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# Violators of the Law and the Curse of the Law: The Perception of the Torah in the Psalms of Solomon and in Paul's Letter to the Galatians

*Stefan Schreiber*

The Psalms of Solomon criticize violators of the law with a striking frequency. The genesis of this corpus of psalms probably lies in Jerusalem in the period after the occupation by Pompey in 63 BCE and more precisely after Pompey's death in Egypt in 48 BCE, to which Pss. Sol. 2.26 alludes.<sup>1</sup> It is in this situation, where the influence of Roman politics and of Hellenistic culture has increased, that the Psalms of Solomon elaborate their understanding of the torah. The situation of Paul, on the other hand, when he writes the Letter to the Galatians almost four generations later, is marked by the new conviction that Jesus is the Christ. This fundamentally changes his view of the torah. This essay seeks to contrast the two ways of looking at the torah in order to bring out their profiles more clearly. I begin with the Psalms of Solomon.

## 1. The Psalms of Solomon and the Torah

At first sight, the torah does not appear to play any great role in the theology of the Psalms of Solomon, since the νόμος is mentioned positively only in Pss. Sol. 10.14 and 14.2. We do, however, encounter the semantic field around νόμος with negative connotations: the use of this concept is dominated by talk about lawlessness, breaches of the law, and lawbreakers. Our investigation will show that this is not based on a general understanding

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1. See Svend Holm-Nielsen, "Die Psalmen Salomos," *JSHRZ* 4: 58–59; Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting*, *JSJSup* 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 135–39.

of law (in the sense that someone does not keep to the laws and conventions of society) but refers to the torah of Israel, which offers the criterion for judging whether a person is righteous as God understands this. It is precisely the picture of the lawbreaker that makes it clear how important obedience to the torah is for the life of Israel.

### 1.1. The Wrong Understanding of the Torah

Especially in Pss. Sol. 4, 8, and 12, we are given a picture of persons who do not keep the torah or else who interpret it falsely and thus lead others into error. The "unholy" one at the beginning of Pss. Sol. 4 is the one who makes the God of Israel angry through "breaches of the law" (*παρανομίας*).<sup>2</sup> He is described polemically as a hypocrite, since he insists that sinners should be condemned before the court, although he himself is entangled in a multitude of sins (4.2–3); he sins by night and in secret (4.5). According to 4.6, one who behaves in this manner lives "in hypocrisy" (*ἐν ὑποκρίσει*, cf. 4.20, 22). In concrete terms, his sin consists of sexual desire and lies: he actively desires several women<sup>3</sup> and makes contracts under oath with no intention of observing them (4.4–5).

The Psalms of Solomon see a very grave problem in the behavior of the ungodly Jewish persons who embody the unholy, namely, that they have a negative influence on other households, which were the basic societal

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2. Robert B. Wright (*The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 1* [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 83) translates the noun too unspecifically as "rotten behavior." The reference to the torah cannot be overlooked here. Psalms of Solomon 4.1 specifies as context *ἐν συνέδριῳ*, which is surely a reference to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The standard edition of the Psalms of Solomon remains that by Oscar von Gebhardt (*Die Psalmen Salomo's zum ersten Male mit Benutzung der Athoshandschriften und des Codex Casanatensis*, TUGAL 13.2 [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895]), which was included in Alfred Rahlfs's concise edition of the Septuagint (1935); see now Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 471–89. Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, presents a new edition, but see the criticism in Felix Albrecht, "Zur Notwendigkeit einer Neuedition der Psalmen Salomos," in *Die Septuaginta—Text, Wirkung, Rezeption*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Siegfried Kreuzer, WUNT 325 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 110–23.

3. The androcentric perspective reflects the societal circumstances in first century Jerusalem. The one who prays in Pss. Sol. 16.17–18, on the other hand, asks to be preserved "from every evil woman" and from "the beauty of a lawbreaking woman" (*καὶ ἅλλος γυναικὸς παρανομούσης*) who deceives him (*δουράτω*).

units in the ancient world. Through their false teachings and their false exposition of the torah, they lead other houses (which are the nuclei of Jewish tradition and piety) into error and corrupt them. The unholy cultivates conduct with other houses, apparently without any evil intention ("cheerfully as though without guile," 4.5). But in reality, he is guided by a destructive intention because his eyes are directed "to the house of the man who is in security" (ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ)—that is to say, a house anchored in the Jewish tradition—in order "to destroy each other's wisdom with transgressors' [παράνομοι] words" (4.9). He wishes to seduce other persons to practice "unrighteous desire" (4.10), and 4.11–12 states that he lays waste a house for the sake of a lawless desire (ἔνεκεν ἐπιθυμίας παρανόμου) and deceives people with his words. He destroys the next house with seductive speeches. This is called *παράνομία* (a "breach of the law"). Psalms of Solomon 4.20 reaffirms that the hypocrites "have laid waste the houses of many men in dishonor and have scattered them in their lust." Lust, as the central cause of immoral or sinful conduct, designates the selfish desire to possess in both the Hellenistic-Roman world and the early Jewish world.<sup>4</sup>

It is characteristic of the unholy that he seeks to please humans (ἀνθρωπάρεσκος, 4.7, 19). At 4.8, this craving is linked to one particular exposition of the torah: λαλοῦντα νόμον μετὰ δόλου ("He speaks the Torah with deceit").<sup>5</sup> We do not know what authority entitles the unholy people to expound the torah. The expression λαλεῖν νόμον ("to speak the torah") signals a pejorative evaluation of this exposition, since λαλεῖν can also mean "to talk nonsense." This means that the text focuses on disputed questions of the correct exposition of the torah. The reference to a craving for admiration may indicate an exposition of the torah that was more open vis-à-vis the Hellenistic culture. The ethical behavior of the others, which is evil from the perspective of Psalms of Solomon, is called their "deeds" (ἔργα) at 4.7.<sup>6</sup>

4. For material, see Stefan Schreiber, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, ÖTK 13.1. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2014), 208–9.

5. See the translation by Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 87: "who deceitfully quotes the Torah." The reference to the torah is lost in Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer, eds, *Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009), 919: "indem er Recht spricht mit Trug." The three best manuscripts offers a different wording: λαλοῦντα μόνον μετὰ δούλου ("He speaks alone with slave"); see Felix Albrecht, *Psalmi Salomonis*, SVTG 12.3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 337.

6. Cf. the ἔργα of the human with a negative connotation also in Psa. Sol. 4.16; 17.8 (parallel to "sins"); in 6.2, the "deeds" succeed because they are protected by

This picture of the “lawbreakers” (παράνομοι, 4.19, 23) is contrasted with the righteousness of God, which can remove unrighteousness (4.24). The positive antithesis to the lawbreakers appears in 4.23, 25: “those who fear the Lord in their innocence” and “love” him.

Psalms of Solomon 8.9 also speaks, with particular reference to the Jewish priests in Jerusalem, of “breakings of the law” (παράνομαι), which provoke God’s wrath. It illustrates this by means of the following crimes (8.9–12): incest, adultery, plundering of God’s sanctuary, and polluting the altar of sacrifice (θυσιαστήριον) and the sacrifices.<sup>7</sup> It is first and foremost the priests in the temple who are defamed here, and it appears that the cult is ultimately made impossible by such pollution. Psalms of Solomon 8.13 underlines the gravity of these sins by saying that they surpass even the gentiles (ὕπερ τὰ ἔθνη).

