speculation because of the lack of parallel accounts of it. The dispute between the two apostles was a real one, though Chrysostom wrongly argues for the opposite. It seems very likely that after the incident and for a short time after, Peter was not convinced and to some extent Paul was isolated in Antioch. Paul's position, however, was soon adopted by Peter, Barnabas and the rest, because we do not hear of a similar crisis within early Christianity. Thus, Paul refers to the incident as evidence which supports his thesis that justification is by faith, and this point was correctly stressed by Chrysostom.²⁵²

Paul also appeals to the Galatian's own experience and to the case of Abraham as arguments in support of his thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law. Paul appeals to the case of Abraham, as both modern scholars and Chrysostom argue, in response to his opponents' argument. Abraham, according to Gen.15:6 and 12:3, was justified by faith, and the true descendants of Abraham are those who follow

²⁵¹ Cf., above in pp.197-200.

²⁵² Cf., above in pp.200-202.

Abraham's faith.²⁵³

Paul's thesis that justification is not by the works of the Law, however, raises questions about the origin and purpose of the Law, which we shall consider in the next chapter.

²⁵³ Cf., above in pp.202-210.

5

THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE LAW

5.1 The Origin of the Law: Paul, after stating his thesis that justification is by faith and not by the works of the Law, turns to the Law's origin and purpose. With regard to the purpose of the Law, Paul states, in Gal.3:19-20, that the Law τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη, ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπηγγέλται 'it was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made.' In regard to the origin of the Law, he says: διαταγείς δι' ἀγγέλων ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου. ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἐνός οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ Θεός εἷς ἔστιν 'it was ordained through angels by a mediator. Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one.' It is worth noting that Paul introduces his statement by asking 'why then the Law?' that is, 'what is its function?' a question which naturally emerges from Paul's assertion that the Law cannot justify.

Before, however, we proceed to the function of the Law it is essential to deal with its origin. While in Romans and I Corinthians Paul clearly originates the Law with God, in Galatians he says that it was given 'through angels,' which leads some scholars to argue that in Galatians it does not originate with God but with the angels.¹

¹Brice L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol. LXII; Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill, 1989), p.35; Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.176, 90; Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.128; Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, p.27.

Albert Schweitzer, for instance, proposes that 'Paul systematically presupposed that the Law was given by evil spiritual powers, the rulers of the old aeon.'² Thus, according to Schweitzer, the Law 'was given by angels who desired to make men subservient to them,'³ and obedience to the Law comes to mean obedience to these evil rulers.⁴ Similarly Schoeps proposes that Paul 'declares that no one other than Moses functioned as the mediator (μεσίτης) of the angels' and thus 'in the last analysis this means that the Law springs not from God but from angels.'⁵

Hans Hübner also supports the view that the angels were not only the mediators but also the authors of the Law. In support of his view, Hübner argues that it 'is linguistically entirely possible, as *διὰ* and *ὑπὸ* can be used interchangeably.' Thus, as he suggests, if the angels are the authors of the Law and their intention is 'to provoke transgressions,' then the intention of the angels is not identical with God's intention. This led Hübner to the conclusion that the angels are to be understood as 'demonic beings who in contrast to God do not desire the salvation of mankind.' This understanding of the purpose of the Law, as Hübner points out, 'no longer gives the disastrous impression of being a cynical comment on God.'⁶

Räisänen observes that Paul's statement in Gal.3:19 that the Law 'was given through angels' seems strange, for it appears 'to regard the angels as the originators of the Law, thus denying its immediately divine origin.' He argues, however, that 'outside

² Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Holt, 1931), p.70.

³ Ibid., p.69. Cf., Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.176.

⁴ Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Holt, 1931), p.71. Cf., Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.128.

⁵ Schoeps, *Paul*, pp.182-183.

⁶ Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, p.27. As he points out, 'if a God, who -although he is a Holy One!- puts men in the (literally) damnable and immoral situation of sinning only so that he can show his divinity through his kindness and unsurpassable grace,' this is a very cynical comment on God. Ibid., p.26.

Galatians Paul always refers to the Law as given by God.’⁷ Räisänen rejects Hübner’s view that the angels were ‘demonic beings with evil intentions,’ arguing that there are strong indications in Gal.3:19-20 that ‘Paul could not ascribe a demonic origin to the Law;’ and that Paul did not exclude ‘God altogether from the act of Law giving.’ However, he does not suggest that the ‘natural literal’ understanding of Gal.3:19-20, that is that ‘the Law was given by angels alone’ should be rejected; rather it is to be understood, as Räisänen proposes, as another ‘internal contradiction in Paul.’⁸ Thus, Räisänen comes to the conclusion that Paul is ‘simply toying’ with the idea that the angels were the originators of the Law, since he never returns to it.⁹

Sanders argues that Paul’s statement in Gal. 3:19 is to be understood as ‘a thrust against the Law in the heat of the debate,’ and not as ‘an actual change of mind which is systematically carried through.’ Sanders suggests reading Galatians 3 as showing the depth of Paul’s dilemma: ‘he believed that God gave the Law, but he also believed that salvation is through faith in Christ and that the Law served only to condemn.’ Thus, Sanders concludes that the main line of Paul’s argument is that ‘God always intended to save by faith, apart from the Law.’¹⁰

Westerholm suggests that the giving of the Law ‘through angels’ is for Paul a ‘dramatic indication of the Law’s inferiority to God’s promises.’¹¹ Paul uses a common tradition in his day, but in a radical way.¹² For Westerholm the expression διαταγὴς δι’

⁷ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, pp.128-129.

⁸ Ibid., pp.131-132.

⁹ Ibid., pp.131, 130.

¹⁰ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.68.

¹¹ Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, p.177.

¹² Westerholm argues that although according to the Old Testament Moses received the Law from God and from no one else, it is a common tradition that angels were present at the giving of the Law (Ex. 3; Acts 7:38, 53; Heb.2:22; Jub. 1:29-2:1). Ibid., p.177. Cf., Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.131.

ἀγγέλων is an ambiguous one. Neither the participle *διαταγείς* nor the preposition *διὰ* determine whether the angels were the source of the Law or just the mediators. As he proposes, ‘only the context can determine which is meant,’ and it ‘shows clearly enough that Paul is speaking of the communication by angels of a Law divine in its origin.’¹³ Thus, Westerholm comes to the conclusion that since Paul throughout Galatians assumes the traditional view that the Law is divine, then ‘the ambiguous expression of 3:19b (‘ordained by angels’) should be interpreted in a way consistent with this implication.’¹⁴

For Chrysostom, however, the divine origin of the Law is beyond any question. Dealing with the second part of v.19 where Paul says that the Law was ‘ordained through angels by a mediator,’ Chrysostom proposes two possible different understandings of the word ‘angels,’ without, however, espousing any of them. Paul, by the word ‘angels,’ Chrysostom says, refers either to the priests or to the angels themselves who ministered the delivery of the Law. None of these two understandings, however, seems to lead Chrysostom to negative conclusions regarding the divine origin and the purpose of the Law. In any case it is quite clear that, for Chrysostom, the mission of the angels is to minister the delivery of the Law, implying its divine origin.¹⁵

What is suprising, however, is that Chrysostom wrongly suggests in this context that Paul by the term ‘mediator,’ in v.20, implies Christ and not Moses.¹⁶ Nevertheless,

¹³ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.177.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.178-179.

¹⁵ PG 61,654; E.I.E. 20, p.310.

¹⁶ Origen is the first Christian writer who understands Christ as the mediator, and is followed by Victorinus, Hilary, Jerome, Augustine and Chrysostom. Origen, as Lightfoot argues, was misled by I Tim.2:5. Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p.146. Among contemporary commentators who disagree with Chrysostom Theodoretus supports the view that Paul by the term ‘mediator’ implies Moses and not Christ. Theodoretus says that ‘καὶ τῇ τοῦτου θέσει Μωϋσέως διακονούντος. Αὐτὸν γὰρ μεσίτην ἐκάλεσε ‘and in his place Moses was ministering. He called him the mediator.’ PG 82,481.

Chrysostom elsewhere clearly espouses the view that Christ is the one who gave the Law to Moses and thus Moses is the ‘receiver of the Law.’¹⁷

It seems that Chrysostom in this context comes to this wrong suggestion on purpose to stress Christ’s superiority over the Law. Chrysostom afterwards is quick to insist that Christ gave the Law, without mentioning the name of the receiver, because it served the conclusion he wants to come to: that is, if Christ is the one who gave the Law, then it was His to annul. Chrysostom’s point was not to reject Moses’ place in the delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai, but rather to stress Christ’s authority to ‘annul the Law.’ He points out that according to Gal.3:19 the Law has a temporal function: it is limited ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπηγγέλται ‘until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made.’ Thus, by stressing Christ’s authority to annul the Law, Chrysostom does not imply that Christ has changed his mind, but rather that Christ always intended a temporal function for the Law.¹⁸

Chrysostom’s understanding of the divine origin of the Law differs from that of some modern scholars, who suggested that the angels were not only the mediators but also the authors of the Law, and that they were ‘demonic beings with evil intentions.’ Chrysostom’s understanding, however, is in agreement with that of his contemporaries. What seems very important to the early Christian writers is to stress that ‘the revelation of God in Christ was in direct continuity with the revelation of the same God in the era of the Old Testament,’¹⁹ although they stress that the Law was clearly limited in extent

¹⁷ Chrysostom, in his homily *De Christi Precibus Contra Anomeas* says that καὶ Μωϋσῆι αὐτὸς τὸν νόμον ἔδωκε ‘and He (Christ) gave the Law to Moses.’ PG 48,791; E.I.E. 35, p.342.

¹⁸ PG 61,654-655; E.I.E. 20, p.310.

¹⁹ Maurice F. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle. The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p49.

and of inferior worth when compared with Christ and his gospel.’²⁰

In particular it was important to early Christian writers to attack Marcion’s interpretation of Paul’s position towards the Law. Thus, although Marcion stressed the ‘extreme one-sidedness of Paul’s criticisms of the Law,’ the early Christian writers stressed on the other side the ‘positive aspects of Paul’s attitude’ keeping to a minimum Paul’s opposition to the Law.²¹ Whereas Marcion and the Gnostics insisted that the Law and the gospel ‘must derive from different Gods,’ the early Christian writers rejected the view that the Law originated with another God and insisted that ‘one and the same God’ is the author of the Law and the gospel.²² As Maurice F. Wiles concludes, the Law ‘was clearly recognized as being the good creation of God’ and it has ‘a positive value, though it was clearly limited in extent and of inferior worth when compared with Christ and his gospel.’²³ Thus it seems safe to conclude that Chrysostom and his contemporaries insisted on the divine origin of the Law in their effort to oppose the views held by Marcion and the Gnostics.

5.2 The Purpose of the Law: Paul’s conviction that justification is ‘not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ,’ forced even Paul himself to ask in Gal.3:19 τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; ‘why then the Law?’ Paul does not leave the receivers of his letter to suppose by themselves what is the function of the Law since it cannot justify, but rather provides his own answer to this crucial question. Paul’s point, by this question, is twofold: to leave no space of misunderstanding from the side of Galatians and to give no chance to his opponents to distort his position towards the Law. Though one would

²⁰ Wiles, *The Divine Apostle. The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles in the Early Church*, p.60.

²¹ Ibid., p.50.

²² Ibid., p.58.

²³ Ibid., p.60.

expect a clear answer from Paul as to the function of the Law, Paul's answer is very ambiguous.²⁴ according to Paul's own answer, the Law 'was added because of transgressions' τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη.

Thus, the expression τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν 'because of the transgressions,' and what Paul means by this expression, needs to be defined before we proceed.

Hans Hübner proposes that the expression τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη is to be understood as a *final* and not as a *causal* clause, and thus as meaning that the Law 'is added (to the promises) and has been given "for the sake of transgressions" or more pointedly "to provoke transgressions."'²⁵ Hübner argues that 'a clear distinction has to be made between the immanent intention of the Law and the intention of the legislator.' The purpose 'to provoke transgressions' indicates the purpose of the Law-giver (or the Law-givers, pointing to the angels as the authors of the Law), but says nothing of the *immanent intention* of the Law: according to this, those who carry out its stipulations are meant 'to live.'²⁶

In an effort to find a 'consistent line of thought' in Gal.3:19-21, Hübner distinguishes three different intentions: God's intention, the immanent intention of the Law and the intention of Law-givers. Paul's entire argument, he argues, 'can be shown to be without inner contradictions,' by concluding that 'God's good intention consisted in taking up the evil intention of the angels and turning it to the purposes of salvation,'²⁷

²⁴ Thus, Räisänen argues that Paul's phrase in Gal.3:19 is ambiguous. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.140. Sanders, also observes that although Paul's question is clear, some aspects of his answer are difficult. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.66.

²⁵ Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, p.26.

²⁶ Ibid., p.26.

²⁷ Ibid., pp.29-30.

and by assuming the 'coexistence and interwovenness of the three intentions.'²⁸

In regard to the purpose of the Law, Räisänen sees two main lines of thought in Paul contradictory to each other. According to the first line of thought, 'the possibility that the Law could lead unto life is excluded already in principle,' and according to the second line of thought, 'that possibility is shown to be irrelevant merely on empirical grounds.'²⁹ Räisänen like Hübner suggests that it sounds rather cynical 'if the Law's only direct purpose was to provoke sin.' He also wonders why God gave so weak a Law, proposing that Christ is then 'God's second attempt to save mankind' since His first attempt proved unsuccessful.³⁰

Räisänen, although he does not suggest that Paul's picture of God is cynical, rejects Hübner's attempt to remove this cynical idea by distinguishing between three different intentions. Rather he proposes that 'If we draw certain logical implications from some of Paul's statements about the Law, then strange conclusions will result' which Paul himself 'would have rejected emphatically.' Paul, as Räisänen concludes, 'ended up by putting forward artificial and conflicting theories about the Law,' because he 'started from an aprioristic Christological conviction.'³¹ Räisänen, thus, comes to the final conclusion that the purpose of the Law was a negative one, that is, to 'increase and even bring about sin,' although a positive purpose is also presupposed by Paul, that is, to lead 'unto life,' which however, it was unable to carry out.³²

Sanders like Räisänen rejects Hübner's effort to reconstruct Paul's argument by

²⁸ Hübner argues that 'God foresees man's failure in the Law, which, in itself, is life-giving; He also foresees the intention of the angels to entice men to destruction through the giving of the Law, and He therefore takes all this into account and creates justification by faith.' *Ibid.*, p.31.

²⁹ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.152.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.153.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.153-154.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.152, 200.

distinguishing between three different intentions. For Sanders, the debate about Abraham is conducted on the assumption that 'the Law reveals the true way to righteousness,' and thus, 'God's own intention.'³³

Sanders, thus, proposes to read Galatians 3 as showing the depth of Paul's dilemma: Paul, as Sanders puts it, 'believed that God gave the Law, but he also believed that salvation is through faith in Christ and that the Law served only to condemn.' His way out of this dilemma was 'to connect the Law with sin and to assign it a negative place in God's plan of salvation.'³⁴

Dunn, however, argues that 'the more likely reading of Gal.3:19a in its own terms, and within the context of Galatians, is as a positive description of the role of the Law in the period prior to the coming of Christ.' Dunn points out that this verse is mistakenly 'almost always taken in a negative sense.' As he correctly argues, it is a mistake 'to read Galatians as though it had been written in the light of the later Romans.' The negative reading of this verse is wrong because it is 'too much dependent on the assumption that Paul's attitude to the Law was wholly negative.'³⁵

Westerholm, sketching the background of the Law in Paul, supports the view that the Law was given 'with sanctions of life and death, blessing and curse.' From Christ's death for the sins of humanity Paul comes to the conclusion that the Law was broken and thus only 'its sanction of death has become operative.' Starting from the principle that God would not be God 'if he were surprised by the latter development, or if it found no place in his plan,' Westerholm thus proposes that for Paul sin to which the Law led was

³³ This assumption, as Sanders argues, characterizes not only Gal.3:16-18 but also 4:21-31. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.68.

³⁴ Sanders argues that this dilemma also appears in Romans, where Paul handles it in a different way. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, pp.66-68.

³⁵ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, pp.188-189.

a part of God's design. However, as he argues, neither God nor his Law 'is responsible for the Law's transgression,' and the consignment by the Law of all humanity to sin is 'merely the prelude to the demonstration of divine mercy in Christ.'³⁶

Dealing primarily with the views held by Sanders and Räisänen, Westerholm argues that more attention to the context of Paul's statements 'will at least reduce the number of inconsistencies' in Paul. He also insists that the tasks Paul attributes to the Law do not represent 'arbitrary inventions,' as both scholars suggest, but rather represent 'restatements of principles long maintained within his inherited religion.'³⁷

Westerholm, in particular, rejects the thought of inconsistency in Paul in regard to his statement about the Law's relationship to sin, by pointing out that everywhere appears the same conviction: 'sin precedes the Law, though the Law makes humanity's plight more desperate.'³⁸ With regard to the effect which could be attributed to the coming of the Law, Westerholm rejects Räisänen's conclusion that Paul shows that 'the effects of the Law are negative and only negative.'³⁹ As Westerholm argues, Paul's understanding of the effect of the coming of the Law is 'consistent with convictions fundamental to Jewish as well as Christian faith.' The Law's sanctions are twofold: it promised life to those who obeyed its commands, but also became 'a fearful curse' to those who transgressed its commands. 'What the Old Testament scriptures declare to have been the Law's effect Paul affirms as its purpose,' and thus, as he points out, Paul's statement that 'the Law brings wrath' is not just 'an arbitrary attempt to discover a negative role for the Law.'⁴⁰

³⁶ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.174-175.

³⁷ Ibid., p.175.

³⁸ Ibid., p.182.

³⁹ Ibid., p.183. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.150.

⁴⁰ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.185.

Tarazi, in search of the purpose of the Law on the basis of Paul's statement in Gal.3:19, argues that this verse 'has proven to be a prime opportunity for commentators to practice *eisegesis*.'⁴¹ He suggests that some modern scholars do not allow Paul's argument in Galatians to 'speak for itself,' but rather they 'systematically resort to Romans in order to circumvent the difficulty' of Gal.3:19. Thus, as Tarazi points out, instead of hearing what Paul has to say in Galatians one hears what Paul has to say in Romans. Tarazi also argues that some scholars assume that it is Paul's premise that the Law is inferior to the promise. However, 'the only premise explicit in the text itself is that Paul is discussing *the place and function* of the Law against the background of God's promise to Abraham.'⁴²

Thus, instead of studying Paul's argument about the purpose of the Law in Romans and then transferring it to Gal.3:19, Tarazi proposes to investigate Paul's usage of the term παράβασις 'transgression,' which is used in Gal.3:19.⁴³

As Tarazi admits, the expression τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν 'because of the transgressions,' can mean either 'due to' or 'for the purpose of.'⁴⁴ According to Tarazi, the terms παράβασις 'transgression' and παραβάτης 'transgressor' are used in Paul as well as in the entire New Testament in relation to the Law.⁴⁵ Paul, in Rom. 4:15 says that

⁴¹ *Eisegesis* is 'the interpretation of a text by reading into it one's own ideas,' and it is opposite to *exegesis*, which is 'an attempt at reading out of text what its author meant to say.' Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.191.

⁴² Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.146.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.146.

⁴⁴ The commentators who opt the first meaning, suggest that Paul's point is that 'the Law had been introduced in order to correct a situation which already existed -the prevalence of sin- by enhancing people's awareness of it.' The commentators who opt for the second meaning, suggest that Paul's point is that the Law had been introduced in order 'to produce and multiply sin.' Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.146-147, 191 notes 57 and 58.

⁴⁵ The former term occurs in Rom. 2:23; 4:15; Heb. 2:2; 9:15, and the latter in Rom. 2:25, 27; Gal.2:18; James 2:9,11. The only exception is the use of transgression of Adam (Rom.5:14) and of Eve (Tim.2:14), where the term transgression refers to the disobedience of Adam and Eve 'against the express command of God not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil' (Gen.2:17; 3:1, 3).

‘where there is no Law there is no transgression either.’⁴⁶

Tarazi proposes that Paul’s usage of the term *transgressions* in Gal. 3:19 ‘can only mean transgressions in conjunction with the express commands of the Law, and not “sins,” or even “sin” in general,’ and thus transgressions ‘can only can be a “post-Law” phenomenon. Paul’s expression *because of*, in the same verse, ‘can only mean “for the purpose of” producing something, and in no way “due to” something that is not even there!’⁴⁷ In support of his view, Tarazi argues that these scholars ‘go astray by reading the idea of *sin* or *trespass* into *transgression*, and because of that they impose the notion of ‘multiplication of sin’ from Rom. 5:20 upon Gal.3:19.’⁴⁸

It remains to see how Chrysostom reads Gal.3:19-22 and thus, what purpose the Law has according to this passage. Chrysostom argues that Paul’s statement in vv.17-18 that the Law cannot turn aside the promises made to Abraham and does not bestow the blessings and even life and righteousness, seems to leave the Law without a clear purpose to serve. He argues that v.19 is to be understood as Paul’s own answer to the question what purpose the Law serves: ‘it was added because of transgression.’ What is worth noting is that Chrysostom, after citing v.19, strongly asserts that for Paul the Law is not superfluous, but altogether useful and profitable.⁴⁹ Chrysostom gives emphasis on ‘how carefully’ Paul measures his every word in declaring his doctrine in order to avoid any misunderstanding. As he points out, Paul having exalted faith and proved that it is older

⁴⁶ Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.147-148.

⁴⁷ Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.148.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.147-149.

⁴⁹ PG 61,654; E.H.E. 20, pp.308-310.

than the Law, proceeds to prove that the Law was not superfluous.⁵⁰

The determinant expression, with regard to the purpose of the Law, τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη ‘it was added because of transgressions,’ is to be understood, Chrysostom argues, as meaning that the Law was given in order that ‘the Jews might not be let live carelessly, and plunge into the depth of wickedness,’ and that the Law functions as ‘a bridle, guiding, regulating, and checking them from transgressing, if not all, at least some of the commandments.’⁵¹

Thus, as Chrysostom readily concludes, the advantage of the Law was not slight. He stresses, however, the temporal nature of the Law which was given ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται ‘until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made.’ Then, Chrysostom argues, if the Law was given until the advent of Christ, why do they protract the mission of the Law beyond its natural period? Thus, at least for Chrysostom, the Law was not considered superfluous, and its advantage was not slight, although its mission ended by the advent of Christ.⁵²

Chrysostom points out that from what was said regarding the purpose of the Law in vv.19-20 one might think that the Law is opposed to the promises of God. Chrysostom admits that from Paul’s argument seems to arise an antithesis, which Paul endeavours to solve: ‘For if the blessing is given in the offspring of Abraham, but the Law brings in the curse, it must be contrary to the promises.’ Paul, Chrysostom argues, does not only imply that the Law is opposed to the promises made to Abraham, but also rejects such a

⁵⁰ The way Chrysostom searches for the motive and the purpose hidden behind Paul’s statement, and the principles of interpretation he forms, is something that one has to have in mind when he reads Chrysostom. More about these issues can be found in chapter 3, pp.162-170. This instance is another clear case where Chrysostom applies his skillful principles in order to have a correct understanding of Paul.

⁵¹ PG 61,654; E.I.E. 20, p.310.