The association with the sinful conduct of the peoples is interesting because this may be a further indication of the intention with which the lawbreakers interpret the torah: in the eyes of Psalms of Solomon, they are conforming to the lifestyle of the Hellenistic world. This is also indicated by the context in 8.14–22, which interprets the incursion of the gentiles into Jerusalem as God’s reaction to the sinful behavior of the upper classes in Jerusalem: these persons were willing to make the invasion possible (see 2.1–5, 11–14; 17.11–18). This is an allusion to the incursion of Pompey into Jerusalem in 63 BCE and to the opening of the city by the Hasmonean Hyrcanus II and his adherents.<sup>8</sup>

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God, and in 18.8, the messiah guides human beings “in deeds of righteousness in the fear of God”; in 9.4 and 16.9, the “deeds” are open for both righteous and unrighteous conduct.

7. The sacrifices are made impure by the “flow of blood,” that is to say, by contact with menstrual blood: the priests are accused of having sexual contacts with impure women, with the result that the cult becomes impure. See Kenneth Atkinson, “Enduring the Lord’s Discipline: Soteriology in the *Psalms of Solomon*,” in *This World and the World to Come: Soteriology in Early Judaism*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 158; Moyna McGlynn, “Authority and Sacred Space: Concepts of the Jerusalem Temple in Aristeas, Wisdom, and Josephus,” *BN* 161 (2014): 124–26.

8. The Romans intervened thereby in the power struggle between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, who had holed up in the temple precincts; see Josephus, *B.J.* 1.131–132, 142–147; *A.J.* 14.58–63. On the background, see Holm-Nielsen, “Die Psalmen Solomons,” 79–80; Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul’s Letters*, ConBNT 26 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 64–65; Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 21–36, 60–64, 135–39; Atkinson,

Psalms of Solomon 12 takes the form of a prayer to be saved from the lawbreakers. The image of the enemy sketched in this psalm is that of a "lawbreaking [παράνομος] and wicked man" whose speech is dismissed as lawless and slanderous, mendacious and deceitful (12.1). The actions of these "lawbreakers" (παράνομοι) are once again described at 12.3–4 as the strife and rupture that they bring about in the "houses," that is to say, in the Jewish families. The positive antithesis appears at 12.5 in "the man who makes peace in the home"—it is clear that the ideal meant here is unity of the people. The basis for this peace is not stated explicitly, but it is the understanding of the torah held by the group that stands behind the Psalms of Solomon. The problem that smolders in the background is the contentious behavior vis-à-vis the torah. This becomes visible in the polemic against the lawless persons.

## 1.2. The Permanent Election of Israel

Psalms of Solomon 9.2 laments the "lawlessnesses" (ἀνομίαι) of Israel, which have led, thanks to God's righteous judgment, to the "dispersion" (διασπορά). But even though Israel has behaved wrongly, this is not the end, since the punishment of Jerusalem makes possible a conversion to God (9.6–7). Psalms of Solomon 9.8–11 holds fast to the permanent election by God that is deeply rooted in Israel's history: he is God for his people Israel, which he loves, which belongs to him, and which is permitted to ask for his mercy (9.8). The covenant formula (Lev 26:12; Jer 11:4) is echoed in the formulation: "You are God, and we are a people whom you have loved, ... we are yours." Psalms of Solomon 9.9 emphasizes the election of Israel as the seed of Abraham (see 18.3) over against (παρά) all the gentiles. God has set his name upon Israel, and the election is irrevocable: God will not cast his people off. Psalms of Solomon 9.10 summarizes this salvific action of God upon Israel in the theology of the covenant: God has made a covenant with the fathers that makes hope and conversion possible

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"Enduring the Lord's Discipline," 147. See also Pss. Sol. 17.4–7, sinful rulers from Israel. It is possible that "the godless man" at 13.5 refers to Aristobulus II. Nadav Sharon underlines the anti-Roman attitude of the Psalms of Solomon in "Between Opposition to the Hasmoneans and Resistance to Rome: The Psalms of Solomon and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Reactions to Empire: Sacred Texts in Their Socio-political Contexts*, ed. John A. Dunne and Dan Batovici, WUNT 372 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 41–54.

for Israel. In all eternity, therefore, God's mercy remains upon the house of Israel (9.11).<sup>9</sup> The covenant forms the basis upon which Israel can lead a godly life.

Naturally, the contemporary situation posed the urgent question of how the conquest of Israel by the foreign political power of Rome could be compatible with the conviction that Israel was God's chosen people. The Psalms of Solomon apply a paradigm from the theology of history here: the sins of the people are seen as provoking the intervention of God, whose instrument is the foreign power (1.7–8; 2.11–13; 8.9–14, 22; 17.5–8, 19–20). This interpretation bears the mark of the Deuteronomic historical scheme that is established in Deut 28–32 and that frequently occurs in early Jewish literature:<sup>10</sup> Israel has sinned against the Sinai covenant and the torah, has been punished by God, but after Israel turns anew to God, it experiences his blessing. The prayer of the pious man in Pss. Sol. 8.25–34 expresses this conversion to God (within the covenant). This makes it clear that Israel has not been abandoned or rejected by God. Israel has been punished, and now God's mercy can come into its own once again (7.3–10; 9.9–11).<sup>11</sup>

However, not everyone in Israel follows God's instruction, since some are walking along the paths of the gentiles. This is why the Psalms of Solomon are pervaded by the contrast between the role models of the righteous and the sinners.<sup>12</sup> After the history of the Roman invasion in 63 BCE has been recapitulated in Pss. Sol. 2, Pss. Sol. 3–7 characterize the life of the righteous and sinners in this historical framework. Psalms of Solomon

9. Cf. the bestowal of eternal salvation in 7.8; 11.7; 14.3–5; 17.4.

10. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Torah and the Deuteronomic Scheme in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: Variations on a Theme and Some Noteworthy Examples of Its Absence," in *Das Gesetz im frühen Judentum und im Neuen Testament: Festschrift C. Burchard*, ed. Dieter Sänger and Matthias Konradt, NTOA 57 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 222–35.

11. See Joseph L. Trafton, "The Bible, the Psalms of Solomon, and Qumran," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, vol. 2 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 435; cf. Atkinson, "Enduring the Lord's Discipline," 154.

12. See Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous*, esp. 125–36; Stefan Schreiber, "Can Wisdom Be Prayer? Form and Function of the Psalms of Solomon," in *Literature or Liturgy? Early Christian Hymns and Prayers in their Literary and Liturgical Context in Antiquity*, ed. Clemens Leonhard and Hermut Löhr, WUNT 363 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 89–106.

3.3–12 posits a direct opposition between the two groups. Psalms of Solomon 4.1 then begins by addressing an “unholy” man (βέβηλε),<sup>13</sup> who sits “in the council of the holy” although his heart is far away from the Lord. It then sketches a critical picture of the godless man. In Pss. Sol. 12–16, the righteous and the sinners are contrasted in an eschatological perspective. The righteous are promised deliverance, but the sinners are threatened with destruction.

This opposition reveals the frontline between two different cultural models, since the sinners are not only the gentiles (although they too are sinners, cf. Pss. Sol. 2.1–2), but, even more so, the Jews who are open to the influence of the Roman-Hellenistic culture and therefore risk hollowing out their own identity from within. The distinction between the righteous and the sinners becomes an existential question for the group behind the Psalms of Solomon, who are influenced by early Jewish wisdom, but also by the theology of Deuteronomy. Within Israel, there arises a core group of those who remain faithful to their God and are therefore righteous.<sup>14</sup> It is vital to perceive who is in fact a sinner, that is to say, one who has assimilated to the Hellenistic culture.<sup>15</sup> One must keep strictly apart from such persons in order not to betray one’s own identity.

### 1.3. The Torah as Testimony to God’s Mercy

Psalms of Solomon 10.1–3 begins with a beatitude on the one who accepts God’s reproof, education, and—to keep to the image—“blows from the whip,” and lets himself be changed thereby. The motif of education

13. The adjective βέβηλος basically means “accessible” because not closed off by holiness or consecration, and hence “profane.” See Franz Passow, *Handwörterbuch der Griechischen Sprache*, 4 vols, 5th ed (repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008), 1.1:499.

14. Jens Schröter, “Gerechtigkeit und Barmherzigkeit: Das Gottesbild der Psalmen Salomos in seinem Verhältnis zu Qumran und Paulus,” *NTS* 44 (1998): 568. Udo Schnelle (“Gerechtigkeit in den Psalmen Salomos und bei Paulus,” in *Jüdische Schriften in ihrem antik-jüdischen und urchristlichen Kontext*, ed. Hermann Lichtenberger and Gerbern S. Oegema, JSHRZ Studien 1 [Gütersloh: Güterloher, 2002], 368) speaks of the “true Israel,” but this term is not used by the Psalms of Solomon.

15. Cf. the merely putative righteousness of Jerusalem in Pss. Sol. 1 and the comparison of the “sinners” with the “gentiles” (1.8; cf. 8.3). The terms “lawbreakers” (4.23; 1.1–6), “impurity” (8.22), and “lawlessness” (e.g., 15.8, 10) point to the distance from the tradition of Israel; this is expressly formulated in Pss. Sol. 17.14–15.



describes God's salvific action with regard to the righteous in order that he may bring them back to the right path again and again, provided that they accept his education (10.3, "those who love him in truth").

In the Psalms of Solomon, God's *παιδεία* is a central factor of what he does for the righteous in Israel: God "judges Israel with education" (*χρίνων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν παιδείᾳ*, 8.26), and God is the "educator" (*παιδευτής*) of Israel (8.29). Psalms of Solomon 13.6–11 contrasts the destruction of the sinner with the "education" (*παιδεία*) of the righteous man, whose "transgressions" (*παρὰπτώματα*) have occurred without an evil intention, in ignorance (13.7; cf. 3.8; 18.4). The use of the concept of *παρὰπτώματα* is in itself an indication that no intentional sinning is meant here (cf. 3.7).<sup>16</sup> God exhorts the righteous man like a beloved son and educates him like a first-born (13.9). Against the social-historical background of the appreciation of the eldest son in classical antiquity, this expresses a very special devotion on the part of the father and the prospect of having the position of the preferential heir. God extinguishes the transgressions of the righteous through his education (13.10), and the chastisement purifies from sins (10.1–2). This presupposes that the righteous also sin but that they repent again and again and turn to God in faithfulness (3.6–8; 9.6–7). This is why there is a difference between the sinfully righteous<sup>17</sup> and notorious sinners, so that 17.5 can state: "But in our sins there rose up sinners against us."

God's motivation is called his "mercy" (*ἔλεος*). Psalms of Solomon 10.4 takes up the theme of God's mercy to his servants and links it—and thus the entire motif complex of education—to the torah: the testimony (*μαρτυρία*) to God's merciful action is "in the law of the everlasting covenant" (*ἐν νόμῳ διαθήκης αἰωνίου*).<sup>18</sup> This appeals to the torah in its positive function of attesting and presenting God's salvific will, and the torah can do this in the framework of the covenant that God has made with Israel. God's mercy appears as the general thrust of the torah. All the cultic and ethical demands that the torah makes of Israel are borne by this mercy, or they assist human beings to live out of this mercy.<sup>19</sup> The torah shows the

16. See Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 133.

17. This is the category in Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 131–34. Schnelle ("Gerechtigkeit," 368) calls being righteous "a status concept."

18. The "eternal covenant" recalls the covenant with Abraham in Gen 17:13, 19. See Pss. Sol. 9.9.

19. The assertion by Winninge (*Sinners and the Righteous*, 206) that "the Torah also has a 'negative' disciplinary task" fails to do justice to this insight. Pss. Sol. 7.9

path to understand God's education and offers orientation for one's concrete behavior. In other words, the torah itself has an educational function. This is why the testimony is also found on the paths of human beings who are under God's "supervision"<sup>20</sup>—that is, those who live in fellowship with God. Logically, therefore, the reference to the testimony in torah to God's mercy flows into Israel's praise of its God in 10.5–7.

God's mercy and compassion is a leitmotif of the picture of God in the Psalms of Solomon.<sup>21</sup> This shows that God does not expect perfection of his righteous ones but is always ready to forgive their sins if they repent and turn back to him. Despite their sins, the righteous are blessed (not punished) by God in 9.7, and God's kindness turns to them when they have sinned and then repent. Ultimately, mercy corresponds to the "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) of God, of which the Psalms of Solomon frequently speak, for example, in 4.2–5: God's righteousness means the implementation of his salvific will and of his teachings (which are written in the law, 10.4; 14.2). It can have a negative effect in the judgement against the sinners and a positive effect in the education of the pious.<sup>22</sup> God's loving action toward Israel in the covenant, through which he initiated his saving relationship to Israel, was always the basis for the implementation of his righteousness.<sup>23</sup> Humans can correspond to God's righteousness when they understand and shape their entire lives in their

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draws a parallel between "yoke" (ζυγός) and "education." If one hears in the concept of ζυγός the following of the torah, then the educational function of the torah is implied here too. Ζυγός is related to the torah in Jer 2:20 LXX, 5:5 LXX; Gal 5:1; 2 Cor 6:14; Matt 11:28–30; Acts 15:10; 2 En. 34.1; 48.9; 2 Bar. 41.3, and in rabbinic literature (e.g., m. 'Abot 3:5); this use could have been transmitted via sapiential traditions that call Wisdom ζυγός (Sir 6:30; 51:26).

20. "Supervision" (ἐπισκοπή) refers here to God's present-day activity, not to the eschaton (cf. 11.6). Atkinson ("Enduring the Lord's Discipline," 161) takes a different position.

21. Ἐλεος or ἐλεημοσύνη in Psalms of Solomon: 4.25; 9.8, 11; 10.3–4, 6–7; 11.1, 9; 13.12; 15.13, 16.3, 6, 15; 17.3, 34, 45; 18.3, 5, 9; cf. the entire promise of salvation in 11.1–9. This, as George Steins ("Die Psalmen Salomos—ein Oratorium über die Barmherzigkeit Gottes und die Rettung Jerusalems," in *Laetare Jerusalem*, ed. Nikodemus C. Schnabel, *Jerusalem theologisches Forum* 10 [Münster: Aschendorff, 2006], 137) states, is clear evidence that the Psalms of Solomon cannot be seen "als jüdische Kronzeugen der 'Werkgerechtigkeit'."

22. Cf. Pss. Sol. 2.15; 4.24; 8.24–26 ("the God of righteousness, who judges Israel with education").

23. See Schröter, "Gerechtigkeit," 566.

relationship to God. Accordingly, righteousness is the principle of right conduct in 9.4–5; its antithesis is to do wrong. The pious can perform righteous deeds (9.3), but this line of thought ends in the rhetorical question in 9.6, “To whom will you show kindness, O God, if not to those who call upon the Lord?”