⁵² PG 61,654; E.I.E. 20, p.310.

conclusion.⁵³ For Chrysostom, Paul solves the antithesis in v.21 doing two things: firstly he forbids by saying *μὴ γένοιτο* ‘certainly not,’ and secondly by arguing that ‘if a Law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed come through the Law.’ As Chrysostom argues, Paul’s point in v.21 is that the objection might be valid only ‘if we had our hope of life in the Law, and our salvation depended on it.’ However, as long as we are being saved by means of faith, we suffer nothing from the Law, though it brings us under the curse, because faith comes and sets all right.’⁵⁴

The description of the mission of the Law, Chrysostom argues, can be found in v.22. As the Jews were not even conscious of their own sins, and in consequence they did not even desire remission, the Law was given ‘to probe their wounds, that they might long for a physician.’ Chrysostom points out that the word *συνέκλεισεν*⁵⁵ ‘shut up’ means *ἤλεγξεν* ‘convicted’ ‘imprisoned’ and that conviction held the Jews in fear.⁵⁶ What is important to stress is that Chrysostom does not attribute a ‘negative’ purpose to the Law. For Chrysostom the Law has clearly a ‘positive’ purpose. As he concludes, the Law was not only against the promises made to Abraham, but also was given for these promises. Expressing the importance of the mission of the Law, he argues that if the Law had not been given then the Jews ‘would have been wrecked upon wickedness, and there would have been no Jews to listen to Christ.’⁵⁷

Outlining the purpose of the Law, Chrysostom argues that the giving of the Law has effected mainly two things: 1) the Law ‘has schooled its followers in a certain degree

⁵³ PG 61,655; E.I.E. 20, p.312.

⁵⁴ PG 61,655; E.I.E. 20, p.312.

⁵⁵ Chrysostom also argues that the expression in v.23 *ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκεκλεισμένοι* ‘were imprisoned and guarded under the Law’ indicates ‘nothing else than the security given by the commandments of the Law.’ PG 61,655; E.I.E. 20, p.314.

⁵⁶ PG 61,655; E.I.E. 20, p.312.

⁵⁷ PG 61,655; E.I.E. 20, pp.312-314.

of virtue, and 2) has pressed on them the knowledge of their own sins. And this especially made them more zealous to seek the Son.’ Thus, it seems correct to conclude that Paul’s statement in v. 22, as at least understood by Chrysostom, attributes clearly a positive purpose to the Law.⁵⁸

The important role of the Law is also stressed in v.24, as Chrysostom suggests, where Paul cites his own conclusion: ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστὸν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν ‘therefore the Law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.’ Chrysostom, after citing Paul’s conclusion, proceeds to determine the duties of a disciplinarian slave in ancient Greece, which is essential in understanding correctly Paul’s point.⁵⁹ He reminds his audience that the disciplinarian is not opposed to the teacher, but cooperates with him ‘ridding the youth from all vice and makes him ready to receive the instructions from his teacher.’ However, when the youth’s habits are formed, then, as he points out, the disciplinarian leaves the youth and his duties are ended.⁶⁰

Dealing with Paul’s expression in Gal.5:17 that ‘what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit,’ Chrysostom argues that Paul used to call ‘the flesh not the natural body but the depraved will,’ and that it is ‘the earthly mind, slothful and careless,’ which Paul calls the flesh. Thus, as he concludes, Paul by his expression that the flesh desires against the Spirit means ‘two mental states which are opposed each other, virtue and vice, not the soul and the body.’ Paul’s statement in Gal.5:18, that ‘if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the Law,’ as Chrysostom points out, means that one who ‘has the

⁵⁸ PG 61,655; E.I.E. 20, p.314.

⁵⁹ In ancient Greece, the disciplinarian was a slave whose responsibility was to take his master’s son and bring him, every day, to his teacher, and then to take him back to his master’s house. Sometimes this slave was educated and was also responsible to help the child in his studies. It was unthinkable to even imagine that the disciplinarian slave could in any way be opposed to the child’s teacher, but he ought to support him.

⁶⁰ PG 61,656; E.I.E. 20, p.314.

Spirit as he ought' 'quenches thereby every evil desire,' and thus he 'needs no help from the Law but is exalted far above its precepts.'⁶¹ As he explains, one who is never angry does not need to hear the command 'you shall not kill,' because anger is the root of murder; one 'who never casts unchaste looks' does not need to hear the admonition 'you shall not commit adultery,' because 'an inquisitive gazing upon faces' is the root of adultery. Thus, he points out that 'the Law stood according to its power in the place of the Spirit before He came,' which is a 'high and striking eulogy' of the Law.⁶² Comparing the teaching role of the Law with that of the Spirit, Chrysostom calls the Law a 'grammarian' and the Spirit a 'philosopher.' Before the coming of the Spirit, as Chrysostom admits, 'we were justly subject to the Law,' in order that 'by fear we might chasten our lusts,' but now that grace is given which 'leads us to a higher rule of life' there is no more need of the Law. For Chrysostom the teaching role of the Law as a grammarian comes to an end with the coming of the Spirit.⁶³

Thus, Chrysostom concludes, since the Law was our disciplinarian and we were kept shut up under it, then 'it is not the adversary but the fellow-worker of grace.' For Chrysostom, the Law would be contrary to grace only if it continues to hold us down; the Law would become the destruction of our salvation only if it confines those who ought to go forward to grace.⁶⁴ Applying his conclusion to the people of fourth-century Antioch, Chrysostom insists that those who still keep the Law are indeed 'the traducers of the Law,' just as the disciplinarian makes a youth ridiculous by retaining him with himself when time calls for his departure. Chrysostom argues that the coming of faith puts an end to the mission of the Law, and thus, we are no longer under the disciplinarian

⁶¹ PG 61, 671-672; E.Π.E. 20, pp.374-376; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.83-84.

⁶² PG 61, 672; E.Π.E. 20, pp.376-378; Library of the Fathers, 12, p.84.

⁶³ PG 61, 672; E.Π.E. 20, p.378; Library of the Fathers, 12, pp.84-85.

⁶⁴ PG 61,656; E.Π.E. 20, p.316.

Law.⁶⁵

Chrysostom's understanding of the purpose of the Law differs from that of modern scholars. He sees no contradictions in Paul and understands the purpose of the Law as a 'positive' one, arguing that if the Law were not given, then there would have been no Jews to listen to Christ.

5.3 The Curse of the Law (Gal.3:10-14): Closely related to the purpose of the Law is Paul's argument that what in fact the Law brings is not life but a curse. From what it has already discussed in chapter 4,⁶⁶ the claim that the Law 'was given for life' is Pauline. What is essential to have in mind, however, is that the Law, according to the Old Testament, on the one hand, promises life to those who obey its commands, but, on the other hand, also threatens with death those who disobey them. As Westerholm correctly points out, 'the sanctions of life as well as death, blessing as well as curse are part of the divine record.' The Law failed to provide the life it promises because of human transgressions,⁶⁷ and Paul was not the first to argue that 'since the Sinaitic covenant had failed through human transgressions, any further dealings of God with his people must be based on God's character and grace alone.'⁶⁸

Chrysostom argues that the Law cannot justify in spite of its intention to do so, because of the 'listlessness of the Jews.'⁶⁹ As he argues, on the basis of Gal.3:10, the Galatians were possessed (besides their perplexity as to who are to be understood as the

⁶⁵ PG 61,656; E.I.E. 20, p.316.

⁶⁶ For a detail discussion of the question, *why the works of the Law cannot justify?*, which arise from Paul's thesis that justification is by faith, see pp.177-182 of my thesis.

⁶⁷ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.144-145; 155-156; 163.

⁶⁸ Jer.31:31-32 and Hos.1:9. Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.163-164. Cf., Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol.2, p.269.

⁶⁹ PG 60,478; E.I.E. 17, p.24; PG 60,500; E.I.E. 17, p.102; PG 60,501; E.I.E. 17, p.106. For Chrysostom's answer to the question *why the Law cannot justify?* see in pp. 181-182 in chapter 4.

true descendants of Abraham and Paul's answer that those of faith are the true descendants) with another apprehension, that of the curse mentioned in Deut.27:26. The notion of curse was also another important element of Paul's opponents' message to the Galatians, and thus v.10 is Paul's response to his opponents. Chrysostom notes that on the one hand Paul's opponents were arguing that he who did not keep the Law and adhered to faith alone was cursed, while on the other hand Paul was arguing that he who kept the Law was cursed, whereas he who did not keep it was blessed.⁷⁰

Chrysostom, after recording the views held by both sides, wonders how Paul substantiates his view. Enumerating the evidence cited by Paul in Galatians, Chrysostom observes that v.9 stands as Paul's own conclusion to the biblical reference of Gen.12:3 quoted in the previous verse.⁷¹ At the time when it was told to Abraham that 'all the Gentiles shall be blessed in you,' he argues, the Law did not exist whereas faith existed.⁷²

In his effort to convince his audience, Chrysostom is at pains to meet the arguments made by Paul's opponents. In this context, for instance, Chrysostom admits that the argument made above by Paul is open to one logical objection: Paul's opponents argued that it is reasonable to say that Abraham was justified by faith because the Law was not yet given, but 'what instance would be found of faith justifying after the delivery of the Law?' Then, Chrysostom suggests, Paul has to show instances of faith justifying after the delivery of the Law and not only before it. However, according to Chrysostom, Paul proves more than what his opponents required, showing not only that faith is justifying after the delivery of the Law, but also that the Law brings its adherents under a curse. Paul unfolds his argument against his opponents on a twofold level, that of faith justifying

⁷⁰ PG 61,651; E.I.E. 20, p.298.

⁷¹ He clearly understands that the conjunction ὥστε 'thus' introduces a concluding statement of what had already said in the previous verse.

⁷² PG 61,651; E.I.E. 20, p.298.

after the Law and that of the Law bringing its adherents under a curse.⁷³

Chrysostom argues that what Paul says in Gal.3:10a is in fact not a proof at all to what he wants to show, but just his own statement. Paul lays down what he is going to prove in Gal.3:10b and 11, namely that the Law brings its adherents under a curse. It is worth noting that Chrysostom tries to distinguish what Paul intends to say from what Paul actually says in v.11: Paul wants simply to say, he argues, that all are under the curse because all have sinned, but he does not say this yet because he does not want to give the impression that he just expresses his own opinion. Paul proceeds to establish his point by citing Hab.2:4, which, as Chrysostom points out, ‘not only establishes the righteousness that is of Faith, but also that there is no salvation through the Law.’⁷⁴

Clarifying the meaning of Hab.2:4, Chrysostom points out that ‘no one kept the Law, but all were under the curse, on account of transgression,’ and because of that ‘an easy way was provided, that from Faith, which is in itself a strong proof that no man can be justified by the Law.’ He also underlines that according to the text itself the prophet Habakkuk does not say that the righteous shall live ‘by the Law’ but ‘by faith.’ Thus, he argues, Hab.2:4 concisely states two points: that no man has fulfilled the Law, and for that reason they are under the curse, and that faith justifies.⁷⁵

Chrysostom summarizing the results of his argument addresses a rhetorical question to his audience, calling them to see how Paul had shown that the adherents of the Law came under the curse because it was impossible to fulfill it. Then Chrysostom proceeds with his reasoning, admitting that there is another point which needs to be proved; that is how faith comes to have the power to justify.⁷⁶

⁷³ PG 61,651; E.I.E. 20, p.298.

⁷⁴ PG 61,652; E.I.E. 20, p.300.

⁷⁵ PG 61,652; E.I.E. 20, p.300.

⁷⁶ PG 61,652; E.I.E. 20, p.300.

Dealing with faith and its mission in comparison with that of the Law, Chrysostom argues that because the Law was 'too weak to lead man to righteousness, an effectual remedy was provided in faith' which makes possible what was impossible by the Law. Thus, on the basis of scripture which repudiates salvation by the Law, and of Abraham, who was justified by faith, Chrysostom argues that it is evident that the efficacy of faith to justify is very great. Thus, Chrysostom comes to the conclusion that it became clear that he who does not abide by the Law is cursed and that he who keeps to faith is righteous.⁷⁷

Chrysostom suggests that Gal.3:13 is to be understood as Paul's reply to an argument probably held by his opponents about how the curse of the Law is not still in force, and who is the person who released all from that curse.⁷⁸ He argues that Paul's argument that if 'a man was once justified and has died to the Law and embraced a novel life' then he can not be subject to the curse, is sufficient to prove that the curse of the Law is not still in force.⁷⁹ However, besides this argument, Paul introduces another one in v.13 showing that it is Christ who released people from that curse. Chrysostom says that people were subject to the curse of Deut.27:26⁸⁰ for no one had fulfilled the whole Law. Christ, who was not subject to the curse of transgression, for He 'had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth' (Is.53:9), exchanged the curse of

⁷⁷ PG 61,652; E.I.E. 20, pp.300-302.

⁷⁸ It is uncertain whether this argument is actually held by Paul's opponents or is invented by Chrysostom in order to reject it. Whatever the case is, the rejection of this argument seems important in convincing the Galatians. What gives the impression, however, that this argument is rather introduced by Chrysostom (and by Paul) is the second part of the argument, namely 'who is the person who released all from that curse.' Paul and Chrysostom were interested to show that Christ is the person who released all from that curse, but not Paul's opponents, who probably argued, as Chrysostom himself already admits it, that the 'one who did not keep the Law was cursed,' and thus he who kept the Law is by no means cursed.

⁷⁹ PG 61,652; E.I.E. 20, p.302.

⁸⁰ The text says 'cursed be anyone who does not uphold the words of this Law by observing them.'

transgression (Deut.27:26) for the curse of Deut.21:23⁸¹ and thereby released people from the first curse. Thus, Chrysostom comes to the conclusion that as Christ 'by dying rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it.'⁸²

Commenting on Gal.3:14a, where Paul concludes that 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law ... in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles,' Chrysostom introduces a rhetorical question, which he readily answers. If one wonders, he argues, how the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, the answer is to be found in Gen.22:18 and 26:4.⁸³ In these passages, the offspring of Abraham, as Chrysostom points out, is to be understood as a reference to Christ. Thus, as Chrysostom puts it: 'If this were said of the Jews, how would it be reasonable that they who were themselves subject to the curse, on account of transgression, should become the authors of a blessing to others?' and he insists that 'an accursed person cannot impart to others that blessing of which he is himself deprived.' These reasonings lead Chrysostom to the conclusion that the quotations from Genesis plainly refer to Christ 'who was the seed of Abraham, and through whom the Gentiles are blessed.'⁸⁴

Turning to Paul's statement in Gal.3:14b, 'so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,' Chrysostom suggests that 'as the grace of the Spirit could not possibly descend on the graceless and offending, they are first blessed, the curse having been removed; then being justified by faith, they draw unto themselves the grace of the Spirit.' Thus, as he declares, the cross of Christ removed the curse, then faith brought

⁸¹ The text says 'anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse.'

⁸² PG 61,652-653; E.I.E. 20, pp.302-304.

⁸³ The text of the two quotations in Genesis says: 'and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves,' and 'all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring.'

⁸⁴ PG 61,653; E.I.E. 20, p.304.

in righteousness, and finally righteousness drew on the grace of the Spirit.⁸⁵

Tarazi points out some interesting issues useful to the understanding of Paul's general point in Gal.3:10-14. As he argues, the notion of the 'blessing' in Gal.3:10-14 is precisely the point of the argument and not the 'righteousness through faith.' The former and not the latter is the 'cornerstone' of Paul's whole argument of Gal.3:2-14.⁸⁶ The word ὅσοι in v.10 is to be translated into 'as many as' and not 'those who.' The latter would be 'a general statement referring to a specific group of people,' while the former is a 'conditional' one. Tarazi then suggests that v.10a would be rephrased to one of the following statements: 'as long as someone remains of works of the Law, he is under a curse,' and 'if someone becomes of works of the Law, he is under a curse.'⁸⁷

Paul, in v.10a, has in mind not the Jews but Christians: Jewish Christians, namely his opponents, 'who want to *remain* under the Law' and Gentile Christians, namely the Galatians, 'who may decide to *become* under it.'⁸⁸ The expression ὑπὸ κατάραν εἶσιν 'to be under a curse' is to be understood, according to Tarazi, as meaning 'to be within the curse's grasp or reach, to be in a situation where the curse is powerfully hanging over one's head, ready to strike at any time.' Tarazi observes that the preposition ὑπὸ with an accusative 'does not entail a negative connotation,' because it functions in the same way regardless of the following object, and what makes the difference is the following object.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ PG 61,653; E.I.E. 20, p.304.

⁸⁶ As he argues, Paul opens a parenthesis in vv.11-12 to explain v.10 which is closely related with v.13, while Paul's conclusion is to be found in v.14. Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.121-122.

⁸⁷ Otherwise, as Tarazi argues, Paul could have said οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου 'those of works of the Law,' or οἱ ἐκ νόμου 'those of the Law' as in Rom.4:14. Ibid., pp.123-124.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.124.

⁸⁹ As, for instance the baptized Christian 'is to be said "under grace" in Rom. 6:14-15. Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.124-125.

Tarazi points out that Paul quotes, in v.10b, the text from Deut. 27:26⁹⁰ in order to remind the Galatians that ‘the Law forces those under it to make choices for which there are consequences.’ Paul also warns the Galatians that if they might ‘decide to *become* under the Law’ but ‘disobey’ or ‘not do’ its commandments, then they will put themselves ‘under the curse of the Law.’⁹¹ The expression ἐν νόμῳ ‘in the Law,’ in v.11 is to be understood as meaning ‘in the realm of the Law,’ or ‘in the sphere where the Law is the rule and has the last word.’⁹² Paul’s point is that righteousness cannot be attained in the realm of the Law, asserting the ‘incompatibility between the mosaic Law and faith.’ In support of his point, Paul makes an appeal to scripture quoting Hab. 2:4 (in v.11) and Lev.18:5 (in v.12).⁹³

Since the pronoun ἡμεῖς ‘us,’ in v.13 refers to Jewish Christians, how then can Paul say that the Galatians, who were non-Jewish Christians, ‘have been redeemed from a curse that did not apply to them?’ Tarazi suggests that the redemption mentioned in v.13 is ‘specifically from the curse and not from the Law;’ and thus the expression ‘to be redeemed from the curse of the Law’ means ‘to be ‘under the “curse of the Law”’ no longer, to be removed from the situation where the curse is hanging over one’s head.’⁹⁴

The expression εἰς τὰ ἔθνη in v.14 is to be translated ‘to the Gentiles’ and not ‘upon the Gentiles.’ If Paul intended to say ‘upon the Gentiles,’ Tarazi argues, he would use the preposition ἐπὶ ‘upon’ rather than εἰς ‘to.’ Paul, in v.14 comes to the conclusion that since the blessing of Abraham was granted to the Jewish Christians through faith,

⁹⁰ Altering the expression ‘all the words of this Law’ in Septuagint to ‘all the things that are written in the book of the Law,’ which is in accord with the ‘traditional understanding of his times. Thus, as Tarazi points out, Paul ‘actually rendered faithfully the meaning of Deut.27:26. Ibid., p.125.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.126.

⁹² Tarazi argues that this expression does not mean ‘by the Law,’ or ‘through the Law. In support to his view, Tarazi appeals to Paul’s use of this expression in Rom. 2:12 and 3:19. Ibid., p.127.

⁹³ Ibid., p.128.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.130-131.

‘the same could be true of the Gentiles.’⁹⁵ Paul stresses the ‘sufficiency as well as necessity of faith for both Jews and Gentiles,’ whereas his opponents held the view that faith ‘was necessary but not sufficient.’⁹⁶

Chrysostom argues that according to Gen.22:18,⁹⁷ the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles by the offspring of Abraham, that is Christ. He argues that this was said of Christ and not the Jews. There is no doubt that for Paul the offspring of Abraham is Christ, but Chrysostom insists on excluding the Jews as the offspring of Abraham. The reasoning he provides in support of this view is interesting: it is not reasonable to think that the Jews ‘who were themselves subject to the curse, on account of transgression, should become the author of a blessing to others,’ because, he argues, ‘an accursed person cannot impart to others that blessing of which he is himself deprived.’⁹⁸ Thus, Chrysostom comes to the conclusion that ‘the Cross removed the curse, faith brought in righteousness and righteousness gained an interest in the grace of the Spirit.’⁹⁹

Thus, according to Chrysostom, Gal.3:10-14 is Paul’s response to his opponents message, who probably argued that he who did not keep the Law and adhered to faith alone was cursed. Paul, on the contrary argued that he who kept the Law was cursed, whereas he who did not keep it was blessed. Gal.3:9 is to be understood as Paul’s own conclusion of the quotation of Gen.12:3, and Gal.3:10 as his response to the ‘logical objection,’ which is probably held by his opponents, that Abraham was justified by faith because the Law was not yet given. Thus, Paul has to show, Chrysostom argues,

⁹⁵ This is evident from the expression γίνονται εἰς ‘to come to’ which refers to the coming of the apostles as it occurs in I Thes. 1:5. Tarazi, *Galatians*, p.134.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.137.

⁹⁷ ‘And by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves.’

⁹⁸ PG 61,653; E.II.E. 20, p.304.

⁹⁹ PG 61,653; E.II.E. 20, p.304.

instances of faith justifying after the delivery of the Law. Gal.3:13 is to be understood as Paul's reply to the question how the curse of the Law is not still in force and who is the person who released all from that curse. Paul argues that according to Genesis Christ is the offspring of Abraham, and through Him the Gentiles are released from the curse of the Law and are blessed.¹⁰⁰

Chrysostom points out that people were subject to the curse of Deut.27:26, for no one had fulfilled the whole Law. Christ, who was not subject to the curse of transgression, exchanged the curse of transgression (Deut.27:26) for the curse of Deut.21:23 and thereby released people from the first curse. Thus, as he concludes, Christ 'by dying rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it.'¹⁰¹

5.4 The Temporal Nature of the Law: In the context where Paul deals with the purpose of the Law, he states that the Law was added to the promise made to Abraham, because of transgressions ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπὶγγελεται 'until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made.'¹⁰² In the context where Paul argues that the Law functions as a custodian, Paul also states that ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν... ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγὸν ἔσμεν 'the Law was our disciplinarian until Christ came... but now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.'¹⁰³ Finally in Romans 10:4 Paul argues that τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς 'for Christ is the end of the Law.'

¹⁰⁰ Cf., above in pp.234-242.

¹⁰¹ PG 61,652-653; E.Π.E. 20, pp.302-304.

¹⁰² Gal.3:19.

¹⁰³ Gal.3:24-25.

Thus, it is essential to find out how these statements were understood by modern scholars and Chrysostom. Does Paul really mean by these statements that the Law was abolished or not? There is no unanimity among modern scholars as to how these statements should be interpreted. Whereas some scholars support the view that for Paul the Law is abolished, others support the view that for Paul the Law is still in force.

Räisänen argues against the view held by some scholars that Paul regards the Law as still in force and that what is done away was not the Law but a perverted and misunderstood Law. Cranfield, for instance, denies the view that Paul regarded the Law as abolished. According to him, what Paul rejects is not the Law itself but the Jewish misunderstanding and misuse of it.¹⁰⁴ Hübner also argues that in Galatians the Law has been superseded whereas in Romans the Law is in force. What is done away with, he argues, is only 'the perverted and misunderstood Law.'¹⁰⁵

As Räisänen points out, at least in Gal.3:19 the Law 'is seen as a temporary addition to God's real plan.'¹⁰⁶ However, Räisänen argues that the meaning of τέλος in Rom.10:4¹⁰⁷ is disputed. It would mean either that Christ is the 'end' of the Law or that Christ is the 'goal' of it, because 'there are indications in the context pointing to both directions.' Räisänen believes, however, that Paul 'could have written that Christ is the goal of the Law.'¹⁰⁸ In conclusion Räisänen says that Paul's own answer to the question whether or not the Law is still in force, 'contains a strong tension,' that is, 'depending on the situation, Paul asserts, as it were, now the καταλῦσαι now the πληρῶσαι of Mt5:17.' The tension cannot be resolved by 'way of development theories' or by 'various

¹⁰⁴ Cranfield's view is also shared by Bultmann and Käsemann.

¹⁰⁵ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.42.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.44.

¹⁰⁷ Τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς 'for Christ is the end of the Law.'

¹⁰⁸ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, pp.53; 56.

distinctions within the Law' to show in what sense the Law is still in force and in what sense is abolished.¹⁰⁹

Westerholm argues that it is pointless to ask which part of the figure of παιδαγωγός Paul applies to the Law in Gal.3:24-25. Paul 'makes no mention of an educational role played by the Law,' and thus, the figure of παιδαγωγός was used to stress 'a period of unpleasant restraint.' The significance of the παιδαγωγός in Gal.3 'is less the function he performed than the limited time during which he performed it.' As Westerholm points out, as the child would one day outgrow his need of the παιδαγωγός, in the same way the epoch of the Law was to last only until the coming of Christ. This temporal reading of εἰς Χριστόν, as Westerholm argues, 'is demanded by the whole context' of Gal.3 and especially in vv.19, 23, 25. Paul, thus, 'limits the period of the Law to an already concluded stage in salvation history.'¹¹⁰

Tarazi points out that the Law has a temporal nature. According to Gal.3:19, the Law 'was intended to last only "until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made."' The temporal nature of the Law is also stressed by Paul's expression εἰς Χριστόν in Gal.3:24, which is to be understood not as 'toward / unto Christ' but rather 'until Christ.'¹¹¹ Dunn, who understands Gal.3:19a as 'a positive description of the role of the Law' argues that the more natural sense of this verse is that 'the Law was provided as an interim measure precisely to deal with the problem of transgression, until it could be dealt with definitively and finally in the cross of Christ.'¹¹² As Dunn argues, Paul in Gal.3:23 attributes to the Law an 'essentially positive' role as 'protective custodian'

¹⁰⁹ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, p.82.

¹¹⁰ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.195-196.

¹¹¹ Tarazi, *Galatians*, pp.149, 164.

¹¹² Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, pp.189-190.

lasting till the coming of faith, ‘an interim role’ that the Law fulfilled.¹¹³

Chrysostom also points out that according to Gal.3:19 the Law has a temporal function: it is limited ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπὶγγελεται ‘until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made.’ For him the Law was not considered superfluous, and its advantage was not slight, although its mission ended by the advent of Christ.¹¹⁴ Dealing with the duties of the παιδαγωγὸς in ancient Greece,¹¹⁵ Chrysostom points out that his duties are ended when ‘the youth’s habits are formed’ and that he is not opposed to the teacher, but cooperates with him ‘ridding the youth from all vice and makes him ready to receive the instructions from his teacher.’¹¹⁶

In regard to the disputed statement of Romans 10:4 that τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς ‘for Christ is the end of the Law,’ Chrysostom understands τέλος as both meaning ‘end’ and ‘goal.’ He stresses the latter though he does not exclude the former. In regard to the understanding of τέλος as meaning ‘goal,’ Chrysostom argues that the goal of the Law was to justify; the Law failed to justify because no one has fulfilled its commandments; but Christ accomplished the Law’s goal, that is justification, by faith.¹¹⁷ Thus, for Chrysostom the advantage of the Law was not slight, but its mission has come to an end by the advent of Christ.

Thus, in the context of Gal.3:19-25, where Paul treats of the function of the Law, the Law was added to the promise made to Abraham, and was intended to last until the

¹¹³ Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, pp.197-198.

¹¹⁴ PG 61,654-655; E.Π.Ε. 20, p.310.

¹¹⁵ In ancient Greece, the disciplinarian was a slave whose responsibility was to take his master’s son and bring him, every day, to his teacher, and then to take him back to his master’s house. Sometimes this slave was educated and was also responsible to help the child in his studies. Chrysostom is correct to argue that the disciplinarian slave could in any way be opposed to the child’s teacher, but he ought to support him.

¹¹⁶ PG 61,656; E.Π.Ε. 20, p.314.

¹¹⁷ PG 60,565; E.Π.Ε. 17, pp.326-328.

coming of Christ. Räisänen argues that Paul's answer to the issue whether or not the Law is still in force, contains a strong tension. Whereas in Gal.3:19 the Law 'is seen as a temporary addition to God's real plan,' he suggests that in Rom.10:4 Christ is the 'goal' of the Law, not its 'end.' Räisänen correctly argues against the view held by Cranfield and other scholars that the Law is still in force and what Paul really rejects is not the Law itself but the Jewish misunderstanding and misuse of it. Westerholm, Tarazi and Dunn agree that the Law was intended to last until the coming of Christ (Gal.3:19) and that the temporal nature of the Law is also stressed by Paul's expression εἰς Χριστόν (Gal.3:24), which is to be understood as meaning 'until Christ.'¹¹⁸

Chrysostom insists that the Law, in both Galatians and Romans, has a temporal mission, which was ended by the advent of Christ. He understands τέλος in Rom.10:4 as both meaning the 'end' and 'goal.' Defining the latter meaning, he argues that Christ is the 'goal' of the Law because He has accomplished the 'goal' of the Law, that is to provide justification by means of faith.¹¹⁹

5.5 The Fulfilment of the Law: Although Paul argues that the Law was a temporary addition to the promise made to Abraham and intended to last until the coming of Christ, he also speaks of the fulfillment of the Law by Christians as for instance in Gal.5:4 and Rom.8:4; 13:8-10. Does Paul really mean by these statements that the Christians are obliged to fulfill the precepts of the Law?

Westerholm argues that Paul, in these statements 'is describing, not prescribing' Christian behaviour. When Paul prescribes Christian behaviour he states that they should 'walk by the Spirit, and not gratify the desires of the flesh' as in Gal.5:16 and Rom.8:12-

¹¹⁸ Cf., above in pp.242-245.

¹¹⁹ Cf., above in p.245.

13. Thus, Westerholm concludes that statements such as Gal.5:4 and Rom.8:4; 13:8-10 'should not be transformed into declarations that Christian duty is prescribed by the Mosaic code.'¹²⁰ For polemical reasons, however, as Westerholm argues, when Paul describes Christian behaviour, it is important for Paul that it 'is condemned by no Law' and that love 'in fact fulfills the Law.' Paul's point is to assure the Galatians that 'the conduct produced by the Spirit apart from the Law was better, not worse than that produced by those living in subjection to its demands.'¹²¹

Hans Hübner argues that Paul's expression 'ὁ πᾶς νόμος in Gal.5:14 does not mean the same as ὅλον τὸν νόμον in Gal.5:3,' but rather 'with ὁ πᾶς νόμος we have to do with a critical and ironical use of language by Paul.'¹²² Sanders, however, rejects Hübner's view and suggests that in order to understand Gal.5:14, 'we must understand the way in which Paul argues: paradoxically, and by flinging his opponents' terms back to them.' Thus, according to Sanders, with Gal.5:14 Paul says to the Galatians that 'the real way to fulfill the Law' is to love their neighbour as themselves. Paul does not explain how one can fulfill the entire Law but he simply asserts it.¹²³

Westerholm agrees with Sanders that the Law which is to be fulfilled in Gal.5:14 is the Mosaic Law, in spite of the fact that Paul states that Christians should not conform 'with Torah's demands of circumcision, purity or festival occasions. But how can Christians be said to fulfill the Law when a significant number of its commands are disregarded? As Westerholm points out, Paul is concerned to show that 'the ethical behaviour of Christians is better, not worse, than that of those living under the Law.' He also argues that 'Paul consistently distinguishes between the "doing" of the Law's

¹²⁰ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p.201.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp.201-202.

¹²² Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, p.37.

¹²³ Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish people*, p.97.

commands required of those subject to it, and the “fulfilling” of the Law by Christians.’ By ‘doing’ the Law Paul means ‘to carry out, to perform, its individual and specific requirements,’ whereas to ‘fulfill’ the Law means to completely and fully satisfy the ‘real purport of the Law.’¹²⁴

Having defined that ὁ πᾶς νόμος ‘the entire Law’ which is to be fulfilled in Gal.5:14 is the Mosaic Law, it remains to deal with the way Christians fulfil the Law. Speaking of the fulfillment of the Law, Paul warns the Galatians in Gal.5:2-3 that if they follow circumcision then they are ‘obliged to obey the entire Law.’ Longenecker argues that ‘the doctrine of the necessity of doing all the Law was not absent in early or formative Judaism.’¹²⁵ As he argues, it seems that David Daube ‘has not overstated the case’ in saying: ‘the inter-dependence of all precepts, their fundamental equality, the importance of even the minor ones, or apparently minor ones, because of their association with the weightiest - these were common themes among the Tannaites.’¹²⁶ Thus, Longenecker argues that Paul’s point of Gal.5:2-3 is to show that with circumcision comes obligation to obey the entire Law.¹²⁷

J. L. Martyn agrees that Paul in Gal.5:3 speaks of ‘the necessity of complete observance’ of the Law, arguing however, that Paul argues neither here nor elsewhere that it is impossible to keep the whole of the Law.¹²⁸ Thus, as he points out, Gal.5:3 is a polemic tightly focused on the message of Paul’s opponents to the Galatians, not a

¹²⁴ Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, pp.202-205.

¹²⁵ Longenecker quotes passages from Rabbinic literature that supports his view. He finds also parallels to Gal.5:3 in 4 Maccabees 5:20-21 and James 2:10. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.227.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.227. Cf., David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone, 1956), p.251.

¹²⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, p.227.

¹²⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, p.470.

‘polemic against Judaism.’¹²⁹

Hans Dieter Betz points out that first century Judaism was not unanimous about the connection between Torah and circumcision. For Paul, according to his statement in Rom.2:25-29, circumcision makes sense only if the circumcised person keeps the Torah whereas if he does not keep the Torah, he is like one who is uncircumcised. Paul’s view that the ‘external ritual of circumcision is not enough to ensure salvation,’ was the generally accepted view in Judaism. Thus, Betz comes to the conclusion that in Gal.5:3 Paul ‘does not talk of his own view of fulfilling the whole Law, but of a Jewish view diametrically opposed to his own.’¹³⁰ Paul’s point is to remind the Galatians that accepting circumcision makes sense only if they observe all the requirements of the Law.¹³¹

It is essential to also deal with Chrysostom’s own understanding of Paul’s statements about the fulfillment of the ‘entire Law.’ Chrysostom gives great importance to Paul’s assurance in Gal.5:2 that ‘Christ will be of no benefit’ for those who let themselves be circumcised, which is understood by Chrysostom as a threat to the Galatians. He admits that Paul provides no proof to support his statement, but instead of any proof he provides his personal authority.¹³²

Chrysostom notifies his audience that he is going to add his own argument to support Paul’s point that Christ will be of no benefit for those who follow circumcision.

¹²⁹ Martyn, *Galatians*, pp.470-471.

¹³⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, pp.259-260.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.261.

¹³² PG 61,664; E.I.E. 20, p.348.

The way Chrysostom introduces his argument¹³³ shows that circumcision is a matter of real concern to Chrysostom who discusses by analogy the situation in first century Galatia between Paul and his opponents.

Chrysostom suggests that Paul's statement in Gal.5:2 could be understood in three different ways. Firstly, he argues that the ground behind following circumcision is the fear of the Law, which betrays a distrust in the power of grace; and since one distrusts the power of grace, one 'can receive no benefit from that which is distrusted.' Secondly, he argues that by following circumcision one makes the Law in force. Then, since one considers the Law to be in force and yet transgresses it in the greater part while keeping it in the lesser part, one 'puts himself again under the curse of the Law.' The third argument, which Chrysostom says seems paradoxical, is that one who follows circumcision believes neither Christ nor the Law, but stands between them; and as he points out, he desires to benefit by both but he 'will reap fruit from neither.' Thus according to Chrysostom one follows circumcision because he fears the Law, by following circumcision one makes the Law in force and one who stands between Christ and the Law will benefit by neither.¹³⁴

Putting emphasis on Paul's statement in Gal.5:3 that one who follows circumcision is obliged to obey the entire Law, Chrysostom argues that 'the parts of the Law are linked one to the other.' Chrysostom appeals to two illustrations from daily life, one from slavery and one from an inheritance, in order to support this point of view. As he argues, the free person who 'has enrolled himself as a slave no longer does what he pleases, but is bound by all the Laws of slavery.' This case is similar with that of the Law, in that if

¹³³ As I know from my search in Chrysostom, this is the only time where Chrysostom makes such a declaration. Normally Chrysostom puts his emphasis on the meaning of Paul's points without feeling necessary to add anything to what Paul says.

¹³⁴ PG 61,665; E.I.E. 20, p.350.

one takes upon himself a small portion of the Law, and submits to the yoke of the Law, he draws upon himself its whole domination. Proceeding to the second illustration, Chrysostom points out that in the case of an inheritance, he 'who touches no part of it, is free from all matters which are consequent on the heirship to the deceased, but if he takes a small portion, though not the whole, yet by that part he has rendered himself liable for every thing.' Likewise it is in the case of the Law because, as he argues, 'legal observances are linked together.'¹³⁵

Expressing the meaning of Paul's statement that 'every man who lets himself be circumcised is obliged to obey the entire Law,' Chrysostom argues twice that 'legal observances are linked together.'¹³⁶ Showing an extensive knowledge of the way circumcision should be followed, Chrysostom points out that 'circumcision has sacrifice connected with it, and the observance of days; sacrifice again has the observance both of days and of places; place has the details of endless purifications; purifications involve a perfect swarm of manifold observances. For it is unlawful for the unclean to sacrifice, to enter the holy shrines, to do any other such act.' Thus, as he concludes, the Law 'introduces many things even by the one commandment.'¹³⁷

Chrysostom, in support of his view that 'legal observances are linked together,' also rightly insists that if one 'is circumcised, but not on the eighth day, or on the eighth day, but no sacrifice is offered, or a sacrifice is offered, but not in the prescribed place, or in the prescribed place, but not the accustomed objects, or if the accustomed objects, but they be unclean, or if clean yet not purified by proper rules, every thing is frustrated.'¹³⁸ Thus, Chrysostom comes to the conclusion that Paul's point of Gal. 5:3

¹³⁵ PG 61,665; E.II.E. 20, pp.350-352.

¹³⁶ In PG 61,665; E.II.E. 20, p.350 and PG 61,665; E.II.E. 20, p.352.

¹³⁷ PG 61,665; E.II.E. 20, p.352.

¹³⁸ PG 61,665; E.II.E. 20, p.352.

is to show that one either should fulfil the whole Law and not only a part if the Law is still in force; or one should not fulfil even a part of the Law, if it is not in force.¹³⁹

According to Chrysostom, Paul's own conclusion of Gal.5:2-3 is to be found in vv.4-5. Paul's point, he says, is to declare that 'we need none of those legal observances' because 'faith suffices to obtain for us the Spirit, and by Him righteousness, and many and great benefits.'¹⁴⁰ It is worth noting Chrysostom's point that whereas Paul has previously said that circumcision was 'hurtful,' he considers circumcision in Gal.5:6 as something 'indifferent.' Explaining the seeming antithesis between the two statements, Chrysostom suggests that circumcision is 'indifferent' for those who were circumcised before the faith, but is 'hurtful' for those who are circumcised after the faith was given. Thus, as he points out, it is faith that makes the difference between περιτομή 'circumcision' and ἀκροβυστία 'uncircumcision.'¹⁴¹

What matters, according to Chrysostom, is not circumcision or uncircumcision but πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη 'the only thing that counts is faith working through love.' Paul's point hidden behind this expression is, according to Chrysostom, to show that what is required is not only to believe but also to abide in love. Paul gives the Galatians a 'hard blow' for the love of Christ had not been rooted within them. It is as if Paul had said to the Galatians, Chrysostom suggests, that if 'you had loved Christ as you ought, you would not have deserted to bondage, nor abandoned Him who redeemed you, nor treated with contumely Him who gave you freedom.'¹⁴² Chrysostom argues that Paul's 'hard blow' in Gal.5:6 is also a hint directed against his opponents, who 'have plotted against' the Galatians, implying that his opponents 'would not have dared to do so, if

¹³⁹ PG 61,665; E.Π.E. 20, p.352.

¹⁴⁰ PG 61,666; E.Π.E. 20, p.354.

¹⁴¹ PG 61,666; E.Π.E. 20, p.354.

¹⁴² PG 61,666; E.Π.E. 20, pp.354-356.

they had felt affection towards them.’¹⁴³

Statements such as Gal.5:4, Rom.8:4 and 13:8-10 should not be transformed into prescriptions of Christian behaviour, because these statements describe rather than prescribe Christian behaviour. As Westerholm points out Paul distinguishes between the doing and the fulfilling of the Law. The former means ‘to carry out, to perform, its individual and specific requirements,’ whereas the latter means to completely and fully satisfy the ‘real purport of the Law.’ Thus, as Westerholm concludes, Paul’s point by saying that the Christians fulfil the Law is to assure the Galatians that ‘the conduct produced by the Spirit apart from the Law was better not worse than that produced by those living in subjection to its demands.’¹⁴⁴

The expression ‘ὁ νόμος νόμος in Gal.5:14 refers to the Mosaic Law as most of modern scholars suggest, and not a ‘critical and ironical use of language by Paul,’ as Hans Hübner wrongly suggests. The necessity of complete observance of the Law was not absent in early or formative Judaism as Longenecker, David Daube, J. L. Martyn and Hans Dieter Betz point out. Thus, Paul’s point that with circumcision comes the obligation to obey the entire Law was also a generally accepted view in Judaism.¹⁴⁵

Chrysostom, who also agrees with the above scholars, gives great emphasis on Gal.5:3 that Christ will be of no benefit for those who follow circumcision, by providing various ways of understanding of this view. He appeals to two illustrations from daily life, one from slavery and one from an inheritance, in order to stress that ‘the parts of the Law are linked one to the other.’¹⁴⁶ Chrysostom is right in arguing that if one follows

¹⁴³ PG 61,666; E.Π.E. 20, p.356.

¹⁴⁴ Cf., above in p.247.

¹⁴⁵ Cf., above in pp.247-249.

¹⁴⁶ Cf., above in pp.249-252.

circumcision he should do it precisely that is, on the eighth day, with the offering of the needed sacrifice, in the prescribed place, purified by proper rules.¹⁴⁷ What matters is not circumcision or uncircumcision but 'faith working through love,' and thus, what is required is not only to believe but also to abide in love.¹⁴⁸

5.6 Conclusions: After the assertion that the Law cannot justify, Paul himself turns to the origin and purpose of the Law by asking in Gal.3:19, *why then the Law?* Answering his own question, Paul states that the Law 'was ordained through angels' and it 'was added because of transgressions.'

Paul, in Romans and I Corinthians, clearly originates the Law with God. Some scholars, however, think that in Galatians Paul seems to originate it with the angels. Albert Schweitzer and Hans Hübner argue that the angels are to be understood as 'evil spiritual powers,' and 'demonic beings.' Räisänen rejects Hübner's view suggesting that Paul is rather 'simply toying' with the idea that the angels were the originators of the Law. Sanders and Westerholm suggest that Paul's statement in Gal.3:19 is a 'thrust against the Law in the heat of the debate' and a 'dramatic indication of the Law's inferiority to God's promises.'¹⁴⁹

For Chrysostom the mission of the angels is to minister the delivery of the Law and thus the divine origin of the Law is beyond any question. His understanding of the mission of the angels differs radically from that of some scholars who suggest that the angels were the authors of the Law, and that they were demonic beings with evil intentions. Chrysostom's understanding is in agreement with that of his contemporaries,

¹⁴⁷ PG 61,665; E.I.E. 20, p.352.

¹⁴⁸ Cf., above in p.252.

¹⁴⁹ Cf., above in pp.218-221.

who in their effort to meet the attacks of Marcion and the Gnostics rejected the view that the Law originated with another God and insisted that the 'one and the same God is the author of the Law and the gospel.'¹⁵⁰

Paul's ambiguous expression that the Law was added 'because of transgressions' was variously understood. For Hübner this expression means 'to provoke transgressions,' which indicates the purpose of the 'Law-givers' but says nothing of *immanent intention* of the Law, that it was given for life. Hübner distinguishes three different intentions (that of God, the immanent intention of the Law and that of the Law-givers) in order to solve any inner contradictions. Räisänen and Sanders reject Hübner's attempt to remove the 'cynical idea' that God made a 'second attempt to save mankind' since His first attempt became unsuccessful. In regard to the purpose of the Law, Räisänen rather sees two main lines of thought contradictory to each other.¹⁵¹ Westerholm argues, however, that neither God nor his Law is responsible for the Law's transgression. In disagreement with both Sanders and Räisänen, Westerholm points out that what Paul attributes to the Law are not 'arbitrary inventions,' but rather 'restatements of principles long maintained within his inherited religion.' The Law was given with sanctions of life and death: it promises life to those who obey its commands and curse to those who transgress its commands.¹⁵²

For Chrysostom the Law was not superfluous, but altogether useful and profitable; it was given in order that 'the Jews might not be let live carelessly and plunge into the depth of wickedness;' it functions as a bridle, 'guiding, regulating, and checking them from transgressing, if not all, at least some of the commandments.' The Law 'has schooled its followers in a certain degree of virtue' and has pressed on the Jews 'the

¹⁵⁰ Cf., above in pp.221-223.

¹⁵¹ Cf., above in pp.223-226.

¹⁵² Cf., above in pp.226-227.

knowledge of their own sins.’ If the Law were not given then ‘there would have been no Jews to listen to Christ.’ Chrysostom, thus, attributes to the Law clearly a ‘positive’ purpose. The Law has a particular place in salvation history: it provided the basic teaching of God’s will and has prepared the acceptance of the gospel. The Law was a ‘grammarian,’ which stood in the place of the Spirit, but its teaching role was temporal: it came to an end with the coming of the Spirit.¹⁵³

According to Paul, the Law actually brings in not the life it promises but curse, because of human transgressions. Westerholm is correct in arguing that Paul was not the first to think so, but rather he shares this view with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea.¹⁵⁴ In agreement with Westerholm, Chrysostom also argues that the Law cannot justify in spite of its intention to do so because of the ‘listlessness of the Jews.’ According to Hab.2:4, as he points out, ‘no one kept the Law, but all are under the curse, on account of transgression.’

The curse of the Law, mentioned in Deut.27:26, is one of the central points of the controversy between Paul and his opponents. Gal.3:10-14 is understood by Chrysostom as Paul’s response to his opponents’s message that ‘he who did not keep the Law and adhered to faith alone is cursed.’ Paul argues, on the contrary, that he who kept the Law was cursed, whereas he who did not keep it was blessed. Chrysostom argues that Christ released people from the curse of the Law by exchanging the curse of transgression (Deut.27:26) for the curse of Deut.21:23. Thus, he concludes, that as Christ ‘by dying rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He

¹⁵³ Cf., above in pp.229-233.