#### 1.4. The Torah as Guideline

Psalms of Solomon 14.1 begins with an assurance to the righteous: “Faithful is the Lord to those who love him in truth, to those who endure his education.” This is then made more precise in 14.2, “those who walk in the righteousness of his ordinances [*προστάγματα*], in the law [*νόμος*] which he commanded us that we might live [*εἰς ζωὴν ἡμῶν*].” A positive picture is painted of the Jewish law in the framework of God’s relationship to Israel. It contains instructions for a successful life with God that continues to exist even beyond death: “they will live in it (the law) forever” (*ζήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, 14.3). The torah, which offers the guiding principle for Israel’s life, has a saving and educative function (cf. 10.1–4). At the same time, it is the basis of the identity of the righteous ones in Israel, who may hope for eternal life.

Psalms of Solomon 14.2–3 contains an allusion to Lev 18:4–5 LXX, which demands that all the instructions and legal decisions of God be preserved and put into action: it is through these that a human being will live. The allusion picks up the concepts of *πορεύομαι* (“to walk”) and *προστάγματα* (“instructions”), as well as the future form *ζήσονται* (Lev 18:5: *ζήσεται*) with the specification *ἐν αὐτῷ* (Lev 18:5: *ἐν αὐτοῖς*). Psalms of Solomon 14.3 expands the affirmation “they will live in it” with “forever” (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*), thereby placing the accent on the future, eschatological life with God. Life according to the torah is motivated by the prospect of eternal life. This, however, must not be misunderstood as a soteriological achievement on the part of the human being.<sup>24</sup>

24. This, however, is the position taken by Simon J. Gathercole in “Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament,” in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 133: “doing Torah is the precondition of a future life”; “it is dependent on obedience to the Torah.” Cf. Eric Ottenheijm, “Which If a Man Do Them He Shall Live by Them: Jewish and Christian Discourse on Lev 18:5,” in *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of*

The psalm goes on to promise the pious an eternal, paradisiac life with God (14.3–5, 10), but their antithesis, the “sinners and lawbreakers [παράνομοι]” who followed their sin and their desire (ἐπιθυμία), will end in the realm of the dead and in destruction (14.6–9). One who keeps to God’s instructions—the torah—lives in his righteousness, that is, in a positive correspondence to God’s salvific will. Righteousness thus also concerns the behavior of the *human being* with regard to the torah: one who lives according to the torah acts in righteousness and thus has a share in God’s righteousness (cf. 5.17). This, however, does not mean that he *merits* this share.<sup>25</sup> God’s saving action cannot be merited, since it has already taken place in the covenantal election, and can be lost only through a conscious and consistent turning away from God. E. P. Sanders has described the connection between the covenant and the torah in early Judaism by means of the concept of covenantal normism. This means that

one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression.... Obedience *maintains* one’s position in the covenant, but it does not earn God’s grace as such.<sup>26</sup>

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Maarten J. J. Menken, ed. Bart J. Koet, Steve Moyise, and Joseph Verheyden, *NovTSup* 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 305. On the relevance of the “deeds” to salvation, see also Schnelle, “Gerechtigkeit,” 373. James D. G. Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 152–53), on the other hand, understands “life” in Lev 18:5 as “a way of life, and not of a life yet to be achieved or attained” (153); it is “the way life is lived within and by ... the covenant people” (152).

25. Winninge, *Sinners*, 133 (on 5.17) goes too far when he asserts “that righteousness is a positive achievement of the pious Jew.” On the contrary, it is a question of a *correspondence* to the righteousness of God. See Andreas Lindemann, “Paulus—Pharisäer und Apostel,” in *Paulus und Johannes: Exegetische Studien zur paulinischen und johanneischen Theologie und Literatur*, ed. Dieter Sänger and Ulrich Mell. WUNT 198 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 333, 336, but the statement that this “jenen Status und jenes Selbstverständnis des Menschen, den Paulus als ἰδία δικαιοσύνη bezeichnet” (333), devalues the intention of the Psalms of Solomon excessively, and leads to an insufficiently differentiated position.

26. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 75; cf. 319–20, 420, 426, 544. Cf. Martin G. Abegg, Jr. “4QMMT, Paul and ‘Works of the Law,’” in *The Bible at Qumran: Texts, Shape, and Interpretation*, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 203–16; Atkinson, “Enduring the Lord’s Discipline,” 151–53. For a lively discussion of Sanders’s theses, see Donald A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A.

God's saving will and the human response, namely, obedience to God's instructions, are inseparable. Since humans, because of their sins, are absolutely incapable of a perfect observance of the torah, God through his mercy compensates for human inadequacy (15.13).

Psalms of Solomon 14 communicates the high esteem that the torah enjoyed in the groups that stand behind the Psalms of Solomon. It is nevertheless striking that we scarcely ever hear of the need to insist on the observance of specific *material* contents of the torah; nor is there any discussion or exposition of individual instructions or commandments. Instead, the torah functions as a differentiator between the righteous and the sinners, and the sinners include not only the gentiles, but also the lawless in Israel. This leads me to propose the thesis that *in the Psalms of Solomon, the delimitation vis-à-vis the lifestyle of the gentiles is the principle of exposition of the torah.*

### 1.5. Delimitation vis-à-vis the Gentiles as the Principle of Exposition of the Torah

Psalms of Solomon 2.13, speaking of the "daughters of Jerusalem," castigates the "disorder of mingling" in the context of unchastity or prostitution (2.11–12). This gives us our first sight of the problems associated with the mingling with the foreign culture that is dangerous but attractive, with its foreign gods and lifestyles. In 3.8, reconciliation for the transgressions committed in ignorance takes place through fasting and humbling oneself; humbling should be understood as the insight into one's own sinfulness and the conscious submission to God's will and commandments. Fasting as a means to attain the forgiveness of unconscious sins is implicitly here a competitor to the cultic animal sacrifices that are prescribed for this purpose by Lev 4–5: the torah is interpreted to mean that the cultic prescriptions have lost their significance, in view of the conviction that the immoral behavior of the priests has made the temple impure.<sup>27</sup> Fasting, confessing one's sins, and continuous prayer (praise) are the attitudes through which the righteous remain in the salvific relationship to God and that delimit them vis-à-vis the sinners (in Israel!). Psalms of Solomon

Seifrid, ed., *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 vols., WUNT 140, 181 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001, 2004); Gerd Theissen and Petra von Gemünden, *Der Römerbrief: Rechenschaft eines Reformators* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 42–45.

27. See Atkinson, "Enduring the Lord's Discipline," 160.

15 and 16 demand attentiveness to the presence of God: Pss. Sol. 15.2–6 recommends the continuous praise of God, which keeps fellowship with God alive (as the antithesis of the “lawlessness” [*ἀνομία*] of the sinners in 15.8, 10), and Pss. Sol. 16.1–4 warns against allowing the soul to fall asleep, since this takes one far from God. It too encourages the praise of God and the continuous remembrance of God (16.5–6, 9).

The historical background to what the Psalms of Solomon see as the necessity to draw a boundary vis-à-vis the pagan lifestyle becomes clearly visible in Pss. Sol. 17. The “lawless one” (*ἀνομος*) in 17.11 comes from a foreign race, from the gentiles (17.7, 13), and has brought death and destruction to Israel. In terms of contemporary history, the author (and the readers) will have had in mind Pompey or the Roman military power in Israel, whose actions in Jerusalem are equated with those of the gentiles in their cities (17.14). Psalms of Solomon 17.15 is interesting, because it states that “the sons of the covenant” (Israel) surpassed even the gentiles in their wicked deeds (cf. 1.8; 8.13). This makes it clear that the sinners in Israel cultivated the same lifestyle as the gentiles, thereby turning their backs on the traditional way of life in Israel, which is represented by the torah.<sup>28</sup> In 17.18, the “lawless ones” (*ἀνομοι*) are identical with the peoples that have scattered Israel over the whole earth. The sinners in Israel are to be found in every class of society, from the ruler to the lowliest, as 17.20 underlines: they were in every kind of sin—“the king in transgression [*παρὰνομία*], and the judge in disobedience, and the people in sin.” For the Psalms of Solomon, a question mark hovers over the traditional way of life, over the very existence of Israel!