¹⁵⁴ Cf., above in p.234 and in chapter 4 in pp.177-182.

delivered them from it.’¹⁵⁵

The temporal nature of the Law is also stressed by Paul in Gal.3:19: It was added to the promise made to Abraham till the coming of Christ. Whereas there is no unanimity among modern scholars about whether the purpose of the Law is a positive or a negative one, most of them agree that the Law was abolished. Chrysostom insists that the mission of the Law has come to an end by the advent of Christ, and that the advantage of the Law was not slight.¹⁵⁶

Statements such as Gal.5:4, Rom.8:4 and 13:8-10 describe rather than prescribe Christian behaviour. Paul distinguishes between the ‘doing’ and the ‘fulfilling’ of the Law. The former means ‘to carry out, to perform, its individual and specific requirements,’ whereas the latter means to completely and fully satisfy the ‘real purport of the Law.’ Thus, as Westerholm proposes, Paul’s point by saying that the Christians fulfil the Law is to assure the Galatians that ‘the conduct produced by the Spirit apart from the Law was better not worse than that produced by those living in subjection to its demands.’¹⁵⁷

The necessity of complete observance of the Mosaic Law, which is stressed by Paul in Gal.5:3, was not absent in early or formative Judaism as most of modern scholars point out. Paul’s point by saying that ‘every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire Law’ is to warn the Galatians that accepting circumcision makes sense only if they observe all the requirements of the Law. Chrysostom also argues that ‘the parts of the Law are linked one to the other.’¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Cf., above in pp.234-242.

¹⁵⁶ Cf., above in pp.242-246.

¹⁵⁷ Cf., above in pp.246-247.

¹⁵⁸ Cf., above in pp.249-252.

6

ANTI-SEMITISM OR ANTI-JUDAISM?

6.1 Definition of Terms: Anyone who considers the question of Paul's views on the Law also has to deal with the closely related question of Paul's relation to Judaism. Paul's conviction that justification is 'not by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ' and especially his negative statements about the Law bring us to ask whether there is any kind of anti-Semitism in Paul or not. Especially after the bloody persecution of the Jews in the Nazi Holocaust in the second World War, it becomes more urgent to search for any kind of anti-Semitism in Paul. After the Nazi Holocaust, which is the 'ripest and most bitter fruit of anti-Semitism,' Christians cannot 'remain unaware of the evil that can be caused by an improper or insensitive use of the anti-Judaic statements of the New Testament.' Thus, every exposition of these anti-Judaic passages should be accompanied 'by explicit statements concerning what they do not mean,' to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding them.¹

Before, however, proceeding to the investigation of Paul's and Chrysostom's relation to Judaism, it seems essential to define the meaning of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism.

¹ Donald A. Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. By Evans, C. A., and Hagner, D. A., (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p.128.

Hagner, who prefers to use the latter, defines anti-Judaism as the ‘theological disagreement with Judaism,’ which can become polemical in tone, whereas anti-Semitism as ‘nothing less than racial hatred of the Jews.’ For Hagner this racial hatred of the Jews ‘can take a variety of forms such as prejudice, injustice, slander, abuse, and even physical violence.’² E. H. Flannery also put emphasis on the distinction of these terms, arguing that anti-Semitism ‘must include a note of hatred or contempt of the Jewish people as such.’³ Although Flannery admits that anti-Judaism finally led to anti-Semitism, he points out that, ‘this consequence does not entitle us to equate one with the other, nor confuse them in our analysis.’⁴ James D. G. Dunn, who also prefers to use the term anti-Judaism, argues that anti-Semitism should be ‘confined to the explicit racism that came to the fore in the nineteenth century and reached its nadir in Nazism.’ The term anti-Judaism, as Dunn suggests, ‘begs the question as to what precisely was “Judaism” in a period when there were several forms of Judaism, or Judaisms, in play.’⁵

Marcel Simon, however, prefers to use the term anti-Semitism, which he defines as ‘an attitude fundamentally and systematically hostile to Jews,’ especially when this hostility against the Jews is supported ‘by some very bad arguments, by calumnies, by an incomplete, tendentious representation of Judaism that falsifies the truth about it.’⁶ Simon

² Hagner supports the view that there is ‘a sense in which the expression “anti-Judaism” is itself totally inappropriate’ because the Jewish Christians writers of the New Testament, including Paul, regarded Christianity as ‘the fulfillment of Judaism,’ and as ‘the true and perfect manifestation of their ancestral faith.’ What they opposed was ‘not truly Judaism but only a truncated version of it, which tragically rejected its Messiah and which thus remained incomplete.’ Hagner, ‘Paul’s Quarrel with Judaism,’ in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.128-129.

³ E. H. Flannery, ‘Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism: A Necessary Distinction,’ *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (1973), p.583.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.584.

⁵ James D. G. Dunn, ‘Anti-Semitism in the Deutero-Pauline Literature,’ in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. By Evans, C. A., and Hagner, D. A., (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p.151, note 1.

⁶ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.395.

admits that the ancient anti-Semitism 'had no racist background,'⁷ and that the Christian opposition to Judaism is 'purely religious.' However, as he argues, this is not a 'sufficient reason for hesitating to speak of anti-Semitism.'⁸ What Simon calls 'Christian anti-Semitism,' as he makes clear, first appears at 'the time when Christianity turned away from Israel;' and that 'there is no shadow of anti-Semitism in Paul.'⁹

Other scholars even held the view that anti-Semitism should not be used in relation to early Christianity. W. D. Davies argues, for instance, that 'the use of the term anti-Semitism, strictly so called, for attitudes and conduct in the early church is anachronistic.'¹⁰ S. Sandmel suggests that anti-Semitism is 'a completely wrong term' when transferred to the first two centuries of Christianity, and suggests that it is better to use the term 'anti-Jewish' or 'anti-Judaic' instead.¹¹

The crux of the debate in defining anti-Semitism is the role given by modern scholars to racial hatred of the Jews. Whereas for Hagner anti-Semitism is defined as 'nothing less than racial hatred of the Jews,' for Simon anti-Semitism does not necessarily have a racial tone to the opposition against the Jews. The descriptions, however, given to these terms by the above cited scholars have some aspects in common. For Simon, the hostility to the Jews, when supported by a representation of Judaism that 'falsifies the truth about it,' is what he calls anti-Semitism. Similarly, for Dunn it is necessary to find out 'what precisely was Judaism' because, he argues, 'there were several forms of Judaism, or Judaisms, in play.' What is important to both scholars, thus, is to check

⁷ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.203.

⁸ Ibid., p.395.

⁹ Ibid., p.207.

¹⁰ W. D. Davies, 'Paul and the People of Israel,' *New Testament Studies* 24 (1977-1978), p.18.

¹¹ Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p.xxi.

whether or not Judaism was misrepresented in the anti-Jewish literature.

Hagner, although he strictly defines anti-Semitism as 'nothing less than racial hatred of the Jews,' clearly points out that this racial hatred 'can take a variety of forms such as prejudice, injustice, slander, abuse, and even physical violence.'¹² Although the racial hatred of the Jews has most appeared in the Nazi Holocaust in the twentieth century, the question remains whether or not earlier forms of Christianity embraced any of the above variety of forms of racial hatred against the Jews. Thus, it is essential to distinguish different types of anti-Semitism that correspond to different periods in Christianity. The use of aggressive language in early Christianity, for instance, differs from the crusades' treatment of the Jews in medieval times and from the bloody persecution of the Jews in the Nazi Holocaust.

I incline to speak of anti-Judaism rather than of anti-Semitism because what characterizes the early Christian anti-Jewish literature is the use of aggressive language in early Christianity, as I will try to show in this chapter. Thus, it is essential to outline the most important characteristics of the Christian anti-Jewish literature with special reference to Paul's and Chrysostom's position towards Judaism, in order to find out whether either Paul or Chrysostom is guilty of slandering the Jews or stirring up deep hatred against them.

6.2 Early Christianity and Judaism: Early Christian literature, contains many anti-Judaistic writings. The criticisms against the Jewish people, in the majority of these writings, are not *racial* but *religious* in nature, in spite of the fact that these criticisms are unusually intense in nature because they condemn the Jewish people as a whole and even

¹² Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p128.

suggest hostilities against them. As Lee Martin McDonald argues, the hostilities against the Jewish people, were not generally racial but religious in nature.¹³

Marcel Simon argues that for Christianity a Jew was always characterized by his religion. When a Jew was converted to Christianity, the Jew 'ceased to be a Jew.'¹⁴ In the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, for instance, as long as Aquila remained a Jew practising his own religion, he was described as a 'wolf.' Nevertheless, after his conversion to Christianity, Aquila was described as 'Christ's sheep.'¹⁵ This point marks the fundamental difference between Hitler's anti-Semitism and early Christianity's anti-Judaism, 'that forbids us to establish any very definite or close connecting link or continuity between the two.' For Hitler, as Simon argues, a Jew who is converted to Christianity remains a Jew and 'it was neither desirable nor possible to change his ethnic characteristics.'¹⁶

The origins of Christian anti-Judaism can be found in the New Testament writings and especially in the writings of John and Paul. In these writings, the Jews are condemned for opposing Jesus. Especially in Paul, the charges against the Jews are focused on religious matters (like the Law and its observance) rather than on the Jews themselves.¹⁷ Paul on the one side can speak positively about the Law,¹⁸ whereas on the

¹³ Religious anti-Judaism, however, especially during the late patristic and medieval times 'has not been unlike racial anti-Semitism,' and thus, as McDonald points out, religious anti-Judaism 'could be just as hostile and dangerous to the Jews as a bias based on race.' Lee Martin McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. By Evans, C. A., and Hagner, D. A., (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p.215.

¹⁴ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.398.

¹⁵ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.216.

¹⁶ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.398.

¹⁷ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.216.

¹⁸ Cf., Rom.2:13, 20, 25; 3:31; 7:12 and Gal.3:21.

other side he can also speak about the Law in a different tone.¹⁹ Paul's negative statements about the Law and Israel, as Hagner concludes, 'inevitably involve an anti-Judaism.'²⁰

Paul's views of the Law,²¹ as Hagner points out, 'stand over against the viewpoint of Judaism wherein the Law remains permanently in force and the de facto means to righteousness.'²² Thus, so far as the Law is concerned, Paul's anti-Judaism 'amounts in fact to nothing other than a new adaptation of the Jewish Law appropriate to the newly dawned age of eschatological fulfillment.' Paul regards 'his faith as the true Judaism and his stance toward the Law as ultimately one of faithfulness.' He is opposed to 'a distortion of Judaism and an appropriate understanding of the Law.'²³

What in fact Paul opposes in Judaism is a righteousness which 'is established by doing the works of the Law.' Thus, a distinction should be made, as Hagner correctly suggests, between Judaism 'as ideally and correctly conceived' and Judaism as 'generally lived out on a day-to-day basis.' It is a fact, Hagner points out, that in the Jewish literature 'a great stress is put upon the importance of works and that frequently one encounters the language of merit.' However, it should not be surprising 'if the Jews often forgot the framework of grace within which the Law had been given and ended up functioning in a legalistic mode that in reality reflected a misunderstanding of their faith.'²⁴ Westerholm also points out that Paul shares his conclusion that 'the keeping of

¹⁹ Cf., Rom.3:20, 28; 4:14; 6:14-15; 7:6; 10:4; and Gal.2:16, 21; 3:11, 21, 23-25; 5:4.

²⁰ Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.139.

²¹ Cf., for instance Paul's view that the Law was intended to be temporary, till the coming of the Messiah; and that it was added to the promises and was never meant to justify.

²² Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.139-140.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.141.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.138-139.

the Law was Israel's path to life,' with Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Ezekiel.²⁵

Moreover, Paul's views of Israel²⁶ 'not only involve aspects of discontinuity but also imply the displacement of Israel.' What Paul says about Israel was borrowed from the Old Testament, but Paul applies it to the Jews who have not believed in the gospel, and thus, as Hagner points out, 'we have again what must be called anti-Judaism.'²⁷ Nevertheless, Paul's statement in Rom.11:25-26 that 'a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved,' brings a quite new dimension because 'Paul turns out to be decidedly pro-Israel, despite all of the instances where he appears to reflect an anti-Judaism.'²⁸

Daniel Boyarin, a 'practicing Jewish, non-Christian, critical but sympathetic reader of Paul,' argues that Paul 'represents an option which Judaism could take in the first century.' According to him, Paul is an important Jewish thinker who 'lived and died convinced that he was a Jew living out Judaism.'²⁹ In answering the question as to what was wrong with Judaism and its culture in Paul's eyes, Boyarin points out that the Jewish culture was characterized by a 'narrow ethnocentrism and universalist monotheism.' Paul's profound concern for 'the one-ness of humanity' motivated his critic of this ethnocentrism and particularly the way 'it implicitly and explicitly created hierarchies between nations, genders and social classes.'³⁰

Paul's expression 'works of the Law,' as Boyarin argues, refers precisely to those

²⁵ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, pp.146-147. A more detail discussion of the question *who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify?* can be found in pp.173-177 of my thesis.

²⁶ Cf., Gal.4:21-31; 2 Cor.3:6-17; 4:3; Rom.11:8-10.

²⁷ Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.141-144, 145.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.145-146.

²⁹ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew. Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkely, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994), pp.1-2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.52.

observances of the Torah which were thought by Jew and Gentile alike to mark off the special status of the Jews.’ For many Jews of the first century, as Boyarin admits, ‘not only these practices mark off the covenant community exclusively, but justification or salvation was dependent on being a member of that very community.’ In other words, for first century Jews, the road to salvation ‘lay in conversion and acceptance of the covenant practices.’³¹ The ‘curse of the Law,’ as Boyarin argues, does not consist ‘of the inability of human beings to ever meet its demands fully,’ but rather ‘the ultimate inadequacy of the Law stems from its ethnic exclusiveness.’³²

Boyarin argues that Paul writes as a Jew, and the ‘thoroughly midrashic character of the main arguments’ of Galatians shows that Paul’s argument is ‘almost prototypical midrash.’³³ Following a ‘very standard midrashic move,’ as Boyarin points out, Paul in Gal.3:10 rewrites syntactically Dt.27:26, as follows: ‘everyone who precisely by doing it does not uphold all that is written in the book of the Law, is under a curse.’ As Boyarin explains, ‘all that is written’ in the book of the Law ‘implies much more than mere doing!’ Paul’s hermeneutical move is ‘quite similar to that of the Rabbis in the Talmud on Exodus 23:2.’³⁴ Thus, Boyarin comes to the conclusion that for Paul ‘it would have been impossible’ to dismiss Torah altogether, since he believes that it was given by God. Thus, Paul’s positive statements ‘are the essence of his hermeneutical theology by which Christianity fulfills and does not abrogate Judaism.’ In other words, for Paul ‘Christian ethics’ is ‘simply the true interpretation of the Jewish Law and always has been.’³⁵

³¹ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew. Paul and the Politics of Identity*, p.53.

³² *Ibid.*, p.136.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.137.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.139-140.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.140.

Boyarin also points out that for Paul 'those who "do" the Law are not "fulfilling" the Law.' Thus, those who hold that works justify and practice accordingly are accursed by the Law itself 'because of their misunderstanding of the true import of the Law.'³⁶ In regard to the function of the Law in Gal.3:19-20, Boyarin argues that the Law was given as a 'temporary and secondary measure because of the existence of sin in the present age,' and not 'to produce transgression in order to increase the scope of the working of God's grace.'³⁷ Although the Law was not given 'for life,' the Law has a 'positive function as a pedagogue:' in the infancy of humanity, as Boyarin argues, 'the pedagogue was necessary because of sin, not to produce sin.'³⁸

The above reading of Gal.3:10-4:7³⁹ leads Boyarin to the conclusion that 'it is totally inappropriate to think of Paul's thought as anti-Semitic, or even as anti-Judaic.'⁴⁰ According to Boyarin, there is no evidence in Galatians, that Paul's problem with the Law 'was connected with the impossibility of keeping the Law fully, or that the Law was given in order to increase sin.' Paul's argument is not anti-Judaic in that it is not a 'claim that God has rejected the Jews because they were inadequate in some sense or another,' or an 'assertion that their keeping of the Law was a striving against God.'⁴¹

Paul's break with Judaism 'must in no sense be taken to mean that Paul turned against his people or against his Jewish heritage,' and thus, it is 'all the more

³⁶ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew. Paul and the Politics of Identity*, p.141.

³⁷ Ibid., 146-147.

³⁸ Ibid., pp.148-149.

³⁹ Ibid., pp.137-151.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 151-152. The only exception, he admits, is 'the occasional outbursts of temper and frustration in I Thess. 2:14, (if genuine) and Phil. 3.'

⁴¹ Ibid., p.156.

inappropriate to connect Paul with anti-Semitism of any kind.' Hagner argues, however, that everyone who tries to understand and follow Paul's theology 'must make every effort' to distinguish Paul's anti-Judaism sharply from anti-Semitism; and moreover, to cut and never allow to grow again the 'connecting nerve between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism.'⁴² The fact that anti-Judaism can lead to anti-Semitism does not mean that the latter 'is a necessary outcome' of the former.⁴³

In early forms of Christian anti-Judaism, as McDonald points out, the Jews are also charged for their obduracy, blindness, crimes committed against the prophets and the crucifixion of Christ. The charges against the Jews are more intensive than those in the New Testament and expanded to include 'God's ultimate and final rejection of the Jews.' It is worth noting, for instance, that unlike Paul, who understood the rejection of the Jews as a temporary matter, the charges against the Jews included the idea that they 'are completely rejected by God and permanently replaced by Christians.' In general, it seems correct to say that in some of the Christian writings there is a shift from an *anti-Judaic* to an *anti-Jewish* position: 'instead of opposing the tenets of Judaism as a means of salvation, they began to reject the Jewish people themselves.'⁴⁴

What is worth noting is that some of the most intense Christian writers, such as Aphrahat, bishop of the Persian side of the river Tigris, Ephraem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo, are from the fourth and fifth centuries, at a time 'when the Jews were still quite active in proselytizing Gentiles and

⁴² Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.150.

⁴³ Ibid., p.129.

⁴⁴ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.216-217.

having significant successes among the Christian population.⁴⁵ It is much debated, among modern scholars whether or not Judaism continued its missionary activity after the crises of A. D. 70 and 135. Thus, it should not be surprising that the writings of Chrysostom and other fathers of the early Christian Church were written with the clear aim of counteracting this Jewish proselytizing situation by trying to suppress every kind of Christian attraction to Judaism.⁴⁶

Even though the anti-Jewish writings of the early Christian fathers are in fact a defensive response of the early Christian church to an active Jewish proselytizing effort, the question remains whether or not these writings may lead to prepare the way for the modern anti-Semitism as it appeared in the twentieth century in Germany. In other words, it is essential to ask whether or not there is any connection between the anti-Jewish writings of the early church and modern anti-Semitism.

There is a debate among modern scholars in regard to the roots of modern anti-Semitism and its bitter outcome, the Nazi Holocaust. Several scholars agree, whereas others strongly disagree with any attempt to establish any definite or close connection between the two. James Parkes, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Samuel Sandmel are among the scholars who speak in favour of the view that modern anti-Semitism has its roots in the writings of the early church fathers, and thus, that Christian religious anti-Semitism is ultimately responsible for the Holocaust.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.217.

⁴⁶ After a thorough investigation of the relations between the early Christian church and Judaism, I came to the conclusion that there was an active Jewish proselytizing effort throughout the Roman Empire and especially in the East, which started from the beginning of Christianity and continued up to the fourth century. For the evidence in support of my conclusion see my Introduction, pp.30-43. For the existence of an active Jewish missionary activity see also Simon's *Verus Israel*, pp.271-301.

⁴⁷ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.219.

James Parkes, in his many writings on Judaism and its relation to Christianity, is convinced that modern anti-Semitism finds its roots in the conflict of the Church with the Synagogue.⁴⁸ Parkes proposes that the factor which led to anti-Semitism was neither a 'racial' nor an 'economic' one, but rather it was a 'religious' one. It cannot be said, as he admits, that the Christian theologian has 'been actuated simply by hatred and contempt.' Rather, as Parkes suggests, the root of his mistake, 'was due to his belief in the verbal inspiration of the scriptures.'⁴⁹ Thus, Parkes comes to the conclusion that the main responsibility must rest with 'the theological picture created in patristic literature of the Jew as being perpetually betraying God and ultimately abandoned by Him.'⁵⁰

Rosemary Radford Ruether also supports the view that Christian anti-Semitism is responsible for the Nazi Holocaust. Hitler, in support of his racial policy, as she argues, seems to have said that 'he was only putting into effect what Christianity had preached and practiced for 2000 years.'⁵¹ Ruether comes to the conclusion that the dispute between Christianity and Judaism over the messiahship of Jesus is the 'theological root' which has growth in a 'distinctively Christian type of anti-Semitism.'⁵² Thus, as Ruether points out, 'it was the distinctively religious hostility of Christianity to Judaism that provided the constant drive behind a polemic that was to transform itself in Christian

⁴⁸ James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue. A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism*, (London: The Soncino Press, 1934), pp.373-374, preface. James Parkes, also repeats this view in his *Judaism and Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp.139, 167; and his *Anti-Semitism* (London: Vallentine - Mitchell, 1963), pp.57-73. A. T. Davies in his Introduction also held the view that 'modern anti-Semitism has its roots in the writings of the early Christian fathers.' *Anti-Semitism and the Foundation of Christianity* (New York: Paulist, 1979), p.xiii-xvii.

⁴⁹ Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, p.374.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.375.

⁵¹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), pp.222-223.

⁵² Ibid., p.28.

civilization into social anti-Semitism.⁵³ Ruether comes to the extreme conclusion that anti-Semitism is *intrinsic* to Christianity, and that 'there is no way to rid Christianity of its anti-Judaism, which constantly takes social expression in anti-Semitism.'⁵⁴

In regard to the roots of Christian anti-Semitism, Samuel Sandmel supports the view that the New Testament is a 'repository for hostility to Jews and Judaism.' While he credits most Christians of being completely free of anti-Semitism, the Christian scripture, he says, is 'permeated by it.'⁵⁵

Nevertheless, other scholars strongly disagree with the existence of any connection between modern anti-Semitism and the early Christian fathers. Marcel Simon, for instance, strongly rejects the view that the Christian church 'must bear the essential responsibility, even though it be an indirect responsibility, for the Nazi atrocities.' According to Simon, it seems hardly likely that, in an age as secularized as ours, 'it should be the theological components of anti-Semitism that are the determining factors in it.'⁵⁶ What must not be forgotten, Simon points out, is that besides the Jewish massacre 'other "inferior" races and malefactors were hunted down by the Nazis in the name of the same biological principle; the Gypsies, for example.'⁵⁷

Simon insists that there is a fundamental difference between Hitler's anti-Semitism and early Christian anti-Judaism, which does not leave any ground to 'establish any very definite or close connecting link or continuity between the two.' The Christian opposition

⁵³ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, Ibid., p.31.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.116.

⁵⁵ Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?*, p.160.

⁵⁶ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.397.

⁵⁷ Simon also points out that the Slavs would not have been in a better situation if the Nazis had won the war. Ibid., pp.397-398.

to Judaism is 'purely religious' whereas Hitler's anti-Semitism is definitely not.⁵⁸

McDonald, in accord with Simon, stresses the fundamental difference between Hitler's anti-Semitism and early Christian anti-Judaism: the former is profoundly racial in character, whereas the latter is religious. As he points out, the Christian criticisms against the Jews are not 'racial in their orientation,' in spite of the fact that some of these criticisms are 'unusually intense even to the point of condemning the Jewish people as a whole and even suggesting hostilities towards the Jews.' He also argues that 'what at times may appear in the church fathers to be a reference to race,' is actually a reference to Jewish 'religious identity' and not a reference to their 'ethnic origins.' We need, however, to distinguish between the early Christian literature and the late patristic and medieval anti-Jewish literature, in which the 'religious' anti-Judaism is as hostile and dangerous as a bias based on race, and thus, 'religious anti-Judaism has not been unlike racial anti-Semitism.' Nevertheless the hostilities in general were 'not racial in nature but religious.'⁵⁹ McDonald comes to the conclusion that Christian anti-Judaic rhetoric 'was in no way similar to nor has it directly been responsible for the racial anti-Semitism' of Hitler. This does not remove, however, the guilt from Christians 'who have wrongfully persecuted the Jews from the time of the Christian triumph over the empire.'⁶⁰

Joel Marcus is correct in arguing that the early Christian writings should be placed 'within particular historical contexts that explain their anti-Jewish polemic without recourse to the hypothesis of anti-Semitic prejudice.' These writings should be analyzed with reference to 'the historical conditions out of which they arose.'⁶¹ This approach is

⁵⁸ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.395, 398.

⁵⁹ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.215.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.225.

⁶¹ Joel Marcus, 'Epilogue,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. By Evans, C. A., and Hagner, D. A., (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p.291.

indeed necessary, for instance, in the case of Chrysostom's eight Discourses against Judaizing Christians. In Chrysostom's time, as I will try to show below in this chapter, the existence of a Judaizing movement in Antioch should be taken seriously before coming to any conclusions of his bitterness against the Jews. The New Testament and some other early Christian writings, as Marcus points out, 'do not demonstrate the sort of racial Anti-Semitism, the hatred of Jews simply because they are Jews.' Thus, these writings are 'absolved of responsibility' for the bloody Holocaust,⁶² and Paul's anti-Jewish stance, and that of the early Christian writers 'is not anti-Semitic.'⁶³

Thus, it is essential to outline firstly, the characteristics of Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature in order to find out whether or not it forms the basis of Christian anti-Judaism; and secondly, the most important characteristics of early Christian anti-Judaism. The latter is useful in determining the already posed question whether or not there is any connection between early Christian anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism.

6.3 Characteristics of Greco-Roman anti-Jewish Literature: The Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature was focused on Jewish separation from the rest of society and on their religious practices such as circumcision, Sabbath and dietary Laws. The most likely factors which produced anti-Jewish attitudes in the Greco-Roman world are the privileges given to the Jews and their missionary activity.⁶⁴

Among the privileges given to the Jews can be listed the 'exemption from military

⁶² Marcus, "Epilogue," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.291.

⁶³ Ibid., p.296.

⁶⁴ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.220-222.

service, relaxation of taxes, special Laws, temple tax protected by Rome as it made its way to Jerusalem, interdiction of intermarriage.⁶⁵ These privileges, which remained intact until the end of the fourth century, had given to the Jews 'an unfair advantage over the rest of the population.' However, because of them, jealousy, bitterness and hatred arose against the Jews.⁶⁶

Jewish missionary activity, as McDonald argues, is 'another overlooked factor,' which led the Greco-Roman world to an anti-Jewish attitude. Although it is much debated among modern scholars whether or not Judaism continued its missionary activity after the crises of A. D. 70 and 135, I am convinced that there was an active Jewish proselytizing effort throughout the Roman Empire and especially in the East, which started from the beginning of Christianity and continued up to the fourth century.⁶⁷ W. H. C. Frend argues that Jewish missionary activity caused the concern of Rome and led to the unpopularity of the Jews, because many of those who opposed the Jews 'had wives who had converted to Judaism.'⁶⁸ The success of the Jewish missionary activity is 'one of the reasons for both a fear and a hatred of the Jews.'⁶⁹

Writers like Cicero, Juvenal, Martial, Galen, Tacitus, Manetho of Egypt, Seneca, Suetonius, Ovid, Plutarch and Marcus Aurelius 'had little good to say about the Jews.' Their criticisms against the Jews show the lack of close personal contact with the Jews and ignorance of their origins and religious practices. Moreover the criticisms of these

⁶⁵ Bernard Lazare lists several other Jewish privileges in his *Anti-Semitism : Its History and Causes* (London: Briton's Publishing Co., 1967), pp.9-12.

⁶⁶ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.220; Lazare, *Anti-Semitism*, pp.9-12.

⁶⁷ For the evidence in support of my conclusion, see my introduction, pp.30-43. For a more detailed support of the existence of an active Jewish missionary activity see Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.271-301.

⁶⁸ W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp.41-42, 52.

⁶⁹ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.221.

writers, as McDonald points out, reveal the widespread disdain for the Jews in the Greco-Roman world.⁷⁰

Thus, the Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature was different from the Christian anti-Jewish literature. The church fathers rejected many of the Greco-Roman criticisms against the Jews, as for instance, the Jews' refusal 'to intermarry with the pagans and to sacrifice to the pagan gods' for the very reason that these criticisms were also applied to the Christians. The Christians compared to the Romans were 'far more knowledgeable of the Jewish origins, practices and scriptures.'⁷¹ The Greco-Roman anti-Jewish writers focused their criticisms on the Jewish separation from the rest of the society and their 'strange religious practices,' whereas in the early Christian anti-Jewish tradition, the criticisms were focused on the rejection of the Jews as the people of God and their replacement by the church as the true Israel.⁷² William Klassen and J. N. Sevenster have also shown that, the roots of anti-Judaism in the ancient world 'had primarily to do with the Jewish exclusionistic practices and their privileges' in the Roman Empire.⁷³ Ruether also agrees that the characteristics of the Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature, 'do not form the basis of the early Christian anti-Judaism.'⁷⁴

6.4 Christian anti-Jewish Literature: At this stage, it is essential to classify the Christian anti-Jewish literature and then to outline its most important characteristics, making special reference to the writings of John Chrysostom. The Christian anti-Jewish

⁷⁰ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.222.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp.220, 223.

⁷² Ibid., pp.220, 236.

⁷³ Ibid., p.224. Cf., William Klassen, *Anti-Judaism*, pp.5-15; J. N. Sevenster, *Roots*.

⁷⁴ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p.31.

writings can be classified into three primary categories: the *dialogues*, the *testimonies* and the *homilies*.⁷⁵ Thus, it is useful to look briefly at the characteristics of each category and its most typical examples.

What is common ground to all these three categories is the scriptural citations within these writings in support of two main arguments. Firstly that Jesus is the Messiah foretold in scriptures, and secondly that Israel is stubborn and blind because it failed to recognize him.⁷⁶ It seems that some kind of collection of scriptural texts circulated among the Christians for use against the Jews. This view, as McDonald argues, is supported by 'the similarity and the overlap of the texts' used in the anti-Jewish writings of the fathers. Typical writings that contain collections of scriptural texts are Tertullian's *Against the Jews*, Cyprian's *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*, and Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa's *Selected Testimonies from the Old Testament Against the Jews*.⁷⁷

The primary value of the *dialogues*, to start with the first category of anti-Jewish writings, lies in the issues they address, which, as McDonald points out, 'were most likely brought forward by the Jews in their contacts with the Christians.'⁷⁸ As Simon points out, 'if Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos* is compared with his *Apology*, or if Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* is compared with his *Apology*, it will be seen that the number of scriptural references is significantly less in the works addressed to pagans than in those addressed to Jews.' A controversy over scripture between Jews and Christians shows that both 'were agreed in recognizing the authority of scripture' and 'laid claim to it as their own.'

⁷⁵ Anti-Jewish attitudes can also be found in antiheretical and apologetic writings.

⁷⁶ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.226.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.230.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.227.

Thus, Simon comes to the conclusion that the anti-Jewish literature should be taken more seriously and be accepted at face value.⁷⁹

The *dialogues*, which contain endless scriptural citations, were originally directed against the Jews and the arguments they brought against Christians.⁸⁰ It seems very likely that the Jews 'attacked features of the Christian faith that they disliked at the same time as they defended their own position.' In support of this view, Simon points out that the christological arguments in the Christian writings 'have their counterpart in the criticisms of christology that are found in the rabbinic writings.'⁸¹

In the dialogues, the Jew is generally convinced and converted to Christianity. The only exception is Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Though this failure gives more credibility to Justin's dialogue, its text does not represent accurately all that took place in such a dialogue. McDonald argues that it is more likely that the dialogues were written as 'an encouragement and admonition to the Christians,' rather than in order to convert the Jews.⁸² Williams also points out that 'it is often difficult to determine whether the conversion of the Jews is genuinely sought by the writer' or whether a dialogue was written to provide 'arguments against Jewish attacks.'⁸³ G. F. Moore comes to the conclusion that the conversion of the Jews was not really an issue.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.139.

⁸⁰ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.227.

⁸¹ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.143. Ruether on the contrary argues that these category of writings is 'so dominated by the Christian presuppositions and even by magical details, that it become difficult to separate elements of fact from fiction.' Thus, in regard to the actual value of the *dialogues*, she comes to the conclusion that they are 'almost useless as sources for what Jews might actually have said about Christianity.' Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, pp.119-120.

⁸² McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.226.

⁸³ A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos. A Bird's Eye View of Christian Apologiae until Renaissance* (Cambridge: University Press, 1935), p.210.

⁸⁴ Moore, 'Christian Writers on Judaism' *Harvard Theological Review* 14 (1921), p.198.

In regard to the effectiveness of the arguments against the Jews, listed in the dialogues, Simon suggests that many Hellenistic Jews 'may well have become Christians' because they 'were less well prepared to meet the Christian arguments and more vulnerable to the Christian attack.'⁸⁵ McDonald argues that though the number of the Jews converted to Christianity was 'large enough to get the attention and draw the criticism of the Jews,' it was 'not large enough to suggest a major turning of the Jews to Christianity.'⁸⁶

Testimonies, the second category of anti-Jewish writings, also include large collections of scriptural citations. A typical example of this category is the Epistle of Barnabas, Tertullian's *An Answer to the Jews*, the writings of Cyprian and pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa.⁸⁷ The existence of collections of scriptural citations specially chosen for the need of preaching and controversy goes back to the apostolic period, where anonymous Christians 'extracted from the Old Testament the most convincing verses and arranged them into what amount to apologetic anthologies' with the purpose of convincing Israel. Already the Jews, 'had compiled catenae of proof texts for the purposes of their mission among the pagans,' and thus, the Christians probably were just following the Jews' own example.⁸⁸

Cyprian's Testimonia, like the works of pseudo-Gregory and Isidore of Seville, is not an isolated attempt to construct a collection of scriptural citations but 'a link in a

⁸⁵ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.175-176.

⁸⁶ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.226, note 62.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.228; Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.140.

⁸⁸ This view was first suggested by Edwin Hatch, in his *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), p.203 and developed by Sanday, Headlam and Rendel Harris. Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.154.

literary tradition that was already old.’ It seems that there were a number of different collections reworked and integrated into systematic compositions. Thus, Simon comes to the conclusion that the proof texts of these collections are drawn from earlier collections and there is no need to argue for ‘a direct dependence of one author on another,’ when we find frequently the same errors and especially when two different verses from different sources combine a single quotation in these works.⁸⁹ For instance, Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa credits to Isaiah a verse of Jeremiah (Jer.7:22) but immediately afterwards cites correctly a verse of Isaiah (Is.1:11). Simon suggests that ‘the error is most likely to be explained by the fact that, in the collection the author was using, the two verses stood side by side under the same heading, *Sacrificial Cult*,’ under which would be grouped texts taken principally from Isaiah. The same error appears, as Simon points out, in the Epistle of Barnabas, where these two verses are also quoted together. It seems, thus, that both pseudo-Gregory of Nissa and Barnabas used the same anthology of texts, which contained this error.⁹⁰

The homilies, the most important category of anti-Jewish writings, are characteristic of the severe tone of the criticisms against the Jews. Typical examples of this category are the homilies from the fourth and fifth century, as those of Aphrahat, bishop of the Persian side of Tigris,⁹¹ and John Chrysostom, whose *Discourses Against*

⁸⁹ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.154-155; Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, pp.7, 124, 215.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.155.

⁹¹ Abrahat’s twenty - three *Demonstrations*, written in Syriac, are his apology against Judaic criticism of Christianity and his criticism against Judaism. An English translation of some of the *Demonstrations*, can be found in Jacob Neusner, *Abrahat and Judaism. The Christian - Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), pp19-121.

Judaizing Christians are the most intense in tone.⁹²

It is worth noting that from the homilies is missing the interest to convert Jews, which is fundamental element in most of the *dialogues*, where the Jew always appears to be convinced by the arguments and converted to Christianity.⁹³ Ruether likewise observes that these homilies 'are remarkable for their relative lack of an appeal to the Jews for conversion.'⁹⁴

Abrahat's twenty - three *Demonstrations*, which were written in Syriac in A. D. 336-345, are in fact an exposition of the Christian faith. They are written in response to a request from an 'inquirer,' who, according to A. Lukyn Williams, 'was evidently a Head of a Monastery of some kind.'⁹⁵ Abrahat's primary concern was to 'strengthen the Christians with arguments to answer the Jewish criticisms against Christian faith,'⁹⁶ rather than to convert Jews. It seems that some Christians in Abrahat's time were attracted to Judaism. The fear at the back of his homilies, as Williams argues, is that 'some of his people were exposed to the danger of being led astray by Jewish practices and even Jewish arguments.'⁹⁷

Abrahat's apology against Judaic criticism of Christianity was not artificial or theoretical but came from 'believing Jews in everyday contact with faithful Christians.' Neusner argues that there is no doubt that some stories about the Jews, mentioned by

⁹² PG 48, 843-942; E.I.E. 34, pp.98-412. An English translation of Chrysostom's *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians* can be found in *The Fathers of the Church. A New Translation*, v. 68; tr. by Paul W. Harkins; (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1979).

⁹³ The only exception is the case of Trypho in *Justin's dialogue with Trypho*. McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.226, 229.

⁹⁴ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p.148.

⁹⁵ Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, p95.

⁹⁶ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.228.

⁹⁷ Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, p.102. For a summary of Abrahat's arguments see pp.96-102.

Abrahat, were founded on actual events. Abrahat's use of the 'depafter of the people,' however, in some cases suggests a real life encounter but in others a 'figment of Abrahat's imagination' solely for literary purposes.⁹⁸

Abrahat, in his criticism against Judaism, argues that God has rejected the Jews because they had rejected Messiah and has replaced them with the 'people which is of the peoples,' that is the Christian church.⁹⁹ Abrahat also argues that the religious practices of Judaism, such as circumcision, Sabbath and dietary Laws, 'do not have and never did have salvific value.'¹⁰⁰ Abrahat is the first Christian father who insists that these practices have never served to bring salvation.¹⁰¹

Abrahat, unlike many of the earlier Christian apologists, has taken the trouble to learn what his opponents really say against Christianity and developed his arguments on the Hebrew scriptures. From this point of view, Abrahat stands generally 'alone, original, inventive.'¹⁰² Although Abrahat makes little direct reference to the Judaism of his own time, it seems that he has a good knowledge of the Jews and their doctrines, because of his close contact with them.¹⁰³

Having dealt with Abrahat's twenty - three *Demonstrations*, it is also essential to deal with Chrysostom's eight *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, which, as Paul W. Harkins points out, have a 'special interest and importance for the history of the anti-

⁹⁸ Neusner, *Abrahat and Judaism*, pp.127-129.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.135-136, 123.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp.136, 143.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.146.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.242-244.

¹⁰³ Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, p.102.

Semitic question because of their undoubted novelty and originality.’¹⁰⁴

6.5 Chrysostom’s ‘Discourses Against Judaizing Christians:’ It appears that these Discourses were written in A.D. 386-387 and, as Harkins points out, they ‘cannot all be assigned to a continuous series.’ It seems that Discourses I-III were written in A.D. 386 and they belong to one series, whereas Discourses IV-VIII were written in A.D. 387 and they belong to a second series. In the first three Discourses Chrysostom ‘attacks and attempts to cure those sick with the Judaizing disease,’ whereas in the last five Discourses, he returns in order to ‘make the cure complete.’¹⁰⁵ Chrysostom’s eight Discourses were delivered at Antioch soon after his ordination to the priesthood in A.D. 386.¹⁰⁶

Before dealing with the basic themes of Chrysostom’s eight Discourses, it is essential to deal with the situation in Antioch in Chrysostom’s time, with special reference to the Judaizing movement in Antioch, which is a ‘specifically Antiochene phenomenon.’¹⁰⁷ The investigation of the symptoms of this movement and the likely causes that provoked it is very important, because it explains at least partially Chrysostom’s bitterness against the Jews, as I intend to show below in this chapter.

Situation in Antioch: At the time of Chrysostom’s ordination to the priesthood, ‘most of the educated classes and civil administrators at Antioch were still pagans.’

¹⁰⁴ Paul W. Harkins, *Saint John Chrysostom. Discourses Against Judaizing Christians* (The Fathers of the Church. A New Translation v. 68; tr. by; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1979), p.xxxvii.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.lix.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.lix; Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, p.132; Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.472, note 69.

¹⁰⁷ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.222.

Though Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, paganism and Judaism were 'far from dead.' As Harkins points out, the Christians encountered in Antioch the distractions and temptations of both paganism and Judaism. Many converts from paganism were in fact demi-pagans and many converts from Judaism were demi-Jews. These demi-Christians, both the demi-pagans and the demi-Jews, constitute dangers to Chrysostom's congregation.¹⁰⁸ However, the problems that arose from pagans and Jews were not altogether the same. Though Christians in Antioch had to 'associate with, work with, even live in the same house' as both pagans and Jews, the Jewish influence on the Christians was more powerful than that of the pagans for two main reasons. The pagans did not proselytize whereas the Jews did; and the Jewish fasts and festivals were more attractive to Christians. It seems that Chrysostom has feared the Jewish influence on Christians more than the pagan influence.¹⁰⁹

The decree 'Cunctos populos' in A.D. 380 established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire,¹¹⁰ but this did not make all the citizens of the Empire 'ardent Christians.' In fact, there were many demi-Christians, who were either demi-pagans or demi-Jews. Especially in Antioch there appears a Judaizing movement which was, according to Harkins, 'very distinctly marked with popular syncretism and strongly coloured by superstition and preoccupation with practices of magic.'¹¹¹

A Judaizing Christian, as Ruether defines it, was the Christian who 'was attracted to Jewish rites and traditions, while remaining within the mainstream church.' Precisely against these Judaizing Christians in Antioch, Chrysostom addresses, his eight Discourses

¹⁰⁸ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxvi, xxxv.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.xxvi-xxvii. My reading of Chrysostom's Discourses confirms Harkins' view.

¹¹⁰ Cf., The Theodosian Code XVI.1.2. An English translation can be found in Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), p.31.

¹¹¹ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxx.

and not against the Jews.¹¹² Ruether supports the view that this Judaizing movement was not superstitious as a whole, although she admits that there was 'a superstitious element to it, such as the amulets worn especially by the women.'¹¹³ According to C. Guignebert, however, in the first five centuries many people, who were converted to Christianity, 'lived a sort of double religious life.' The reasons which Guignebert gives for the existence of these demi-Christians are 'syncretism, poor instruction of faith and the scandals of Christian converts.'¹¹⁴

Chrysostom, in his eight 'Discourses Against Judaizing Christians', says nothing about the causes of the Judaizing movement at Antioch, but he reveals its essential symptoms. Describing the dimensions of the Judaizing movement, in his first Discourse, Chrysostom speaks of a 'serious illness' which 'has become implanted in the body of the church.'¹¹⁵ He also states that many among his congregation 'respect the Jews and think that their present way of life is a venerable one,' and thus, his intention is to 'uproot and tear out this deadly opinion.'¹¹⁶ The Jews are 'pitiable and miserable' because, as he points out, they 'rejected the blessings which were sent to them.' They have been called to the 'adoption of sons' but they fell to 'kinship with dogs.'¹¹⁷

The fact that Chrysostom urges his congregation to keep their wives and slaves 'at home' and to 'keep them away from the synagogue,' shows that many Christian slaves

¹¹² Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, pp.170, 173.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.171.

¹¹⁴ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxiv.

¹¹⁵ PG 48,844; E.I.E. 34, p.100; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.3.

¹¹⁶ PG 48,847; E.I.E. 34, p.108; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.10.

¹¹⁷ PG 48,845; E.I.E. 34, pp.102-104; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.5.

and wives were among the adherents of this movement.¹¹⁸ Jerome and the Jewish historian Josephus also speak of women among the Judaizers. Josephus reports that all the women in Damascus were Judaizers.¹¹⁹

Chrysostom exhorts his congregation, in the last Discourse, to conceal the real number of the Christians who participated in the Jewish feasts, which shows the real dimensions of the Judaizing movement in Antioch, and its serious threat to the church. The seriousness of the situation explains partially Chrysostom's bitterness against the Jews. Chrysostom exhorts his congregation to conceal the fact that many Christians had fallen away in order to 'keep the church safe from a double hurt;' namely to prevent the spread of the rumour and to cure 'those who have fallen away.' The latter reason shows Chrysostom's primary concern, which was to cure those Christians who participated in the Jewish feasts and to support those who did not. It is worth noting Chrysostom's fear that once a Christian hears 'the rumour that a large number joined in keeping the fast, he will be more inclined to be careless himself.'¹²⁰ His profound concern was to take any necessary measures to stop other Christians participating in the Jewish feasts. And the delivery of these Discourses obviously serves this concern. As Harkins points out, participation in the Jewish feasts by demi-Christians 'was one of the principal symptoms of the Judaizing disease.'¹²¹

Another symptom of the 'Judaizing disease' can be found in Chrysostom's story of a man who 'was forcing a woman to enter the shrine of the Hebrews and to swear there an oath about some matters under dispute with him.' Chrysostom says that this

¹¹⁸ PG 48,881; E.II.E. 34, p.220; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.92.

¹¹⁹ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxix. Cf., Jerome *In Matt.* 23.5; PL.26,175 and Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.20.

¹²⁰ PG 48,933; E.II.E. 34, p.384; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.218-219.

¹²¹ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxix.

story is from his own experience and not a product of a guesswork. He describes that woman as ‘a woman of good bearing, modest, and a believer,’ and that man, who obviously was a demi-Christian, as ‘a brutal, unfeeling man, reputed to be a Christian,’ but not a ‘sincere Christian.’ Chrysostom ‘snatched her from the hands of her abductor’ and told him that ‘it was altogether forbidden to swear’ an oath either in the synagogue or in any other place. What is of great importance is the reason that that man gives for his behaviour: ‘many people had told him that oaths sworn there were more to be feared.’¹²² This story shows that it was commonly believed that any oath sworn in a synagogue ‘was more solemn and binding.’¹²³

It also appears that many demi-Christians in Antioch sought healings from the rabbis, who had great reputations as physicians. There was a great fascination about their therapeutic methods, which according to Harkins, ‘arose from the close association in the popular mind between physicians, magicians and sorcerers.’¹²⁴ This symptom is also detected by Chrysostom. In his eighth discourse, he admits that the rabbis seem to have the reputation for healing, but he argues that the rabbis ‘do not effect genuine cures.’ In his effort to correct the fallen Christians, Chrysostom suggests that his congregation must reveal the tricks the Jews use, namely ‘their incantations, their amulets, their charms and spells,’ because their reputation for healing was based precisely on them.¹²⁵ In the same context, Chrysostom also speaks of many demi-Christians who run to the synagogues when they were sick with fever and hurts. Chrysostom asks these Christians to think hard of what defence they will make to Christ, of what excuse they will have to their

¹²² PG 48,847; E.Π.E. 34, p.110; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.11-12.

¹²³ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xl.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.xli.

¹²⁵ PG 48,935; E.Π.E. 34, p.390; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.222.

conscience, if they summon into their own house ‘these sorcerers, these dealers in witchcraft?’ Describing the rabbis’ reputation for healing, Chrysostom notes that they chant over the people that they treated an incantation, or tie an amulet to their body.¹²⁶ He advises his congregation to ‘reject the incantations, the spells, and the charms’ and even to prefer to die of their disease, because they will become ‘perfect martyrs.’¹²⁷ Simon points out that the superstitious use of amulets is also attested by Jerome and Augustine who strongly denounce its use.¹²⁸ Harkins notes that the Jewish scholar S. Krauss states that ‘the Jews in Antioch spread all sorts of superstitions and magic among the Christians.’¹²⁹

Having dealt with the Judaizing movement in Antioch and its symptoms, we turn now to Chrysostom’s rhetoric in order to place in context his anti-Jewish rhetoric.