Psalms of Solomon 17 then projects the delimitation vis-à-vis the pagan lifestyle into the messianic future. The messiah, as mediator and God's agent, will establish this boundary line perfectly. The messiah who

28. This raises the question of the group of “bearers” of the Psalms of Solomon. A few years ago, one could speak of a consensus that attributed these texts to the Pharisees, but today, in view of the plurality of currents in early Judaism, it is impossible to attribute them unambiguously to any one of the known groups. See Stefan Schreiber, *Gesalbter und König: Titel und Konzeptionen der königlichen Gesalbtenwartung in frühjüdischen und urchristlichen Schriften*, BZNW 105 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 161–62; Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 6–8; Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 7–10. Trafton (“Bible,” 434) thinks of “an anti-Hasmonean Jewish sentiment that had affinities with both Pharisaism and Essenism, but which cannot be identified with either.” One should also bear in mind the influence of sapiential currents (see Schreiber, “Can Wisdom Be a Prayer?”).

is awaited will destroy unjust rulers and "lawbreaking peoples" (ἔθνη παράνομα), and he will drive away the sinners from the inheritance, calling into question their membership of Israel (17.22–24).<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the messiah will gather together a "holy people" (λαὸν ἅγιον) and "judge the tribes of the people" (κρινεῖ φυλὰς λαοῦ) that "is sanctified by the Lord his God" (17.26). The delimitation becomes even clearer in the promise that then there will be no more injustice among them and that there will not dwell among them anyone who knows evil. "Neither settler [παρόικος] nor alien [ἀλλογενής] shall live among them any more" (17.27–28). The settler is an inhabitant who lacks the rights of a citizen, and an alien comes from another people. All those who do not truly belong to Israel, and thus their dangerous, different culture, will no longer pose a threat to the people of God—the delimitation is perfect!

Once the messiah has reestablished the pure, original state of things in Jerusalem (17.30), an eschatological promise envisages a possible entry of the gentiles, but only on the premise that they are oriented to Israel: there will be "peoples of the gentiles" (λαοὺς ἐθνῶν) who serve the messiah under his yoke,<sup>30</sup> and there will be gentiles (ἔθνη) who come from the end of the earth to see his glory, "bringing as gifts her children who had fainted." Their function is the eschatological bringing back of the Jews from the diaspora to Jerusalem (17.30–31; cf. the motif in Isa 49:22 LXX). According to 17.34, he will be merciful to all the gentiles who fear him,<sup>31</sup> and according to 17.43, he will rule "in the midst of sanctified peoples [λαῶν]." An eschatological opening of the λαός Israel is thus envisaged for those gentiles who submit to the rule of the messiah.<sup>32</sup>

29. Influences from Ps 2 are discernible in the text. See John J. Collins, "The Royal Psalms and Eschatological Messianism," in *Aux origines des messianismes juifs*, ed. David Hamidović, VTSup 158 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 85.

30. The "yoke" of the messiah has political connotations; see Joel Willitts, "Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon's* Messianism: A Comparative Study in First-Century Messianology," *BBR* 22 (2012): 38. This concept, which is also used in 7.9, may indicate that the sovereignty of the messiah comes about in accordance with the torah, which the gentiles adopt.

31. The term φόβος has positive connotations here (see Willitts, "Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon's* Messianism," 47–48).

32. The concept of λαός does not have a univocal reference in the *Psalms of Solomon*. It is frequently employed for Israel as the people of God (and is then used in the singular): 9.8; 10.6; 17.20, 26, 35, 36, 43. In 5.11; 9.2; 17.29, 30, 33, it stands (in the

This opening onto the peoples of the world is, however, only conceivable in eschatological terms, in the saving rule of the messiah, when he makes this rule secure and guarantees it. The psalm closes, therefore, with a prayer that God may save Israel "from the uncleanness of unholy enemies" (17.45). In the present time, delimitation is commanded. This is the visibly lived belonging to the God of Israel in a life for which the torah provides the orientation. A life in accordance with the torah is evidence of this belonging.<sup>33</sup> The group behind the Psalms of Solomon formulates here a clear directive for Israel's conduct in the present time.

## 2. Paul's Letter to the Galatians and the Torah

### 2.1. The Demarcation Is Abolished

What remains an eschatological perspective in the Psalms of Solomon becomes in Paul a present-day conflict: the inclusion of the gentiles. As we have seen, the torah functions in general in the Psalms of Solomon to draw a boundary line between Israel and the gentiles, and more specifically to draw a boundary line within Israel between the pious Jews and those who adapt to the Gentile way of life. In Paul's dialogue situation, where, as a consequence of the eschatological Christ-event, persons from Judaism and from the gentiles together form the community of the end-time, it is precisely the delimitation between Jews and gentiles that he wants to overcome. In Paul's eyes, after the Christ-event, access to God stands open for persons from the gentiles too. These gentiles are integrated into the community of Christ without first becoming proselytes. The so-called Antioch incident, which is recalled in Gal 2:11–14,<sup>34</sup> shows that the resulting coexistence of Jewish and gentile Christians, which was actualized substantively in their common meal (Gal 2:12), aroused suspicion on the Jewish

plural) for the peoples of the earth. Pss. Sol. 12.2 uses it in general for "people." In 8.2, *λαός πάλις* refers to Roman troops.

33. This does not, however, mean that observance of the torah has a soteriological function. For a different view, see Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, NovTSup 68 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 130–33.

34. On the historical background: Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Geschichte des Urchristentums: Ein Lehrbuch*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 238–43; Udo Schnelle, *Die ersten 100 Jahre des Christentums 30–130 n. Chr. Die Entstehungsgeschichte einer Weltreligion*, UTB 4411 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 232–34.



side. Under the influence of a group of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem (whom Paul calls "James's people"), even Barnabas (who had accompanied Paul for many years on the mission to gentiles that did not demand circumcision) and Peter withdrew into the old pattern of delimitation, and *this* is what forms Paul's criticism of Peter in Gal 2:14: "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" The delimitation of the Jews vis-à-vis the gentiles has lost its basis, since all who belong to Christ possess a common identity. This relativizes other, typically Jewish, patterns of identity.

The overcoming of the boundary between Jews and gentiles in the community of Christ—an overcoming that becomes visible in the coexistence of the two groups in the central spheres of life—is the problem that the Letter to the Galatians takes up. Paul's rivals demand that the gentile Christians<sup>35</sup> in Galatia also accept circumcision, which has been the sign of the covenant since the days of Abraham (Gen 17:11), as a decisive mark of Israel's identity (Gal 5:2–3, 6; 6:12–13, 15). As proselytes, these Christians would possess a clear identity, and they would be able to demonstrate clearly through the classic Jewish identity markers that they belonged to the people of Israel, in a visible delimitation vis-à-vis the pagan milieu. These rivals must have had a considerable influence, since some Galatians were clearly on the point of getting circumcised (1:6; 4:9, 17, 21; 5:4). In order to defend his new praxis, Paul must interpret the torah in such a way that the visible marks of delimitation, such as circumcision and commandments concerning diet and purity, are relativized. It seems natural to relate the central syntagma works of the law in Gal 2:16 to these identity markers of Judaism.

This identifies the goal of Paul's argumentation with regard to the concrete problem in Galatia. But in order to understand the affirmations of the Letter to the Galatians in their theological depth, we must go on to ask: when Jews become adherents of Christ, does nothing change in their understanding of the torah?

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35. Gal 4:8 indicates that the addressees of the letter were primarily gentile Christians.

## 2.2. The Structure in Paul's Thinking: The Relationship to the God of Israel in Christ

This question leads us to the fundamental structure in Paul's thinking. At its center stands the relationship between God and the human person. Paul presupposes that, with Christ, the final age has dawned, and God turns toward Israel or to human beings in a new way in Christ, opening up the relationship to his own self. Paul affirms the eschatological significance of the Christ-event already in the prescript of the letter, at Gal 1:4: Jesus's gift of himself snatches us out of the present evil aeon, and this implies that we are freed in principle from the power of sin.<sup>36</sup> This leads to a new, eschatologically transformed existence in Christ: it is "Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live in trust in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (2:20). And in 6:15, he speaks of the human being who is in Christ as a "new creation," implying an eschatological change of status. Galatians 2:16 sums up this salutary turning of God to human beings by means of the motif of justifying. On God's part, this means that human beings are welcomed and saved and that their sins are forgiven.

"Justifying" (*δικαιοῦσθαι*) in Gal 2:16, or "righteousness" in 2:21, denotes an action on the part of God that puts the human being in the right relationship to God and gives fellowship with God. The human being himself cannot do this. This is something that God must do.<sup>37</sup>

The decisive point now is how Paul defines the part played by the human being. How does the human being behave in the new relationship to God? The Christ-event brings about here the central difference that Paul formulates as a sharp antithesis at 2:16: the basis (*ἐκ*) of justification is no longer the works of the law but the "solid relationship to Christ" (*πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*).<sup>38</sup>

In classical linguistic usage, *πίστις* means confidence, fidelity, and reliability within a relationship and a conviction.<sup>39</sup> The genitive term *πίστις*

36. Cf. Gal 4:4-5: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son ... to redeem those who were under the law."

37. Cf., e.g., LXX Ps 142[143]:1-2; Mic 7:9; Dan 9:14-16. In the linguistic usage of the LXX, the righteousness of God means his salvific turning to his people, cf. Ps 40[41]:11; 70[71]:15; 97[98]:2; Isa 45:8; 46:13; 51:5; 56:1; 59:17; 4 Ezra 8:26.

38. On this antithesis, see also Gal 2:21; 3:2, 5, 10-14; 5:4-5.

39. See Schreiber, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 93-96; Thomas Schum-

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, which is the object of controversial discussion among scholars, is best translated as “solid relationship to Jesus Christ,” where the *reciprocity* of the relationship is decisive.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, 2:17 can employ the formulation “to be justified *in Christ*,” that is to say, in the sphere of the relationship to him.

For Paul, justification passes, after the eschatological Christ-event, via the relationship to Christ. Accordingly, he has “put his trust in Christ Jesus” (2:16). The new fellowship with God in Christ creates a new perspective on the torah that is contrary to the traditional Jewish understanding, which Paul describes by means of the syntagma works of the law.

### 2.3. The Works of the Law

Paul continues to understand the torah as a Jew. At 2:15, he explicitly numbers himself among the Jews and adopts the customary Jewish delimitation that sees the gentiles in principle—in contradistinction to the Jews—as sinners.<sup>41</sup> But, as 2:16 underlines three times, Paul is convinced that, after the Christ-event, a human being “is not justified by works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου].” Here (as also in the Psalms of Solomon) the meaning is not that one merits God’s righteousness through religious achievements. Rather, the question is how the relationship to God is lived. The works of the law are now useless as a response to justification.

The concept of ἔργα achieves a vital differentiation here. In linguistic terms, it makes it impossible to deny completely the significance of the torah. Works of the law does not in the least have the general meaning of behaving and living in accordance with the torah, with the intention of attaining righteousness before God. It means *actions that make visible one’s belonging to God* (as the human side within the relationship between God and the human being). Those who perform the works of the law thereby

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acher, *Zur Entstehung christlicher Sprache: Eine Untersuchung der paulinischen Idiomatik und der Verwendung des Begriffes πίστις*, BBB 168 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

40. This neutralizes the disputed question whether πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is to be understood as an objective genitive (“faith in Christ,” according to classic German scholarship) or as a subjective genitive (“the fidelity of Jesus in his death,” as many English-language scholars prefer). See further Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 148–50.

41. Cf. Isa 14:5; 1 Macc 1:34; 2:48; Psa. Sol. 1.1–8.

show that they are living the torah in the classically Jewish manner, which also finds a representative in the Psalms of Solomon. The concept of *ἔργα* points to concrete prescriptions or modes of conduct that can be plainly seen to be a consequence of the law. In the dialogue situation of the Letter to the Galatians, we should think of these as pointedly Jewish identity markers that make the Jewish identity visible in demarcation vis-à-vis the pagan world—first and foremost, circumcision, the Sabbath commandment, and commandments about eating and purity.<sup>42</sup> For Paul, these are dangerous, not only because of their function of demarcation, but also because they signify an access to God that has become obsolete.

The reference of the syntagma *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* is extremely disputed among exegetes.<sup>43</sup> Above all, there is no agreement about whether this refers to following the entire torah or only particular modes of conduct that mark the special character of Judaism (in the so-called new perspective, these are called identity or boundary markers). Martin Luther's general distinction between legalism (that is to say, every compliance with laws of the state and of religion) and divine grace has left a lasting mark on the discussion. This is connected with the theological question of whether works of the law are to be understood as human achievements that are meant to establish a claim on God. Paul would strictly reject such an idea, combating it by proclaiming the divine grace. Scholars also discuss a distinction between prescriptions and concrete actions.<sup>44</sup>

42. Cf. 4Q398 14 II, 2–7 (part of 4QMMT): "And also we have written to you some of the precepts of the Torah [*ma'aseh ha-Torah*] ... and it shall be reckoned to you as justice when you do what is good and upright before him." These words are preceded by some precepts that were understood as torah and that were important for the group behind this text. These are concerned above all with ritual purity and fulfill the function of marking boundaries between groups within Judaism. Josephus (*A.J.* 20.42, 43, 46) uses the expression "to do the work" (*πράσσειν τὸν ἔργον*) in the sense of "carrying out circumcision" in the context of conversion to Judaism. On this understanding, see James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), esp. 1–88, 109; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 354–59.

43. On the state of the discussion, see Ivana Bendik, *Paulus in neuer Sicht? Eine kritische Einführung in die „New Perspective on Paul“*, *Judentum und Christentum* 18 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), esp. 165–74; Stefan Schreiber, "Paulus und die Tradition. Zur Hermeneutik der 'Rechtfertigung' in neuer Perspektive," *TRav* 105 (2009): 91–102; Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer*, vol. 1, *EKKNT* 6.1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2014), 1:233–37.