Chrysostom’s Use of Invective: Chrysostom’s education in rhetoric and especially his use of invective in his eight Discourses against Judaizing Christians is very important in understanding his bitterness against the Jews. Chrysostom is without question ‘the master of anti-Jewish invective.’ In his eight Discourses are gathered together all the complaints and all the insults against the Jews.¹³⁰

In the opening discourse, Chrysostom announces that the festivals of ‘the pitiful and miserable Jews’ are soon to come. Using aggressive language he says that the Jews ‘really are pitiable and miserable,’ because they ‘rejected the blessings which were sent

¹²⁶ PG 48,937-938; E.I.E. 34, p.398; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.229-230.

¹²⁷ PG 48,940; E.I.E. 34, p.406; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.235.

¹²⁸ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.354, 365-366.

¹²⁹ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xli, note 88.

¹³⁰ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.216. For Chrysostom’s education in rhetoric, see my third chapter, in pp.97-101.

to them,'¹³¹ because they 'never failed to attack their own salvation.¹³² They are 'the most miserable and wretched of all men.'¹³³

The next target of Chrysostom's invective is the Jewish synagogue. 'There is no difference between the theatre and the synagogue,' he says. In defence of his aggressive language, Chrysostom argues that the words he speaks are the words of the prophet Jeremiah and other prophets: 'You had a harlot's brow, you become shameless before all.' Where a harlot has set herself up, he points out, 'that place is a brothel.'¹³⁴ Jerome similarly calls the synagogue a harlot,¹³⁵ but for Jerome synagogue signifies an abstraction of Judaism and thus calling the synagogue a harlot is only a metaphor. For Chrysostom, however, the synagogue is an actual place of worship and he speaks of it as a 'place of abomination.' What is worth noting, however, is that according to a rabbinic tradition 'the synagogue will be used for prostitution' at the coming of the Messiah.¹³⁶

Chrysostom goes further to state that the synagogue is a 'den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts,' that it becomes a 'dwelling of demons.'¹³⁷ The synagogue, as Chrysostom repeatedly states, is not 'merely a lodging place for robbers and cheats but also for demons.' Demons, he repeatedly says, dwell not only in the place of the synagogue itself but also in the souls of the Jews.¹³⁸

Next subject of Chrysostom's invective is the 'vices' of the Jews. The Jews in the

¹³¹ PG 48,844-845; E.I.E. 34, pp.100-102; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.3-5.

¹³² PG 48,845; E.I.E. 34, p.104; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.6.

¹³³ PG 48,871; E.I.E. 34, p.192; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.71.

¹³⁴ Jer.3:3. PG 48,847; E.I.E. 34, pp.108-110; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.9-10.

¹³⁵ PL 25,880.

¹³⁶ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.473, note 76.

¹³⁷ PG 48,847; E.I.E. 34, p.110; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.10-11.

¹³⁸ PG 48,849, 852; E.I.E. 34, p.114, 126; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.15,24.

past, he argues, ‘acted impiously against the prophets’ and that ‘now they outrage the master of the prophets.’ Citing a series of rhetorical questions, Chrysostom exhorts his congregation not even to share ‘a greeting with them’ and ‘to turn away from them,’ because ‘they are the common disgrace and infection of the whole world.’¹³⁹ Immediately afterwards, he also wonders: ‘Have they not come to every form of wickedness? ... They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons.’ Thus, he wonders: ‘what deed of theirs should strike us with greater astonishment? That they sacrificed their children or that they sacrificed them to demons?’¹⁴⁰ ‘What else do you wish me to tell you? Shall I tell you of their plundering, their covetousness, their abandonment of the poor, their thefts, their cheating in trade? The whole day long will not be enough to give you an account of these things.’¹⁴¹ Chrysostom’s list of the vices of the Jews is completed with the accusation of killing Christ ‘χριστοκτόνοι.’¹⁴² He calls their fasting ‘a table of demons, because they slew God.’¹⁴³

Comparing the past of the Jews with their present, Chrysostom argues that whereas in the past the Jews ‘were guilty of ungodliness, worshipped idols, slew their children, stoned the prophets,’ the Jews continued to ‘enjoy such great kindness and good will’ and ‘such protection’ from God. In the present time although the Jews ‘do not worship idols,’ ‘do not slay their children,’ ‘do not stone the prophets,’ nevertheless the Jews are spending their lives ‘in endless captivity.’ Chrysostom insists that God ‘has turned himself altogether away from the Jews’ because they ‘did slay Christ,’ ‘did lift violent hands

¹³⁹ PG 48,852; E.II.E. 34, p.128; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.24.

¹⁴⁰ PG 48,852-853; E.II.E. 34, p.128; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.24-25.

¹⁴¹ PG 48,853; E.II.E. 34, pp.128-130; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.25-26.

¹⁴² PG 48,849; 48,852; 48,853; 48,870.

¹⁴³ PG 48,854; E.II.E. 34, p.132; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.28.

against the Master,' and 'did spill his precious blood.'¹⁴⁴ Chrysostom is not the only one who accused the Jews of killing Christ.¹⁴⁵ What is worth noting, however, is that Chrysostom understands that Jews killed Christ not as a means of denigrating his Jewish contemporaries but rather as an explanation as to why the fourth captivity of the Jews will never come to an end.¹⁴⁶ Chrysostom, focusing his interest on the reason for which the Jews 'will recover neither their city nor their temple in days to come,'¹⁴⁷ argues that the Jews committed sins even in the past but God has not turned himself away from them, whereas now that their sins 'are less serious' God has turned himself altogether away from them.¹⁴⁸ As he clearly admits, his Jewish contemporaries ceased to repeat the vices, which they had committed in the past. Thus, what he wants to stress is not that his Jewish contemporaries are also responsible for killing Christ but rather that the Jews will not recover their city and temple because they killed Christ in the past.¹⁴⁹

Thus, when Chrysostom suggests the opposite view, representing the Jews as guilty of vices which they had committed in the past, overstating them, he does so merely for rhetorical purposes in an effort to cure those sick with the Judaizing disease. Chrysostom's concern was to reclaim for the church these Judaizing Christians and to keep those Christians 'who were weak and on the brink' from falling by frightening them.

¹⁴⁴ PG 48,906-907; E.I.E. 34, p.300; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.153-154.

¹⁴⁵ Cf., below in this chapter, in p.303.

¹⁴⁶ Chrysostom, in his discourse V, puts an emphasis on the captivities of the Jews, arguing in general that while the prophets predicted the place and the duration for the first three captivities of the Jews, no prophet defined the duration for their fourth captivity, that under the Romans. For Chrysostom's approach to the four captivities of the Jews and the prophecies about them see below in pp.296-299.

¹⁴⁷ PG 48,889; E.I.E. 34, p.244; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.110.

¹⁴⁸ Chrysostom, listing some of the 'wondrous and marvelous signs' that God worked for the Jews in the past, speaks of the cloud and pillar of fire that guided the Jews toward the Red Sea, the collapse of Jericho's walls and the the manna that God sent to them in the dessert. PG 48,906; E.I.E. 34, p.300; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.154.

¹⁴⁹ PG 48,906; E.I.E. 34, p.300; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.153-154.

For this very reason Chrysostom's language 'must be strong in his instruction of the sick and his denunciation of their disease.'¹⁵⁰

An 'improper or insensitive use' of Chrysostom's aggressive language, however, can cause tragic effects, as for instance, the excesses of the crusades, the pogroms of Eastern Europe and the Nazi Holocaust. Thus, it becomes very important to accompany these writings with 'explicit statements concerning what they do not mean' in order to not repeat the atrocities of the past.¹⁵¹

Having placed in context Chrysostom's anti-Jewish rhetoric and especially his use of invective, we turn now to Chrysostom's arguments against the Jews and his use of scripture in order to find out what is new in these Discourses with regard to other anti-Jewish writings and what are the similarities and differences between Chrysostom and the rest Christian anti-Jewish writers.

Chrysostom's Arguments Against the Jews: Although, in all the eight Discourses against Judaizing Christians, there is a bitterness against the Jews, the tone, as Harkins points out, 'changes considerably in the course of the series.' In Discourses I, II, and IV Chrysostom attacks the Jewish practices, but ends up with a prayer that 'his wandering brethren may return to the fold.' In discourse III, he attacks the Protopaschites.¹⁵²

Discourses V-VIII, however, are 'far less vituperative and much more apologetic, exegetic and instructional.' In discourse V, Chrysostom argues that the predictions of

¹⁵⁰ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxvii.

¹⁵¹ Hagner, 'Paul's Quarrel with Judaism,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.128.

¹⁵² Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xlviii.

Christ are true, and that the temple will never be rebuilt. He also speaks of the three captivities of the Jews. This discourse also ends up with a plea 'to bring back those who are sick.' In Discourses VI and VII, Chrysostom argues that the Jews have no temple, no priesthood, no sacrifice. Both Discourses again end up with a plea 'for fraternal correction.' In discourse VIII, Chrysostom repeats several of the themes of the earlier Discourses, but his main concern is to help and correct those Christians 'who erred.'¹⁵³

Chrysostom's criticism against the Jews starts with their Jewish festivals, which followed one another in succession for nine days, within the first fifteen days of September-October.¹⁵⁴ According to Chrysostom, many Christians during these nine days either were 'going to watch these festivals,' or even joined 'the Jews in keeping their fasts and observing their fasts.'¹⁵⁵

The Jews, as Chrysostom points out, 'obstinately strive to observe the Law' at a time when the Law 'ceased to bind.' Their fasting is 'untimely and an abomination' because in the past they 'were striking your fellow slaves' and they have 'slain' their master.¹⁵⁶ Building his argument on Is.58:4-5,¹⁵⁷ Chrysostom comments on how the Jews were fasting in the past and in his own time, showing that Chrysostom has some kind of knowledge about Judaism. A man 'who fasts should be properly restrained, contrite, humbled -not drunk with anger. But do you strike your fellow slaves? In Isaiah's day they

¹⁵³ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.xlviii-xlix. For a more detail approach to Chrysostom's use of scripture in support of the view that 'the temple will never be rebuilt,' see below in this chapter.

¹⁵⁴ Chrysostom speaks of the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Tabernacles, and the fasts. Cf., my introductory chapter in p.44.

¹⁵⁵ PG 48,845; E.Π.E. 34, pp.100-102; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.3-4.

¹⁵⁶ PG 48,845-846; E.Π.E. 34, pp.104-108; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.7-9.

¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the whole chapter deals with true fasting and, as Harkins suggests, Isaiah refers to the fasting days 'instituted to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem. *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.9, note 34.

quarreled and squabbled when they fasted; now when they fast, they go in for excesses and the ultimate licentiousness, dancing with bare feet in the marketplace.' His criticism is focused on the fact that their fasting was followed by dancing and singing, because these public parades during these festivals attracted many Christians to the Jewish festivals.¹⁵⁸ As he admits, many Christians were 'going to watch these festivals,' or even joined 'the Jews in keeping their fasts and observing their fasts.'¹⁵⁹

Besides the Jewish festivals, Chrysostom also criticizes the synagogue. 'There is no difference between the theatre and the synagogue,' and if his declaration rests on his own authority, then they can charge him 'with rashness.' But, if the words he speaks are the words of the prophet then they must 'accept his decision.'¹⁶⁰

The synagogue, he argues, is not only 'a brothel and a theatre' but also 'a den of robbers and a lodging of wild beasts.' Here again, Chrysostom seems to acknowledge the Jewish response to his view, namely that the Jews too 'adore God.' In overthrowing this argument, Chrysostom insists that 'no Jew adores God.' God, is not worshipped in the synagogue, which 'from now on remains a place of idolatry,' because, as he argues, the Jews 'fail to know the Father,' 'crucified the Son,' and 'thrust off the help of the Spirit.'¹⁶¹

He criticizes those Christians who were rushing to the synagogue to 'hear the trumpeters,' arguing that their feasts are completely illegitimate, because it is a violation of God's Law. The Jews could sound their trumpets long ago, only when they 'did have

¹⁵⁸ PG 48,846; E.II.E. 34, p.108; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.9.

¹⁵⁹ PG 48,845; E.II.E. 34, p.102; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.4.

¹⁶⁰ PG 48,847; E.II.E. 34, p.108; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.10.

¹⁶¹ PG 48,847; E.II.E. 34, pp.108-110; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.10-11.

sacrifices.¹⁶² He admits that he hates the synagogue, because 'it does have the Law and the prophets,' in which 'they have a great allurements and many a snare to attract the more simple-minded sort of men.' Chrysostom's bitterness against the Jews is motivated by his concern to stop any kind of attractiveness of Judaism, and not by racism against them. He understood the synagogue as a 'snare' which attracted many Christians.¹⁶³

Chrysostom also argues that the temple is destroyed and it will never be rebuilt, and thus, all their fasts and sacrifices are completely illegal. Showing a precise knowledge of the circumstances under which the Jews of the past observed them, Chrysostom points out that only in Jerusalem and precisely in their temple could these rituals be observed. Ask the Jew, he exhorts his congregation, 'why he observes the fast when he has no city.' If the Jew probably replies that he does so because he expects to recover his city, as Chrysostom suggests, then his congregation should advise him to stop fasting until he does recover his city. He argues that the three boys in Babylon and Daniel and all the others who spent their days in captivity, 'practiced none of these rites,' until they returned to their land.¹⁶⁴

The Jews, as he similarly points out, illegally continue to celebrate the feast of Passover, because the Lawgiver clearly prescribes, in Dt.16:5, to celebrate Passover only in Jerusalem. Chrysostom correctly quotes the words of the Lawgiver: 'You may not sacrifice the Passover in any one of the cities which the Lord your God gives you, but only in the place in which His name shall be evoked. And, as he stresses, 'Moses was here speaking of Jerusalem.'¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² PG 48,881; E.P.E. 34, p.220; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.92.

¹⁶³ PG 48,913; E.P.E. 34, pp.320-322; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.171.

¹⁶⁴ PG 48,883; E.P.E. 34, pp.226-228; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.98-99.

¹⁶⁵ PG 48,865-866; E.P.E. 34, p.172; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.57.

Thus, according to Chrysostom, the destruction of the temple puts an end to the Passover, the sacrifices and the priesthood in Judaism. Simon points out that it is Chrysostom who explains the disappearance of the priesthood ‘not by the installation of a new priesthood, the Christian one, but simply by the fact that the ordinary conditions of its existence and functioning no longer obtain.’¹⁶⁶

Chrysostom’s use of scripture: At this stage it is essential to deal with Chrysostom’s use of scripture in order to show his skills in appealing to scripture in support of his arguments. A typical example of his use of scripture can be found in his effort to support the view that ‘the temple will never be rebuilt.’ Chrysostom’s intention in discourse V, which is longer than the other Discourses and its tone is ‘far less vituperative and much more apologetic, exegetic and instructional,’¹⁶⁷ was to give ‘abundant proof that the temple will not be rebuilt and that the Jews will not return to their former way of life.’¹⁶⁸

Firstly Chrysostom recalls Christ’s prediction, in Lk.21:24 and Mt.24:2, that the temple would come to a final devastation, which will last till the end of the world. They reject Christ’s testimony, he says, because they do not believe in Christ as ‘God and Master of all the world,’ but they consider Him ‘just as another man.’ Thus, he suggests to look at what else Christ predicted in order to test whether Christ tells the truth in all things or not.¹⁶⁹ Chrysostom appeals, firstly, to the case of the woman who poured an alabaster jar of precious ointment on Christ, described in Mt.26:7-13, for whom Christ

¹⁶⁶ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.168.

¹⁶⁷ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xlviii.

¹⁶⁸ PG 48,883-884; E.II.E. 34, p.228; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.99.

¹⁶⁹ PG 48,884; E.II.E. 34, p.230; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.99-101.

predicted that 'wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.' Chrysostom emphasizes that 'certainly we do hear her story 'wherever in the world you may go.' The prediction of such things, as Chrysostom concludes, is 'not within the scope of human power.'¹⁷⁰

Chrysostom, in a second example, recalls Christ's prediction to Peter, in Mt.16:18, that Christ will build his church on this rock and 'the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.' Reminding his audience of the various forms of persecutions which have been kindled against the church,¹⁷¹ Chrysostom concludes that the testimony of facts shows that 'none of these things destroyed the church nor made it weaker.' He also reminds his congregation of the efforts of Zeno of Kitium, Plato, Socrates, Diagoras, Pythagoras and others, 'who wished to introduce their teachings among the Greeks and to establish a new commonwealth and way of life.' These men, he argues, 'fell so far short of success that many people do not even now know them by name.'¹⁷² He also appeals to Gamaliel's advice, in Acts 5:38-39, to the Sanhedrin of the Jews, that 'if this plan is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. In that case you may even be found fighting against God.'¹⁷³ On the basis of the above cited arguments Chrysostom points out that Christ was not a 'deceiver,' or a 'mere man' and His predictions were 'gloriously fulfilled, and their truth waxing stronger with each passing day.' Thus, he concludes, why do the Jews 'reject this one prediction about the

¹⁷⁰ PG 48,884-885; E.I.E. 34, pp.230-234; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.101-102.

¹⁷¹ PG 48,885-886; E.I.E. 34, p.234; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.102-103.

¹⁷² PG 48,886; E.I.E. 34, pp.234-236; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.103.

¹⁷³ Chrysostom also mentions the movement of Theudas and that of Judas the Galilean who both died and their disciples perished, on the basis of Acts 5:34-41. PG 48,887; E.I.E. 34, p.238; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.106.

temple?’¹⁷⁴

Chrysostom then broadens his case with a series of arguments taken from the prophecies of the Old Testament. Besides Christ’s prediction that the temple will never be rebuilt, he argues that according to the words of the prophets, ‘the Jews will recover neither their city nor their temple in days to come.’¹⁷⁵ For all the three captivities of the Jews God ‘foretold the place, the duration, the kind, the form of their misfortune, the return from slavery and everything else.’¹⁷⁶

The first captivity, that in Egypt, was predicted to Abraham. According to Gen.15:13-16, God said to Abraham: ‘know this for certain that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years.’ Chrysostom is mainly interested in indicating that God foretold the duration, the place and the nature of the first captivity of the Jews: it was predicted to last for four hundred years, to take place in Egypt where the Jews shall be oppressed.¹⁷⁷

The second captivity, that in Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C., was predicted by Jeremiah. According to Jer.29:10,14: ‘For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon’s seventy years are completed will I visit you and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place ... I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.’ Chrysostom is interested again in showing that the prophet spoke of the place and the duration of this captivity, that is to last for seventy years and take place in Babylon.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ PG 48,888; E.I.E. 34, p.240; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.107-109.

¹⁷⁵ PG 48,889; E.I.E. 34, p.244; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.110.

¹⁷⁶ PG 48,890; E.I.E. 34, p.248; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.113. Besides these three captivities, Chrysostom speaks of a fourth one, that under the Romans which he calls their present captivity. For more details, see below in this chapter.

¹⁷⁷ PG 48,890; E.I.E. 34, pp.248-250; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.113.

¹⁷⁸ He also appeals to Dn.8:27-9:3, arguing that Daniel ‘did not make his prayer for the Jews until he saw that the seventy years had elapsed.’ According to Chrysostom, Daniel ‘did not dare to bring his prayer to God before the appointed time,’ because ‘he feared that his prayer might be rash and in vain. He was afraid he

The third captivity of the Jews, that in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes who, in 168 B.C. ‘burned the temple, laid waste the holy of the holies, put an end to the sacrifices, subjected the Jews, and destroyed their whole state,’ was predicted by Daniel ‘with the greatest accuracy even to the very day’ in Dan.8:2-14.¹⁷⁹ After analyzing Daniel’s vision, Chrysostom says that Daniel himself asked ‘what shall be the outcome of these things?’ but the answer given to him was that ‘the words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end.’¹⁸⁰ With regard to the duration of this captivity, the angel said to Daniel that is ‘one thousand two hundred and ninety days.’¹⁸¹ As Chrysostom explains, this period of time is ‘three and a half years.’¹⁸² What is worth noting, in regard to the third captivity, is that Chrysostom brings in Josephus, as a witness to his view. Chrysostom’s reference to Josephus shows that Chrysostom probably had a very good knowledge of Josephus’s writings in general.¹⁸³ Even Josephus admits, he argues, that ‘it did happen that the nation of our fathers underwent those sufferings under Antiochus Epiphanes, just as Daniel had seen many years before and had written would come to pass.’¹⁸⁴

would hear what Jeremiah had heard.’ PG 48,891; E.II.E. 34, pp.250-252; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.114-115.

¹⁷⁹ PG 48,893; E.II.E. 34, p.258; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.120.

¹⁸⁰ Dn.12:8-9.

¹⁸¹ Dn.12:10.

¹⁸² PG 48,895; E.II.E. 34, p.266; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.125.

¹⁸³ The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote in Greek the *Jewish Antiquities* (up to A.D. 66), and a history of the *Jewish Wars* (from the capture of Jerusalem in 70 B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes up to its capture by Titus in A.D.70). Chrysostom’s reference is from Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* 10.269-276. Harkins even supports the view that ‘in fact, editors have used Chrysostom’s account to correct the text of Josephus where it was in doubt.’ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.126-127.

¹⁸⁴ Cf., Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* 10,276. PG 48,897; E.II.E. 34, p.270; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.129.

Turning to 'the present bondage of the Jews,' that under the Romans, which is their fourth captivity, Chrysostom appeals again to Josephus, who in his account of Daniel's vision writes: 'in the same manner Daniel also wrote about the empire of the Romans and that they would capture Jerusalem and devastate the temple.' Chrysostom correctly points out that when Josephus spoke of the third captivity of the Jews in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and his devastation of Jerusalem, he did state 'how many days and years the captivity was going to last;' when Josephus, however, spoke of the captivity under the Romans, he said nothing about such a restoration.¹⁸⁵ Chrysostom's view that the temple will never be rebuilt is also shared by the rabbis in Josephus' time. According to Harkins, Josephus' rabbinic contemporaries also 'interpreted Dn.11-12 as a prophecy of Roman conquest of Jerusalem. This will lead to the fourth bondage, which will never end.'¹⁸⁶

The cause for which the present fourth captivity of the Jews will never end and their temple will never be rebuilt, according to Chrysostom, is because they 'slew Christ.' As he points out, Daniel's reference to the 'seventy weeks, which are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin,' in Dn.9:24, is to be understood as meaning that 'the Jews are committing many sins, but the end of their evil deeds will be the day they slay their Master.' The thoughts of Christ and Daniel agree, he points out, because Christ also said, in Mt.23:32, 'fill up the measure of your ancestors.' Thus, he comes to the conclusion that God was estranged from the Jews, 'because of the bold crime they were going to commit.'¹⁸⁷ The period of the

¹⁸⁵ Cf., Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 10,276. PG 48,897; E.I.E. 34, pp.270-272; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.129-130.

¹⁸⁶ Harkins takes this view from Marcus, the English translator of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, in Loeb Library. Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.129.

¹⁸⁷ PG 48,898; E.I.E. 34, pp.272-274; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.130-131.