44. Michael Bachmann ("Keil oder Mikroskop? Zur jüngeren Diskussion um den Ausdruck 'Werke des Gesetzes,'" in *Lutherische und Neue Paulusperspektive. Beiträge*

The intention to make one's own belonging to the God of Israel visible in the *ἔργα νόμου* is, *per se*, positive. But for Paul, this has been rendered obsolete through the eschatological Christ-event, since God has now opened up in Christ a new possibility of belonging. The fulfilling of the torah changes both for the Jewish adherents of Christ and for those who come from the gentiles (ἔθνη).<sup>45</sup> For the Jewish Christians, the relationship to Christ means that the customary torah actions that express Israel's belonging to its God lose their relevance; in addition to the identity markers mentioned above, these also include cultic actions in the temple in Jerusalem, or the fasting that is recommended in Pss. Sol. 3.8 to atone for the sins committed in ignorance; the latter is irrelevant, since the sins have now been removed through Christ's gift of himself (Gal 1:4). And for the adherents from the gentiles, it is the relationship to Christ that makes possible in the first place their belonging to the God of Israel without accepting circumcision and commandments concerning matters such as food—in short, without becoming proselytes. Like the Jewish adherents, those from the gentiles find their orientation in the torah and its picture of God, but they understand this in a special manner, from the perspective of the Christ-event. It is precisely against the background of the Psalms of Solomon that we can grasp that when Paul's rivals in Galatia saw this opening for the ἔθνη, they could accuse him of interpreting the torah in such a way that it meant a cheap assimilation to the pagan culture.<sup>46</sup>

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zu einem Schlüsselproblem der gegenwärtigen exegetischen Diskussion, ed. Michael Bachmann, WUNT 182 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 69–134) holds that only regulations of the law are meant. Against this, see James D. G. Dunn, "The Dialogue Progresses," in Bachmann, *Lutherische und Neue Paulusperspektive*, 400. Philo (*Praem.* 82–83, 126) and Josephus (*C. Ap.* 2.291–292) already note that it is only works that implement the laws.

45. From the perspective of the history of scholarship, the new theological evaluation of the regulations of the torah that make one's belonging to the God of Israel come alive is inseparable from the sociological consequence, that is to say, the admission of persons from the gentiles to the communities of Christ. The latter is strongly emphasized by the New Perspective (the function as boundary markers).

46. When Paul defends himself in Gal 1:10 against the charge that he wants to please human beings (*ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν*), his rivals were probably making the same kind of accusations that the Psalms of Solomon too could raise against the "sinners" (Pss. Sol. 4.7, 19).

For Paul, the consequence of the new fellowship with God in Christ is a new interpretation of the torah. Let me conclude by at least indicating briefly in four points what has changed in Paul's understanding of the torah in comparison to that in the Psalms of Solomon.

## 2.4. The Interpretation of the Torah in Christ

First, Paul defines the significance of the figure of Abraham anew by means of an interpretation that is unusual in early Judaism. In the Psalms of Solomon, Abraham stands for the election of Israel, which distinguishes it from the gentiles (Pss. Sol. 9.9), and for the beginning of the covenant with God (10.4); an allusion to Gen 17:13, 19 can be heard here.<sup>47</sup> But Gal 3:6–18 begins at an earlier point in the story of Abraham, in order to show that God made it possible for Abraham to enter into a relationship with him through Abraham's trust in God's promise—even before circumcision. Gal 3:6 quotes from Gen 15:6 LXX: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." The gentiles (ἔθνη), too, are blessed in this attitude of trust (Gen 12:3 is quoted); according to Gal 3:7–9, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως ("those from the relationship of trust") are the children of Abraham; the gentiles are included here from the outset. Paul thus uses Abraham to demonstrate that God always favored the attitude of πίστις; the law, which came later, does not change this in any way (Gal 3:17).<sup>48</sup> In Gal 3:29, he states that all who belong to Christ are descendants of Abraham. The torah is given the function of bearing witness that the correct attitude of the human being in the relationship to God is πίστις; this applies both to Abraham (Gen 15:6) and to his descendants (Gen 12:3).

Second, the Psalms of Solomon do not speak of a curse of the law. Here, Paul elaborates an interpretation that is generated by the perspective of the Christ-event. According to Gal 3:10–13, all who live out of works

47. In early Judaism, Abraham was regarded as the founding father of Israel when he accepted circumcision. He already observed the torah before it was given on Sinai; cf. Gen<sup>LXX</sup> 26:5; Sir<sup>LXX</sup> 44:20–21; Jub. 24.11. Cf. Oda Wischmeyer, "Wie kommt Abraham in den Galaterbrief? Überlegungen zu Gal 3,6–29," in *Umstrittener Galaterbrief: Studien zur Situierung und Theologie des Paulus-Schreibens*, ed. Michael Bachmann and Bernd Kollmann, *Biblisch-theologische Studien* 106 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2010), 119–63.

48. According to Gal 3:17, the law was given 430 years later. This figure is taken from Exod 12:40–41 LXX; cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 2.318.

of the law are under a curse. In support of this affirmation, Paul quotes Deut 27:26,<sup>49</sup> where the curse falls on everyone who "does not abide by all things written in the book of the law." The fundamental idea, already established in this quotation, is that no one is able to keep the torah perfectly. This means that all who rely on works of the law are in fact always under the curse.<sup>50</sup> The thesis that Paul's starting point is the inability of the (Jewish) human being to fulfill the entire torah has often been criticized by scholars who assert that early Judaism considered obedience to the law as practicable; it required no impossible perfection but made provision for atonement and repentance.<sup>51</sup> But as we have seen, the Psalms of Solomon already place the emphasis on God's mercy. In other words, they presuppose that even the righteous are always in need of this mercy, since no one can keep the torah perfectly ("sinful righteous"). And they no longer regarded the sacrificial cult as reliable, because the priests had incurred impurity. Unlike Paul, however, the Psalms of Solomon still envisage the strict observance of the torah as the path on which one can live in God's mercy. Paul interprets the inability of the human being to do the torah perfectly in *malam partem* through the idea of the curse in order to show that works of the law and the relationship to Christ are not equally valuable alternatives as a basis for fellowship with God.

The quotation from Lev 18:5 LXX places the accent on *doing* the torah. The Septuagint version of Lev 18:5 already underlines that this

49. Michael Bachmann ("Zur Argumentation von Gal 3.10–12," *NTS* 53 [2007]: 524–44) defines Gal 3:10–12 formally as two linked syllogisms. It seems to me more important that we have here an interpretation of scripture, probably a thematic pesher (cf., e.g., 4Q174 III; Acts 2:14–42).

50. Ottenheim, "Which If a Man Do Them," 316: "In Paul's vision no person is able to keep the Law outside the realm of Christian faith." The dying "through the law" of which Gal 2:19 speaks (*διὰ* with the genitive denotes the law as mediator) is probably to be understood on the basis of this curse. The "dying to the law" in the same verse is a metaphor for the separation, the distance vis-à-vis the law (cf. Rom 6:2, 10–11; 7:6), that opens up a new standpoint in relation to the torah and a new interpretation. Gal 5:1, 3 speaks, with reference to circumcision, of the "yoke [*ζυγός*] of slavery," which apparently means that the entire torah must be kept.

51. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 361; cf. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (repr. London: T&T Clark, 2004), 145. R. Barry Matlock discusses alternative drafts and convincingly defends the inability explanation in "Helping Paul's Argument Work? The Curse of Galatians 3.10–14," in *The Torah in the New Testament*, ed. Michael Tait and Peter Oakes (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 154–79.

means keeping the *entire* torah ("all my instructions and all my legal decisions")—something that Paul sees as impossible, so that, on this basis, the curse must necessarily fall.<sup>52</sup>

In Gal 3:11–12, there is a contrast between two scriptural quotations, Hab 2:4 ("The righteous will live out of trust [*ἐκ πίστεως*]") and Lev 18:5 (the one "who does [these commandments] shall live by them"). The motif of life links the two texts and places the accent on the opposition, already made pointedly at Gal 2:16, between trust and doing the torah; in both cases, the goal is life with God. Life has a comprehensive meaning here, including both the present day and the inalienable life with God.<sup>53</sup> Leviticus 18:5 focuses life on the delimited sphere of doing the torah, whereas the relationship of trust in God breaks open the boundary, leading to a new understanding of the torah.

For Paul, therefore, belonging to God can be realized and lived only in an inadequate manner on the basis of fulfilling the torah. But Christ ransomed humans from the curse of the law (not from the law as such!)<sup>54</sup> by taking upon himself the curse uttered in Deut 21:23 LXX ("Cursed [be] everyone who hangs on the wood"), shared it with all other human beings under the law, and—as Christ, as God's representative—liberated them from the curse with an eschatological effect (Gal 3:13).

Third, in Gal 3:19–4:7, Paul can assign certain *functions* of the torah to *the past*. The caesura is formed by the Christ-event, which divides the

52. On various interpretations of Paul's use of Lev 18:5, see Friedrich Avemarie, "Paul and the Claim of the Law according to the Scripture: Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12 and Romans 10:5," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2005), 125–48. Cf. Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, "Leben im Gesetz: Die paulinische Interpretation von Lev 18:5 (Gal 3:12; Rom 10:5)," *NovT* 50 (2008): 105–19.

53. Gathercole, "Torah, Life, and Salvation" 143–45, sees Paul "in dialogue with a Judaism that thought in terms of obedience, final judgment, and eternal life" and argues against the view that "obedience to Torah is not the means of salvation but rather marks out covenant membership" (144)—a view maintained, e.g., by N. T. Wright (*Climax of the Covenant*, 149–50). In my opinion, the supposition of a *causal* relationship between observance of the torah and the reward of eternal life does not go far enough, since it omits from view the entire relationship to God that the torah seeks to shape; the theology of the antecedent covenant influences the soteriology of the Psalms of Solomon (esp. 9.8–11). The new interpretation of the torah by Paul after the Christ-event is the decisive point of conflict.

54. Pace de Boer, *Galatians*, 210: "the law itself is a curse."



whole of history into a period before Christ and a period after Christ. This dichotomy of the ages means that the time between Abraham and Christ loses its contours; Moses, David, and the prophets play no role. In this provisional, dark time, the law too has only a provisional function. According to Gal 3:19, the law was added "because of transgressions," in order to prevent the worst from happening, or in order to bring to light hidden, unconscious transgressions and make people conscious of them.<sup>55</sup> This function is temporary, until the coming of the "offspring" (Christ). According to 3:21–22, there never existed a righteousness "by the law," because everything, including the torah, was enclosed under sin and dominated by sin. Prior to the "relationship of trust [πίστις]," the law had the function of guarding (3:23) and of a "tutor" (παιδαγωγός, 3:24). This reflects an ambivalent view. Guarding can mean protection but also imprisonment,<sup>56</sup> and the "tutor"—a slave who took boys to school or the gymnasium and back and watched over them—could protect but also chastise. He was responsible for protection from dangers and bad influences, but he was also mocked, because the tutor was often a slave whose age or handicap meant that he could not be used for any other work. The function of the tutor recalls Pss. Sol. 7.9 and 10.1–4, but once again Paul sees it as temporary, until the coming of the relationship to Christ. Now that Christ has come, faithful are no longer under the tutor (Gal 3:25).

Psalms of Solomon 4.4–5 summarizes the significance of the coming of Christ: through the sending of his Son by God, the "fullness of time," the eschaton, has come. Since the Son himself was subject to the conditions of humans ("born of a woman"), and specifically Jewish existence ("born under the law"), he was able to redeem those who are "under the law," so that they receive "divine childhood"—that is, new life in the relationship, in immediate closeness to God in the end-time. The motif of education, whereby the torah played a central role as guideline, is central to the Psalms of Solomon, but this has become obsolete in Paul, thanks to God's salvific action in Christ. A new interpretation of the torah is both possible and necessary.

Fourth, the *commandment of love* from Lev 19:18 becomes the new *criterion of interpretation of the torah* in Gal 5:14: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one (single) word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

55. But not "to produce the transgressions" (thus de Boer, *Galatians*, 231).

56. Paul uses the verbs *φρουρέω* (transitive: to guard, to protect, but also of a garrison: to occupy) and *συντελέω* (to enclose, to shelter, to encircle, to shut in).

Love for one's neighbor, welcoming and accepting the other person, getting involved on behalf of the other, means the fulfillment of the torah.<sup>57</sup> This is in accord with the new relationship to Christ, so that 5:6 speaks of "πίστις that becomes operative through ἀγάπη." Love of neighbor is a consequence of the relationship to Christ and is thus the key to the interpretation of the torah in Christ. It is here that Paul's specific hermeneutic of the torah becomes visible. Leviticus 19:18 itself comes from the torah, which means that Paul does not leave Judaism through his interpretation. In Gal 6:2, he speaks of "the law of Christ." This is not a new law, but the law that is qualified through Christ. He defines it by means of the exhortation: "Bear one another's burdens"—which is in keeping with the intention of Lev 19:18. Love of neighbor becomes the new identity marker of the community, which sets its stamp upon the community's ethos and demarcates it *ad extra*, while Jews and gentile Christians are united precisely in this love. Galatians 6:1 states that dealing with a "transgression" (παράπτωμα) is the task of the community, which consists of persons filled with the Spirit (πνευματικοί) and can bring the transgressor back onto the right path. The community takes on a task that is God's: in Pss. Sol. 13.10, it was God himself who removed the transgressions of the righteous through his education.

### 3. Conclusion

This comparison with the Psalms of Solomon shows that Paul's new interpretation touches a raw nerve of the Jewish understanding of the torah: Abraham as the beginning of the election of Israel, the torah as a good path of righteousness, the educational function of the torah. In these areas, Paul develops new paths and summarizes his understanding of the torah in the commandment of love, which is his hermeneutical key. The Psalms of Solomon and Paul share a central interest in God's turning to Israel, which is expressed in his "righteousness" and his "mercy" (Psalms of Solomon) or his "love" (Gal 2:20). In the Psalms of Solomon, doing the torah corresponds to the righteousness of God, and whoever lives in accordance with the torah can be called righteous and may hope for the forgiveness

57. Rom 13:8–10 also quotes Lev 19:18 as the summary of the torah. Such summaries were known in early Judaism. See Stefan Schreiber, "Law and Love in Romans 13.8–10," in *The Torah in the Ethics of Paul*, ed. Martin Meiser, LNTS 473 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 100–19.

of his or her sins (one does not merit God's righteousness; one lives in it).<sup>58</sup> For Paul, on the other hand, the righteousness of God finds a new place in Christ, whereby also sins are forgiven. In Christ, God opens up for his people (and also for the gentiles) a new access to himself, a new relationship that makes one free for a new interpretation of the torah that relativizes the instructions that delimit the Jews vis-à-vis the gentiles and thus also gives the gentiles who belong to Christ the eschatological access to the people of God.

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58. Atkinson ("Enduring the Lord's Discipline," 159) emphasizes the elements that are shared by the Psalms of Solomon and Paul: the fulfilling of the law does not make one righteous before God; all human beings sin; the pious know this, and they acknowledge the righteousness of God.