‘seventy weeks,’ which is a period of ‘four hundred and eight-three years,’ starts from the restoration of Jerusalem and comes to the time of the last destruction of it. Chrysostom, on the account of 2 Ezras 2-3, suggests that the restoration of Jerusalem happened not under Cyrus but under Artaxerxes, the ‘long-handed,’ during the twentieth year of Nehemiah’s kingship.¹⁸⁸ Chrysostom insists that this period does not indicate the end of the slavery of the Jews, because according to Dn.9:26 after the end of this period ‘the troops of the prince,¹⁸⁹ who is to come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.’¹⁹⁰

Chrysostom repeats the view that the temple will never be rebuilt because they slew Christ, in his discourse VI. Summarizing his arguments, Chrysostom argues that ‘If the present captivity of the Jews were going to come to an end, the prophets would not have remained silent on this, but would have foretold it.’ He also points out that the Jews tried many times to rebuild their temple but without success.¹⁹¹

Chrysostom focuses his interest on the reason for which the Jews did not recover their city and temple, as it has happened in their previous captivities.¹⁹² He rejects the view that the Jews ‘should plead their sins as an excuse’ for not recovering their city and the temple. As he correctly points out, the Jews committed sins even in the past but God has not turned himself away from them, whereas now that their sins ‘are less serious’ God ‘has turned himself altogether away from the Jews.’ This is because they ‘did slay Christ,’ they ‘did lift violent hands against the Master’ and ‘did spill his precious

¹⁸⁸ PG 48,899; E.I.E. 34, p.276; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.133-134.

¹⁸⁹ As Harkins suggests, Chrysostom must be referring to Titus who destroyed the city and the sanctuary. Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.134.

¹⁹⁰ PG 48,899; E.I.E. 34, p.276; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.134.

¹⁹¹ The Jews, as Chrysostom notes, tried unsuccessfully to rebuild their temple three times: in the time of Hadrian, in the time of Constantine and in the time of Julian. This is also noted in discourse V. PG 48,900 and 905; E.I.E. 34, pp.278-280 and 296; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.137 and 150.

¹⁹² PG 48,905; E.I.E. 34, p.298; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.150.

blood.’¹⁹³

What is also of great interest, in Chrysostom’s eight Discourses, is his views on the Law and justification by faith.¹⁹⁴ Does he hold the views he espouses in his reading of Galatians and Romans, or does he modify them? In spite of his bitterness against the Jews, Chrysostom does not actually say anything different to what he says in his writings on Galatians and Romans about the Law and justification by faith.

Outlining his views, in discourse II, Chrysostom argues that ‘there was a time when the Law was useful and necessary, but now it has ceased and is fruitless.’¹⁹⁵ Circumcision is the very command which ‘imposes on you the entire yoke of the Law.’ Thus, he points out, ‘the man who fulfills a single commandment of the Law, like circumcision or fasting, through that one commandment, has given the Law full power over himself.’ He argues, however, that what he says about the Law should not be understood as an ‘accusation of the Law.’ He admits that he is ‘forced to say all these things because of the untimely contentiousness of those who do not use the Law as they should.’ His point is to show the ‘surpassing riches of the grace of Christ.’ Nevertheless, according to Chrysostom, the Law cannot be contrary to Christ, since Christ is ‘the one who gave the Law’ and the Law’s mission is to ‘lead us to him.’ He proceeds to state that he ‘would never deny’ the fact that the Law ‘has profited our nature very much,’ but he also accuses the Judaizers of clinging to the Law ‘beyond the proper time.’ The profit of the Law is great, because it ‘has prepared our soul to receive a greater philosophy,’ and it ‘led us sincerely to Christ.’¹⁹⁶ The scriptures, he says in another instance, took him by the hand and lead him

¹⁹³ PG 48,906; E.Π.E. 34, p.300; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.153-154.

¹⁹⁴ For Chrysostom’s views on these issues see above in chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁹⁵ PG 48,858; E.Π.E. 34, p.148; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.37.

¹⁹⁶ PG 48,859-860; E.Π.E. 34, pp.152-154; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.41-42.

to Christ.¹⁹⁷ Chrysostom, thus, does not modify his views on the Law and justification by faith in his Discourses.

Chrysostom's Discourses differ from the rest of Christian anti-Jewish literature only in the 'rhetorical' tone and the 'immediacy' with the Jewish community of Antioch, which 'must have been numerous, influential and active.' As Ruether points out, Augustine's treatise differs from Chrysostom's eight Discourses only in that Augustine writes 'with no Jewish threat in sight,' whereas Chrysostom speaks 'in the heat of the battle.'¹⁹⁸

From the above data, it appears that Chrysostom in his eight Discourses not only confirms the existence of a Judaizing movement in Antioch, which is a 'specifically Antiochene phenomenon' as Simon points out, but also describes its symptoms. There is no doubt that all the eight Discourses are characterized by bitterness against the Jews. However, the fact that Chrysostom changes considerably his tone and ends up in all his eight Discourses with a plea to help and correct the fallen Christians shows that his primary concerns are the Judaizing Christians and not the Jews themselves.

Having dealt with Chrysostom's eight Discourses against Judaizing Christians, it remains to outline the most important characteristics of the Christian anti-Jewish literature in order to find out what are the likely causes that provoked the Christian polemic against the Jews.

6.6 Characteristics of Christian Anti-Jewish Literature: The Church fathers called into question the Jewish position as the people of God, claiming that the Jews were

¹⁹⁷ PG 48,852; E.I.E. 34, p.126; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.24.

¹⁹⁸ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, pp.173-174.

rejected by God and have been replaced by the church as the true Israel.¹⁹⁹ Justin Martyr is the first Christian writer who argued that the Christians are the true spiritual Israel and have replaced the Jews.²⁰⁰ Abrahah also argues that God has rejected the Jews because they had rejected Messiah and he has replaced them with the 'people which is of the peoples,' that is the Christian church.²⁰¹

McDonald supports the view that 'the fathers disagreed on whether the rejection of the Jews was temporary or final.' For Origen the plan of God could not be complete without their conversion. Chrysostom 'seems to have accepted the rejection of the Jews as final,' as McDonald suggests.²⁰² Chrysostom, in his eight *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, holds the view that God 'has turned himself altogether away from the Jews' because they 'did slay Christ.'²⁰³ However, in his Homilies on Romans, he argues that God 'has not rejected His people,' because 'if God has rejected His people, He would not accept any of them. Since God accepted some of them, this clearly means that He has not rejected them.'²⁰⁴

Another important characteristic of the Christian anti-Jewish literature is the criticism of the Jews for their inability to interpret their own scriptures and the failure to see from scriptures that 'Jesus was the Messiah of Israel.' In the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, for instance, the Jew Aquila asks for proof from scriptures that Jesus is the

¹⁹⁹ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.230.

²⁰⁰ Justin argues that 'because the true spiritual Israel and race of Judah and of Jacob and of Isaac and of Abraham, which was witnessed and blessed by God from uncircumcision to faith are we who were brought forward to God by the crucified Christ.' Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, 11.5. It is my own translation. McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.223.

²⁰¹ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.228, Neusner, *Abrahah and Judaism*, pp.135-136, 123.

²⁰² McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.236.

²⁰³ PG 48,907; E.I.E. 34, p.300; *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.154.

²⁰⁴ PG 60,577; E.I.E. 17, p.370. It is my own translation.

Messiah. The Christian Timothy, in his reply, cites Gen.28:12; 2 Sam.12:25; Deut.21:23; Isa. 6:1-3 and 7:14 and numerous other passages from the Old Testament.²⁰⁵ The Jews' inability to draw this conclusion from scriptures was understood as an 'irrefutable proof of their spiritual blindness and evidence for the justness of their punishment.'²⁰⁶

Besides the accusation of blindness because of the Jews' inability to see from scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah, the Jews were also accused of killing the prophets, becoming idolaters and Law breakers, rejecting the will of God and most importantly of killing Christ.²⁰⁷ Melito of Sardis is the first who accused the Jews of killing 'God.'²⁰⁸ In his work *On Pascha*, Melito of Sardis wonders: 'What strange crime, O Israel, have you committed?' 'You killed Him that made you live.'²⁰⁹ What is worth noting is Melito's argument that Christ had to suffer, be dishonoured, be judged and be hung up, but not by the Jews.²¹⁰ The accusation of killing Christ, as McDonald points out, 'is not too far removed from Paul's accusation in I Cor.2:8' and thus this accusation is to be understood as 'a logical deduction from the developing Christology in the second century.'²¹¹

Thus, to summarize, the most important characteristics of the Christian anti-Jewish

²⁰⁵ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.230-231.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.231. Cf., Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, 29.2.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p.235. Chrysostom also accused the Jews of killing Christ. Cf., above in pp.288-289.

²⁰⁸ Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*, TLG cd, 735: 'Ο Θεός πεφόνευται, 'God had been killed.' It is my own translation.

²⁰⁹ Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*, TLG cd, 534-539: Τὴ ἐποίησας, ὦ Ἰσραήλ, τὸ καινὸν ἀδίκημα; ... ἀπέκτεινας τὸν ζωοποιήσαντά σε. The English translation is from an online translation from *Monachos.Net* Web page.

²¹⁰ Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*, TLG cd, 544-549. The view that Christ's death was according to the plan of God is also supported by Justin and Irenaeus. Cf., Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, 141.1; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 4.18.4.

²¹¹ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.235.

literature is the criticism of the Jews for their inability to interpret their own scriptures, because they failed to see from scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. The Jews, thus, were rejected by God and replaced by the church as the true Israel, because of their failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. They were also accused of killing the prophets, becoming idolaters and Law breakers, and of killing Christ.

It is essential to deal now with the likely causes that provoked the Christian polemic against the Jews. McDonald suggests that early Christians expected that Jesus would return soon to establish his kingdom, would establish Jerusalem as the religious capital of Christianity and that the Jews would eventually come to faith in Christ accepting Him as the promised Messiah. These expectations, however, did not materialize in the way early Christians had hoped. Firstly the church has attempted to convert the Jews because they believed that God had not rejected them. The failure to convert the Jews then led the church to the view that God had rejected them and thus, the Jews were rejected by God and replaced by the church as the true Israel.²¹²

Besides these three expectations, another important cause that provoked the Christian polemic against the Jews is the attractiveness of Judaism to the Christians. It seems that many Gentile Christians and pagans were finding Judaism more attractive than Christianity. Especially in the fourth and fifth centuries many were attending the Jewish festivals and sought physical healing from Judaism. It seems that some of the church's leaders were tempted toward Judaism. Canon 70 of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, at the end of the fourth century, orders that 'if any bishop, or any other of the clergy, fast with the Jews, or keeps the festivals with them, or accepts of the presents from their festivals,

²¹² McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.237-238.

as unleavened bread or some such thing, let him be deprived; but if he be one of the laity, let him be suspended.'²¹³ Chrysostom also warns the Christians of Antioch against converting to Judaism.

McDonald points out that conversions to Judaism and Christian participation in Jewish festivals and other religious activities and conversion 'could not have taken place without significant missionary activity on the part of the Jews.' The Christian anti-Jewish literature was most intense in places where Jewish missionary activity 'was having considerable success among the Christians,' which success has given rise to the production of the 'strongest invective' against the Jews well into the Middle Ages.²¹⁴

This is true, for instance, in the cases of Melito of Sardis and of Chrysostom. In Sardis the Jews had built the largest synagogue known in ancient times and operated one of the largest and most impressive gymnasiums. The Jewish presence in Sardis was very impressive attracting many to Judaism.²¹⁵ The Jews were among the earliest inhabitants of Antioch and their synagogue worship, fasts and festivals were attractive to Christians too.²¹⁶ Chrysostom warned the Christians of Antioch against being attracted to Judaism and his criticisms of the Jews 'reveal the critical situation of the church in the later half of the fourth century.'²¹⁷

What remains to deal with is an appraisal of Chrysostom's position within the Christian anti-Jewish literature. The conflict between Christianity and Judaism 'remained

²¹³ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, p.240.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p.240.

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp.240-241.

²¹⁶ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxvii.

²¹⁷ McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,' in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp.241-242.

a lively one in some areas whilst in others it had already died out.' Simon argues that in the places that this conflict remained alive 'it was the Jews who kept it so.' The decisive point is 'whether or not the Judaism with which these works come to grips represents a real threat to the church,' and from this point, Chrysostom's Discourses, as Simon concludes, 'enable us to see just what the danger was.'²¹⁸

Although Chrysostom 'may be using merely rhetorical devices' in his criticism against the Jews, he 'goes far beyond any earlier Christian polemicist,' and his 'argumentation could at times be called offensive.' Although, his Discourses were preached in a church and in front of Christian congregation with no Jews present there, nevertheless, since they become written documents, they 'have clearly played an important part in the history of the whole question of anti-Semitism,' and they 'have exercised an influence which went far beyond any specific occasion or local situation.'²¹⁹ The 'violence of his invective' is without parallel in the Christian anti-Jewish literature. His attitude and methods reappear 'every time the subject of the Jews crops up' in the Christian anti-Jewish literature.²²⁰ Chrysostom 'is not a racist' and 'his invective is not an expression of class conflict,' but if, as Simon suggests, anti-Semitism is to be defined as 'an attitude fundamentally and systematically hostile to Jews,' and when this hostility is supported 'by very bad arguments, by calumnies, by an incomplete, tendentious representation of Judaism that falsifies the truth about it,' then Chrysostom 'deserves to be set in the front rank among the anti-Semites of all time.'²²¹

Chrysostom, along with Jerome and Augustine, was accused by Friedrich Heer of

²¹⁸ Simon, *Verus Israel*, pp.144-145.

²¹⁹ Harkins, 'Introduction,' in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, pp.xxxvii-xxxviii.

²²⁰ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.222.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p.395.

‘having presented a picture of the Jews which had its effect on neurotic anti-Semites in every historical crisis affecting the Jews for more than the next 1500 years.’ With regard to Chrysostom’s eight ‘Discourses against Judaizing Christians,’ Heer points out that in these Discourses are found ‘all the weapons used against the Jews down to the present day.’ Chrysostom presents the Jews as ‘sensual, slippery, voluptuous, avaricious, possessed by demons;’ calls them ‘drunkards, harlots, and breakers of the Law;’ and identifies them as the people who murdered the prophets, Christ, and God.’ Heer assigns, thus, to these Discourses ‘an epoch-making significance.’²²²

Harkins strongly disagrees with Heer’s conclusions. Although he admits that Chrysostom indeed speaks of the Jews in ‘these coarse terms,’ he insists that it is not correct to take Chrysostom’s accusations out of their historical context, as Heer has done.²²³ Chrysostom’s intention was to cure those Christians who had participated in the Jewish feasts. His primary concern was to take any necessary measures to stop other Christians participating in these feasts. As Simon admits, Chrysostom’s Discourses ‘enable us to see what the danger was’ to the church from the Judaizing movement in Antioch. These Discourses, are not aimed at the Jews at all but at the Judaizing Christians of Antioch.²²⁴ Chrysostom’s intention was to cure and reclaim these Judaizing Christians for the church. Harkins is correct in arguing that Chrysostom’s language ‘must be strong in his instruction of the sick and his denunciation of their disease.’²²⁵ What must not be forgotten, as Ruether admits, is that Chrysostom ‘never actually tells his people

²²² Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxviii. Friedrich Heer’s views are quoted by Harkins.

²²³ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxviii.

²²⁴ Simon, *Verus Israel*, p.145.

²²⁵ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxvii.

to do any violence to the Jews or to their synagogues,²²⁶ and he ‘surely could not have intended the tragic future effects alleged by Heer,’ as Harkins points out.²²⁷

It is essential, thus, to distinguish between Chrysostom’s intention in writing his eight Discourses against Judaizing Christians and the use of these Discourses in the subsequent history of anti-Semitism. The excesses of the crusades, the pogroms of Eastern Europe and the Nazi Holocaust clearly show what evil can be caused by ‘an improper or insensitive use’ of Chrysostom’s writings. Nevertheless Chrysostom must not bear the essential responsibility for the tragic future effects caused by any improper or insensitive use of his writings. The responsibility, I think, lies rather on everyone who used or will use his writings improperly and insensitively.

Whatever the effect of Chrysostom’s Discourses on the subsequent history of anti-Semitism, ‘it is clear that the Judaizing movement in Antioch was a menace to orthodox Christianity.’ His Discourses represent ‘an energetic defence reaction or a vigorous counterattack which springs from an extremely disquieting local situation.’²²⁸ It is our responsibility not to use these Discourses improperly or insensitively by taking them out of their historical context.

6.7 Conclusions: After the bloody persecution of the Jews in the Nazi Holocaust, the ‘ripest and most bitter fruit of anti-Semitism,’ it becomes more urgent to search for any kind of anti-Semitism in Paul and early Christianity. A careful investigation of Paul’s and Chrysostom’s position towards Judaism, and especially their negative statements about the Law, is essential to find out whether either Paul or Chrysostom is guilty of

²²⁶ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p.179.

²²⁷ Harkins, ‘Introduction,’ in *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*, p.xxxviii.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.xxxviii-xxxix.

slandering the Jews and stirring up deep hatred against them.

Are we going to speak of anti-Semitism or of anti-Judaism? This question is already imposed on the title of this chapter. Thus, before entering the investigation of this crucial issue, it becomes very important to define these terms. Simon defines anti-Semitism as 'an attitude fundamentally and systematically hostile to Jews,' especially when this hostility against the Jews is supported 'by some very bad arguments, by calumnies, by an incomplete, tendentious representation of Judaism that falsifies the truth about it.' Hagner, however, defines anti-Semitism as 'nothing less than racial hatred of the Jews,' which 'can take a variety of forms such as prejudice, injustice, slander, abuse, and even physical violence.' Instead of anti-Semitism Hagner speaks of anti-Judaism, which he defines as the 'theological disagreement with Judaism.' This latter term is also used in this chapter.²²⁹

The criticisms against the Jews, in the early Christian literature are not racial but religious in nature. When a Jew was converted to Christianity, as for instance in the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, the Jew ceased to be a Jew, whereas for Hitler, a Jew who is converted to Christianity remains a Jew.²³⁰

The origins of Christian anti-Judaism can be found in the New Testament and especially in John and Paul. Although Paul's negative statements about the Law and Israel involve a critique of Judaism, his view in Rom.11:25-26 that 'all Israel will be saved' makes him pro-Israel. Thus, as Hagner proposes, it is inappropriate to connect Paul with anti-Semitism of any kind. Daniel Boyarin, a 'practicing Jewish Critical but sympathetic reader of Paul,' argues that for Paul 'it would have been impossible' to

²²⁹ Cf., above in pp.258-261.

²³⁰ Cf., above in p.262.

dismiss Torah altogether because of his conviction that it was given by God. Thus, as he proposes, Paul's positive statements 'are the essence of his hermeneutical theology by which Christianity fulfills and does not abrogate Judaism.' Boyarin's reading of Gal.3:10-4:7 points to the conclusion that 'it is totally inappropriate to think of Paul's thought as anti-Semitic, or even as anti-Judaic.'²³¹

In early forms of Christian anti-Judaism the charges against the Jews are intensified including God's ultimate and final rejection of the Jews, whereas in Paul this rejection was a temporary matter. The most intense Christian anti-Jewish writings of the fourth and fifth centuries, namely these of Aphraates, Ephraem the Syrian and John Chrysostom, were written with the aim counteracting the Jewish proselytizing activity.²³²

With regard to the roots of modern anti-Semitism there is a dispute among modern scholars. James Parkes, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Samuel Sandmel are among the scholars, who support the view that modern anti-Semitism has its roots in the writings of the early church fathers, and thus, that Christian religious anti-Semitism is ultimately responsible for the Holocaust. Nevertheless other scholars, as for instance Marcel Simon, Lee Martin McDonald and Joel Marcus, strongly disagree with any attempt to establish definite and close connection between modern anti-Semitism and the early Christian fathers. As Simon points out, the theological components of anti-Semitism are not the determining factors for the Nazi atrocities. Hitler's anti-Semitism is profoundly racial in character, McDonald argues, whereas early Christian anti-Judaism is religious. Thus, as Marcus concludes, the New Testament and some early Christian writings 'do not demonstrate that sort of racial anti-Semitism.' The early Christian writings should be

²³¹ Cf., above in pp.262-267.

²³² Cf., above in pp.267-268.

placed 'within the particular historical contexts that explain their anti-Jewish polemic.'²³³

The Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature was focused on Jewish separation from the rest of the society and their religious practices. The most likely factors that led the Greco-Roman world to anti-Jewish attitudes were the privileges given to the Jews on the one hand and their missionary activity on the other. The characteristics of the Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature, as Ruether concludes, 'do not form the basis of the early Christian anti-Judaism.'²³⁴

The early Christian anti-Jewish literature can be classified in three primary categories: the *dialogues*, the *testimonies* and the *homilies*. All these three categories contain endless scriptural citations in support of the views that Jesus is the Messiah and that Israel is stubborn and blind because it failed to recognise him.²³⁵

Although in all the dialogues except in Justin's 'Dialogue with Trypho' the Jew is generally convinced and converted to Christianity, it is more likely that the dialogues were written as an encouragement and admonition to the Christians rather than in order to convert the Jews. Testimonies also include large collections of scriptural citations which were drawn from earlier collections reworked and integrated into systematic compositions.²³⁶

From the homilies, which are characteristic of the severe tone of the criticisms against the Jews, is missing the interest in converting Jews. Abrahat's primary concern,

²³³ Cf., above in pp.268-272.

²³⁴ Cf., above in pp.272-274.

²³⁵ Cf., above in pp.274-275.

²³⁶ Cf., above in pp.275-278.

in his twenty - three 'Demonstrations,' was not to convert the Jews but to strengthen his Christians with arguments to answer the Jewish criticisms against Christian faith. It seems that some of his people were attracted to Judaism. Abrahat argues that God has rejected the Jews, because they had rejected Messiah, and has replaced them with the 'people which is of the peoples,' the Christian church. He also criticizes the religious practices of Judaism.²³⁷

Chrysostom's eight 'Discourses Against Judaizing Christians' have a 'special interest and importance for the history of the anti-Semitic question because of their undoubted novelty and originality.' The Christians in Chrysostom's time encountered in Antioch the distractions and temptations of both paganism and Judaism. The pagans did not proselytize whereas the Jews did; and the Jewish fasts and festivals were more attractive to Christians. Chrysostom seems to fear the Jewish influence on his congregation rather than the pagan. The Judaizing movement, a 'specifically Antiochene phenomenon,' caused Chrysostom's concern. According to Chrysostom, among the adherents of this movement are many Christian slaves and women.²³⁸

Although Chrysostom says nothing about the causes of the Judaizing movement at Antioch, he describes its essential symptoms. Many demi-Christians participated in the Jewish feasts, because he exhorts his congregation to conceal the real number of the Christians who had fallen. Participation in the Jewish feasts is one of the principal symptoms of the 'Judaizing disease.' Moreover, many Christians in Antioch used to go to the synagogue and swear an oath there, because it was generally believed that the oaths sworn in the synagogue were more solemn and binding. Many Christians sought

²³⁷ Cf., above in pp.278-280.

²³⁸ Cf., above in pp.281-283.

healings from the rabbis, because they had a great reputation as physicians.²³⁹

Chrysostom's education in rhetoric and especially his use of invective are very important factors in understanding his bitterness against the Jews. The festivals of the Jews, the Jewish synagogue and the list of their vices which includes their killing of Christ, are the targets of Chrysostom's invective. He calls the Jews 'pitiful' and 'miserable' because they 'rejected the blessings which were sent to them.' Their synagogue is a 'brothel,' a 'den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts' and a 'dwelling of demons.' Demons also dwell in their souls. The Jews in their past 'were guilty of ungodliness, worshipped idols, slew their children, stoned the prophets,' but continued to 'enjoy such great kindness and good will' and 'such protection' from God. Although the Jews in the present time 'do not worship idols,' 'do not slay their children' and 'do not stone the prophets,' they are spending their lives 'in endless captivity.' God 'has turned himself altogether away from the Jews,' because they slew Christ. Chrysostom understands that Jews killed Christ not as a means of denigrating his contemporary Jews but rather as an explanation for not recovering their city and temple. He admits, moreover, that his contemporary Jews ceased to repeat the vices they had committed in the past.²⁴⁰

Thus, when Chrysostom represents the Jews as guilty of vices which they had committed in the past, including the killing of Christ, overstating them, he does so merely for rhetorical purposes in his effort to reclaim for the church the Judaizing Christians and keep others from falling. Nevertheless, it is our responsibility not to use these Discourses improperly or insensitively by taking them out of their historical context, because such

²³⁹ Cf., above in pp.283-286.

²⁴⁰ Cf., above in pp.288-289, 295-300.

a use can cause tragic effects.²⁴¹

What must not be forgotten, however, is that Chrysostom's use of invective is only one form of his fight against the Jews. He also provides strict criticism on issues that attracted many demi-Christians to Judaism and a series of arguments from scripture in support of his criticism.

Chrysostom's criticism is focused on the Jewish festivals (the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Tabernacles, and the fasts), in which many Christians participated. He also criticizes the synagogue, which he declares that he hates, because it appears as a 'snare' to attract the 'more simple-minded sort of men.' Chrysostom argues that the destruction of the temple puts an end to the Jewish priesthood, Passover and the sacrifices. The Jews cannot have priesthood and observe any rite or feast, because they should do so only in Jerusalem. As he points out, when the Jews were in captivity and exile they 'practiced none of these rites' until they returned to their land.²⁴²

Chrysostom's appeal to scripture, in support of his view that 'the temple will never be rebuilt' and that the Jews 'will not return to their former way of life,' is a typical example of his use of scripture. In discourse V, Chrysostom, referring to the relevant prophecies of the three captivities of the Jews, shows that for all the three captivities, God 'foretold the place, the duration, the kind, the form of their misfortune, the return from slavery and everything else.' In this discourse Chrysostom's tone is 'far less vituperative and much more apologetic, exegetic and instructional.' With regard to the present captivity of the Jews, the fourth one, Chrysostom argues that neither a prophet nor Josephus, said anything about the restoration of their city and temple. Their captivity

²⁴¹ Cf., above in p.289.

²⁴² Cf., above in pp.291-294.

will never be ended 'because of the bold crime they were going to commit,' that is to slay Christ.²⁴³

Chrysostom's views on the Law and justification by faith in his Discourses against Judaizing Christians are identical with those in his writings on Galatians and Romans. In spite of his bitterness against the Jews, Chrysostom can say that 'there was a time when the Law was useful and necessary.' The Law cannot be contrary to Christ because Christ is 'the one who gave the Law,' and its mission is to 'lead us to him.' The Law prepared the way to receive the 'greater philosophy' of Christ, attributing to it a clear positive function as a pedagogue.²⁴⁴

Chrysostom's eight Discourses, which confirm the existence of a Judaizing movement in Antioch and its essential symptoms, coped well with its attraction to many demi-Christians in Chrysostom's time.²⁴⁵

In the Christian anti-Jewish literature, the church fathers called into question the Jewish position as the people of God. The Jews were rejected by God and have been replaced by the church as the true Israel. The Jews were also criticized for their inability to interpret their own scriptures, because they failed to see from scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. The Jews, thus, were rejected by God and replaced by the church as the true Israel, because of their failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. They were also accused of killing the prophets, becoming idolaters and Law breakers, and of killing Christ.²⁴⁶

Among the likely causes that provoked the Christian polemic against the Jews are

²⁴³ Cf., above in pp.294-299.

²⁴⁴ Cf., above in pp.300-301.

²⁴⁵ Cf., above in p.301.

²⁴⁶ Cf., above in pp.301-304.

the attractiveness of Judaism to the Christians and the Jewish missionary activity. The Christian anti-Jewish literature was more intense in places where Jewish missionary activity was successful.²⁴⁷

Any honest appraisal of Chrysostom's position towards the question of anti-Semitism has to consider several factors. In the places that the conflict between Christianity and Judaism remained alive, 'it was the Jews who kept it so,' as Simon points out. The decisive point, I think, is whether or not Judaism represents 'a real threat to the church,' and from this point, Chrysostom's Discourses 'enable us to see just what the danger was.' Although Chrysostom 'may be using merely rhetorical devices' in his criticism against the Jews, he 'goes far beyond any earlier Christian polemicist,' and his 'argumentation could at times be called offensive.' Although his Discourses were preached in a church, since they become written documents, they 'have exercised an influence which went far beyond and specific occasion or local situation.' His attitude and methods reappear 'every time the subject of the Jews crops up' in the Christian anti-Jewish literature.²⁴⁸

Chrysostom 'is not a racist' and 'his invective is not an expression of class conflict,' but if, as Simon suggests anti-Semitism is to be defined as 'an attitude fundamentally and systematically hostile to Jews,' and when this hostility is supported 'by very bad arguments, by calumnies, by an incomplete, tendentious representation of Judaism that falsifies the truth about it,' then Chrysostom 'deserves to be set in the front rank among the anti-Semites of all time.'

Heer accuses Chrysostom, along with Jerome and Augustine, of 'having presented

²⁴⁷ Cf., above in pp.304-305.

²⁴⁸ Cf., above in pp.305-306.

a picture of the Jews which had its effect on neurotic anti-Semites in every historical crisis affecting the Jews for more than the next 1500 years.' He assigns to these Discourses 'an epoch-making significance.' Harkins, who strongly disagrees with Heer's conclusion, admits that Chrysostom indeed speaks of the Jews in 'coarse terms,' but he insists that it is not correct to take Chrysostom's accusations out of their historical context.²⁴⁹

Chrysostom's primary concern in these Discourses was to cure those who were sick from the Judaizing disease, to correct those who erred, as he repeatedly states in his Discourses. His intention was to cure and reclaim these Judaizing Christians for the church. His Discourses are not aimed at the Jews at all but at the Judaizing Christians of Antioch, and he 'never actually tells his people to do any violence to the Jews or to their synagogues,' as Ruether admits. The excesses of the crusades, the pogroms of Eastern Europe and the Nazi Holocaust clearly show what evil can be caused by 'an improper or insensitive use' of Chrysostom's Discourses and the rest of the Christian anti-Jewish literature. The essential responsibility for these effects, however, lies on everyone who used or will use these anti-Jewish writings improperly and insensitively. Chrysostom, as Harkins correctly points out, surely could not have intended these tragic effects, and thus, I think, Chrysostom must not bear the essential responsibility for these effects. Whatever the effect of his Discourses on the subsequent history of anti-Semitism, Chrysostom's Discourses represent 'an energetic defence reaction or a vigorous counterattack which springs from an extremely disquieting local situation.'²⁵⁰

What should be stressed, especially after the Nazi Holocaust, is that every one who

²⁴⁹ Cf., above in pp.306-307.

²⁵⁰ Cf., above in pp.307-308.

attempts to read the New Testament and especially Paul's letters, Chrysostom's Discourses, or any other Christian anti-Jewish writing, should be aware of 'the evil that can be caused by an improper or insensitive use' of these writings and, thus, to accompany these writings with 'explicit statements concerning what they do not mean,' to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding these writings and not to repeat the atrocities of the past and especially the Nazi Holocaust.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Cf., above in p.258.

‘PAUL AND THE LAW’
IN
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

PART 4

7

CONCLUSIONS

7

CONCLUSIONS

The central position of the Law in Paul's theology requires us to clarify the meaning Paul gives to the Law. Even though we have many statements of Paul about the Law, the clarification of its meaning is very difficult. In spite of the enormous volume of literature, which has appeared the last few decades on Paul and the Law, the scholars have thus far reached no consensus. As has been correctly pointed out by many scholars, the wide variety of divergent opinions which were available not only gave unsatisfactory answers but also produced greater confusion. Even the evaluation of the results from recent research varies considerably, intensifying this confusion.

Aiming to give a new direction to the investigation of the question of 'Paul and the Law,' I have proposed to look for other events within the history of early Christianity, where the Church confronted similar circumstances. It appears that the problem which Paul confronted in first - century Galatia would turn out to be a chronic one for Christianity for many centuries after Paul. All the evidence cited in my *Introduction* (chapter 1) points to the conclusion that the situation in fourth - century Antioch is very similar to that in first - century Galatia.

Thus, I proposed to investigate the case of Chrysostom because he has many similarities with Paul. They both confronted their opponents in the same extreme way, using strong expressions in their polemic, and losing their temper many times. Moreover, they both expressed their views more calmly elsewhere, Paul in Romans and Chrysostom in his commentary to Galatians. Thus, the study of the situation in fourth - century Antioch and Chrysostom's reaction to it might throw at least some light upon Paul's position towards the Law.

Besides the similarities between the situation in fourth - century Antioch and the situation in first - century Galatia and the similarities between Paul and Chrysostom, there is another reason for choosing to investigate the case of Chrysostom: his skills as an exegete. I have, thus, dealt with the most important characteristics of early Christian Exegesis and Chrysostom's place within it, in order to outline his skills.

Every reader of Chrysostom's writings is astonished by his ability to use the rhetorical devices with dexterity, his philosophical and spiritual formation, his extensive knowledge of scripture, his excellent memory in quoting long passages of scripture, and his skill in introducing fitting quotations from all parts of scripture.

Chrysostom's usage of allegory and typology is another important characteristic, which makes him distinguished within early Christian exegesis. Although he does not rigidly exclude allegory from his exegesis, he usually restricts himself to typology. In fact, Chrysostom reduces to the bare minimum the usage of allegory without leaving any limits to the interpreter's imagination to come to arbitrary conclusions. Moreover, his interest in the literal historical reading of Paul's letters and his insistence on searching for Paul's purpose and deeper mind make him a good reader of Paul.

My research in Chrysostom's writings has shown that some of the views held by modern scholars are in agreement with some of Chrysostom's views whereas other views are not. Modern scholars might find in Chrysostom a further help to re-evaluate their views and to what extent they should revise them in order that modern scholarship might attain a consensus on Paul's position towards the Law.

For Chrysostom νόμος and ἔργα νόμου, especially in statements where Paul attacks the Law, refer to the Law of Moses as a whole and the deeds demanded by it, and not to a part of this Law or anything else. Paul's object everywhere, he points out, is to annul the Law of Moses for the very reason that 'it was through a fear and a horror of this Law that the Jews obstinately opposed grace.' The view held by Cranfield and Hübner that νόμος sometimes means not the Mosaic Law itself but its perversion, legalism, does not find any support in Chrysostom.

Although Paul's thesis that justification is not by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ is stated by Paul too frequently and too explicitly, Paul's real reason for abandoning the Law is not so readily apparent. Chrysostom argues that Paul rejects the Law because it is too weak and unable to justify, and not because it is evil by nature, a view which was held by the Manicheans, in Chrysostom's time. Christ's crucifixion is, for Chrysostom, a plain proof of the Law's inability to justify. The Law, however, is by no means responsible for the final results. Passages like Rom.7:7-8, 3:20 and 5:20 are not to be understood as an accusation held by Paul against the Law, because it is sin and not the Law itself who actually is responsible for the results described in these passages.

Paul's insistence, however, that no one can be justified by the works of the Law raises the question *who ever thought that the works of the Law could justify?* Chrysostom points out that, according to Lev. 18:5 and Rom.10:5, for both Paul and Judaism the Law was indeed a path to salvation. The observance of the Law could lead to salvation

and the Law's intention was to do so regardless of the final results. Räisänen argues that Judaism was not characterized by legalism, whereas Judaism was depicted by Paul as legalism. Although Westerholm agrees with Räisänen's view that Paul ascribes 'a saving value to the fulfillment of the precepts of the Law,' he points out that when Paul contrasts the righteousness of the Law with that of faith, he does not base his depiction on empirical observation of first-century communities but rather finds both principles enunciated in scripture. Westerholm's view stands in agreement with that of Chrysostom.

However, if the Law was indeed a path to salvation, as both Chrysostom and Westerholm suggest, then one may ask, *why the works of the Law cannot justify?* For Chrysostom the Law was unable to justify, although its intention was to do so, because of the 'listlessness of those who received it.' Similarly Westerholm suggests that the Law does not provide the life it promises, because of human transgressions. For Paul, he argues, the Law promises life to those who obey its commands, but threatens with death those who disobey them. Paul shares this view, as Westerholm correctly points out, with Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Ezekiel. Again Westerholm's view stands in agreement with that of Chrysostom.

According to Chrysostom, the entire letter to the Galatians is written in support of Paul's thesis that justification is by faith. The case of Titus and the incident of Antioch are to be understood as evidence that support Paul's thesis of Gal.2:16. Paul's expression that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised has been variously understood by modern scholars. For Chrysostom, Titus was not circumcised and he understood Titus' case as a plain proof that the apostles in the Jerusalem Conference did not condemn either Paul's doctrine or his practice. Most scholars understood the case of Titus as a direct affirmation that Titus was not circumcised, whereas some others understood it as

meaning that Titus was circumcised ‘voluntarily or at Paul’s suggestion.’

With regard to the incident of Antioch some scholars support the view that Paul failed to convince Peter and Barnabas to adopt his position. Taylor and Dunn argue that the incident of Antioch ended up in defeat and isolation for Paul. Longenecker argues that though Paul was right he failed to convince Peter, but this does not continue to be true for long. The patristic interpretation of the incident, including that of Chrysostom, proposed two main solutions in an effort to confront the diverse ‘attacks of heretics and unbelievers.’ According to the first, proposed by Clement of Alexandria, the Cephas whom Paul rebukes was not the apostle Peter but one of the seventy disciples; according to the second, proposed by Origen, the dispute between the two apostles was ‘simulated’ in order that Paul might more effectively ‘condemn the Judaizers.’ Chrysostom rejects Clement’s solution and espouses that of Origen.

The dispute between Paul and Peter was a real one, though Chrysostom wrongly argues for the opposite. It seems very likely that after the incident and for a short time after, Peter was not convinced and to some extent Paul was isolated in Antioch, but Paul’s position was soon adopted by Peter, Barnabas and the rest, because we do not hear of similar crises within early Christianity. Chrysostom however, correctly stresses the view that Paul refers to the incident as evidence which supports his thesis that justification is by faith.

Paul’s appeal to the Galatian’s own experience and to the case of Abraham are understood by both modern scholars and Chrysostom again as arguments in support of Paul’s thesis.

Paul’s assertion that the Law cannot justify opens the question of the origin and purpose of the Law. Paul, answering his own question *why then the Law?*, states in

Gal.3:19, that the Law 'was ordained through angels' and it 'was added because of transgressions.' For Chrysostom the divine origin of the Law is beyond any question. The mission of the angels is to minister the delivery of the Law. Chrysostom's view is in agreement with his contemporaries, who in their effort to meet the attacks of Marcion and the Gnostics rejected the view that the Law originated with another God. The view, thus, held by Schweitzer and Hübner, that the angels were the authors of the Law, and that they were demonic beings with evil intentions, finds no support in Chrysostom.

With regard to the purpose of the Law, Chrysostom argues that the Law was given in order that the 'Jews might not be let live carelessly and plunge into the depth of wickedness,' and that it functions as a bridle 'guiding, regulating, and checking them from transgressing.' He also stresses the teaching role of the Law as a grammarian, in order that 'by fear we might chasten our lusts,' which comes to an end with the coming of the Spirit. Chrysostom attributes to the Law clearly a 'positive' purpose, arguing that if the Law was not given, then there would have been no Jews to listen to Christ. Dunn, in agreement with Chrysostom, argues that the more likely reading of Gal.3:19a points to a positive role of the Law before the coming of Christ. Westerholm, in disagreement with Sanders and Räisänen, argues that neither God, nor his Law is responsible for the Law's transgression. For Westerholm, what Paul attributes to the Law are not 'arbitrary inventions,' but rather 'restatements of principles long maintained within his inherited religion.' The view held by Hübner and Räisänen that Paul's expression 'because of transgressions' means 'to provoke transgressions,' finds no support in Chrysostom.

In fact, what the Law actually brings in is not the life it promises but curse, because of human transgressions, according to Hab.2:4. Paul also shares this view with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea. Chrysostom argues that Christ released people from the curse of the

Law by exchanging the curse of transgression (Deut.27:26) for the curse of Deut.21:23.

The temporal nature of the Law is also stressed by Paul in Gal.3:19. Chrysostom argues that although the role of the Law is clearly a positive one, its mission is brought to an end by the advent of Christ. There is no unanimity among modern scholars about whether the purpose of the Law is a positive or a negative one, and whether or not the Law was abolished by the coming of Christ.

Paul's view, in Gal.5:4, that one who lets himself be circumcised is obliged to obey the entire Law, was not absent in early or formative Judaism as most modern scholars point out. Chrysostom also argues that the 'parts of the Law are linked one to the other.' Paul's point is to show that one either should fulfil the whole Law and not only a part of the Law if the Law is still in force, or should not fulfil even a part of the Law if it is not in force. Paul's point is to warn the Galatians that accepting circumcision makes sense only if they observe all the requirements of the Law.

Paul's views of the Law are closely related to Paul's relation to Judaism. Are we going to speak of anti-Semitism or of anti-Judaism? Simon, who espouses the former, defines it as 'an attitude fundamentally and systematically hostile to the Jews.' Hagner, who espouses the latter, defines anti-Semitism as 'nothing less than racial hatred of the Jews, and anti-Judaism as the 'theological disagreement with Judaism.' Hagner points out, however, that this racial hatred of the Jews 'can take a variety of forms such as prejudice, injustice, slander, abuse, and even physical violence.' It is essential to distinguish different types of anti-Semitism that correspond to different periods of Christianity. The use of aggressive language in early Christianity differs from the crusade's treatment of the Jews in medieval times and from the bloody persecution of the Jews in the Nazi Holocaust.

The origins of Christian anti-Judaism can be found in the New Testament and especially in John and Paul. Especially in Paul the charges against the Jews are focused on religious matters (like the Law and its observance) rather than on the Jews themselves. Paul's negative statements on the Law involve an anti-Judaism, which, as Hagner points out, 'amounts in fact to nothing other than a new adaptation of the Jewish Law.' Paul is opposed to a distortion of Judaism. Nevertheless, Paul's view in Rom.11:25 that 'all Israel will be saved,' makes him pro-Israel. Simon argues that there is no shadow of anti-Semitism in Paul. Boyarin, a practicing Jewish critical but sympathetic reader of Paul, concludes that 'it is totally inappropriate to think of Paul's thought as anti-Semitic, or even anti-Judaic.'

In early forms of Christian anti-Judaism, however, there is a shift from an anti-Judaic to an anti-Jewish position. The charges against the Jews are more intensive and included God's ultimate and final rejection of the Jews, which in Paul was only a temporary matter.

The Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature was focused on Jewish separation from the rest of the society and their religious practices. The most likely factors that provoked it were the privileges given to the Jews and their missionary activity. The characteristics, however, of the Greco-Roman anti-Jewish literature do not form the basis of early Christian anti-Judaism.

The early Christian anti-Jewish literature can be classified in three primary categories, the dialogues, the testimonies and the homilies. In the first two categories there is an interest in converting the Jews, whereas in the homilies such an interest is missing. This is true for Abrahah and Chrysostom, who both rather focus their effort in

counteracting the attraction of Judaism on their congregation.

Chrysostom, in his eight discourses against Judaizing Christians, describes the essential symptoms of the Judaizing movement at Antioch: many among his Christians participated in Jewish feasts, they used to go to the synagogue, they believed that oaths sworn there were more solemn and binding, and they sought of healings from the rabbis.

Chrysostom makes use of everything at his disposal in his effort to cure those among his Christians who were 'sick with the Judaizing disease.' Using an aggressive language, Chrysostom focuses his criticism on the Jewish festivals (that of Trumpets, that of Tabernacles, and the fasts) and Passover, arguing that the destruction of the Jerusalem temple puts an end to priesthood, fasts and festivals, like that of Passover, and sacrifices. His use of scripture in support of his arguments is outstanding as for instance in his discourse V, where he substantiates his view that the temple will never be rebuilt, that the Jews will not return to their former way of life, and that their present captivity will never be ended.

Chrysostom's use of invective is only a part of his fight against the Jews, an effective rhetorical device at his disposal. Although in all the eight discourses there is a bitterness against the Jews, which easily could be mistaken as anti-Semitic, Chrysostom changes his tone considerably in the course of the series, ending most of them with a plea to bring back those who erred among his congregation. Discourses V-VIII are far less vituperative and much more apologetic, exegetic and instructional.

Among the likely causes that provoked the Christian polemic against the Jews are the attractiveness of Judaism to the Christians and the Jewish missionary activity. It appears that this polemic was more intense in places where Jewish missionary activity was successful. This is true, for instance, in the cases of Abrahat and Chrysostom.

Any honest appraisal of Chrysostom's position towards the question of anti-Semitism has to consider the real danger of the Judaizing movement in Antioch. Chrysostom's invective is without parallel in the Christian anti-Jewish literature, but he never actually tells his people to do any violence to the Jews or to their synagogues. His use of aggressive language makes Chrysostom anti-Jewish but not anti-Semitic.

Chrysostom's understanding of Paul and the Law might be helpful to a better understanding of Paul's position towards the Law. In particular, what I think might be helpful to modern scholarship is the understanding of the various factors that formed his views on Paul and the Law, such as the situation in Antioch and his education in general. When Chrysostom was writing his commentary on Galatians, and especially when he was delivering his discourses against Judaizing Christians, he did so in an effort to cope with an extreme situation. He was forced to provide a solution capable of counteracting on the one side the views held by Manicheans and other Gnostic groups on Paul and the Law and on the other, to confront the Judaizing movement at Antioch and the attraction of many demi-Christians to Judaism. With regard to his education, we should note that it also played an important role in forming his views, as for instance, his high respect to both scripture and Paul, his deep knowledge of scripture and his ability to appeal to scripture in support of his arguments and his education in rhetoric. One should also consider these factors in order to have a better understanding of Chrysostom's views.

What my research in Chrysostom has taught me is that, in spite of the extreme situation in Antioch and the aggressive language he uses against the Jews, Chrysostom can speak of the Law in positive terms. Although one would expect him to attack the Law by any means at his disposal, he does not do so. Chrysostom provides a balanced

understanding of Paul capable of meeting diverse issues: to stop the attraction to Judaism on the one hand and simultaneously on the other to overthrow the heretic views held by the Manicheans. Chrysostom's understanding of Paul and the Law stands as an alternative option to modern scholarship, a study of which might throw some light on the question of Paul and the Law.

I incline to think that every reader of Paul should take seriously Chrysostom's understanding of Paul for many reasons. Firstly, the similarities between the situation in fourth - century Antioch and the situation in first - century Galatia, and the similarities between Paul and Chrysostom, give to Chrysostom an advantage to have a better understanding of the situation in first - century Galatia. This does not assume, however, that Chrysostom's understanding is always correct, as it has been shown in my thesis. Every reader of Chrysostom, thus, should carefully cross-check Chrysostom's own evaluation of each point with the information provided from other relevant sources, before coming to any conclusion. Secondly, Chrysostom's ability to analyse Paul's rhetorical strategies, his extensive knowledge of scripture, his skills in introducing fitting quotations from scripture, and especially his constant interest in searching for the literal historical meaning of each quotation he deals with, make him a very good reader of Paul. Thirdly, Chrysostom's approach to the question of Paul and the Law provides a coherent line of thought and makes sense of Paul's views as a whole.

The above cited reasons indicate that Chrysostom might have a better understanding of Paul, and for these reasons Chrysostom's views should be taken seriously by modern scholarship in their effort to understand Paul.

‘PAUL AND THE LAW’

IN

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

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