

## **“RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION”: A FRESH LOOK AT ROMANS 4:25\***

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Most exegetes have argued that the basis of justification according to Paul lies in the cross of Christ (cf. Rom 3:24; 5:9). Normatively the resurrection has been regarded as the ratification of the accomplished justification that took place upon the cross<sup>1</sup> or else it is the vehicle by which the cross continues to evoke significance.<sup>2</sup> This, however, reduces the resurrection to a divine apologetic or else makes the resurrection an addendum to the cross. This perspective should perhaps be questioned on the grounds that Paul’s gospel knows of no separation between the cross and the resurrection and their ensuing effect (cf. 1 Thess 4:14; 1 Cor 15:3-8; 2 Cor 5:15; Rom 4:25; 14:7). Indeed, the resurrection figures just as prominently as the cross in Paul’s most concise summaries of the gospel (Rom 1:3-4; 10:9-10; 1 Cor 15:3-8; cf. 2 Tim 2:8). We may legitimately ask then whether it is possible that the resurrection of Christ exerts a causal relation upon the justification of believers. If we pursue such a question, no other verse in the Pauline corpus is more relevant to such a study than Romans 4:25. In this verse is the only explicit statement made by Paul that associates the justification of believers with Christ’s resurrection. Though the link is intimated in other texts (cf. 1 Cor 15:17; 1 Tim 3:16), Rom 4:25 is the most lucid expression of their connection. However, such an investigation is hampered by the fact that several aspects of the verse are debatable. The background is disputable as to whether Isaiah 53 constitutes the background or its construction lies in Pauline redaction of

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<sup>1</sup> See most recently Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998) 244.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Käsemann, “The Saving Significance of Jesus’ Death in Paul,” in *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971).

traditional material. Second, the verse must be understood within the overall argument of Rom 1:3-4:25 as it brings the section to its completion. Third, the issue arises whether the prepositional *διὰ* clauses are to be taken retrospectively (i.e., causally) or prospectively (i.e., finally). Four, side by side with the question of the prepositions is the issue of rhetoric. Does Paul intend a genuine distinction to be made between the effect of Christ's death and the effect of Christ's resurrection, or is the contrast simply rhetorical. In order to understand the significance of the resurrection for Paul's view of justification it is fitting to give Romans 4:25 an in-depth treatment.

### Background to Romans 4:25

Although Pauline authorship of Rom 4:25 cannot be totally ruled out,<sup>3</sup> on balance it would seem that it is pre-Pauline.<sup>4</sup> This can be discerned from the use of the preposition *διὰ* instead of Paul's favourite *ὑπέρ*, the presence of *δικαίωσις*, instead of Paul's normal *δικαιοσύνη* and reflection on the Suffering Servant is not a *typically* Pauline motif (but then again cf. 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5-11). The two stich formula is either a baptismal liturgy<sup>5</sup> or more likely still an early Christian hymn or creed.<sup>6</sup> Some leave open the possibility that the second stich was created by Paul<sup>7</sup> but the tight parallelism (passive verb + *διὰ* + *ἡμῶν* in both clauses) seems to indicate that they were part of the one unit. With regard to a possible *Sitz im Leben* the close parallel with Isa 53:5-

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<sup>3</sup> Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKKNT; Neukirchen/Vluyn: Neukirchener and Zürich: Benziger, 1978-81), thinks that Paul has formulated the phrase using traditional motifs (1.278-80).

<sup>4</sup> This view had tended to predominate, cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM 1978 [1952]) 1.31, 46, 82; Peter Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Resurrection and the View of Righteousness in the Pre-Pauline Mission Congregations," in *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 55-56.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Eph 5:2; Gal 2:20; so Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM 1980 [1973]) 128; Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Resurrection and the View of Righteousness," 58.

<sup>6</sup> This is indicated by the antithetical parallelism, the placement of the relative clause at the commencement of the verse (cf. Col 1:15; Phil 2:5-11; 1 Tim 3:16), the Semitic style of placing the verbs prior to the main phrase, the presence of the divine passives, the concluding plural pronoun *ἡμῶν* "our" which suggests a communitarian setting with a view to worship or confession.

<sup>7</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988) 225; Wilckens, *Römer*, 1.278-80.

12 (LXX) could imply a Hellenistic Jewish setting in the Diaspora,<sup>8</sup> however, a Palestinian provenance is equally possible on the grounds that the verse has a Semitic structure and the fact that *παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα* "delivered because of our transgressions" has an Aramaic parallel in the Targums of Isaiah 53:5b.<sup>9</sup> This makes a Palestinian source at least plausible. Of particular relevance to the study is the relationship of Isaiah 53 to Rom 4:25.<sup>10</sup> Isa 53:5 is most likely behind the first stich and Isa 53:11 is the background to the second stich.

After the suffering of his soul  
 he will see the light of life<sup>11</sup> and be satisfied;  
 by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,  
 and he will bear their iniquities.

In Isa 53:11 what is anticipated of the Servant is that subsequent to a period of suffering the Servant will be vindicated in the heavenly courtroom and will see "the light of life". In Jewish literature "life" is not so much associated with post-mortem bliss as it is related to the hope of resurrection.<sup>12</sup> The Servant is the representative of Israel and what is dramatized in the scene is that through the suffering and the resurrection of the Servant many will be justified. In Isa 53:11 resurrection is cast in juridical terms. The ultimate vindication of the Servant from his sufferings at the hands of pagans is to be seen in his reconstitution back to life. "For Isaiah the

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<sup>8</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 129; H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief: Kommentar* (HTKNT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1977) 137; J. Christian Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in the Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 203-04.

<sup>9</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Romans* (TNTC; London: IVP, 1985 [1963]) 113; Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (London: SCM, 1971) 296-97.

<sup>10</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 224; Käsemann (*Romans*, 128) argues that the Suffering Servant motif is not present there due to the lack of "atomizing" typical of NT quotations. In contrast Dunn states that "The influence of Isa 53 LXX is hard to dispute." Similar is C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1. "the influence of Isa 52.13-53.12 is hardly to be doubted." Given the clear thematic correlation between Isaiah 53 and Rom 4:25 we should side with Dunn and Cranfield.

<sup>11</sup> The LXX and DSS versions of Isaiah add "light of life" as opposed to the MT reading which omits it.

<sup>12</sup> For the idea of resurrection as "light" cf. Job 33:28, 30; Ps 49:19; *1 Enoch* 58:3; 92:3-5; 108:12-13; *2 Enoch* 65:8; *Ps Sol* 3:12; *IQS* 4:8; John 8:12; 1 Clem. 16:12; *Sib Or* 1.379.

resurrection of the righteous is in *itself* the vindication of the righteous.”<sup>13</sup> Significantly, the vindication of the Servant is the vindication of Israel. In this sense justification proceeds to Israel as mediated by and represented through the Servant. The theme of the righteous being vindicated after a duration of suffering is prominent in Jewish literature,<sup>14</sup> and Rom 4:25 demonstrates that this same motif was merged together in the crucified and resurrected Messiah. The unexpected element of a *crucified* Messiah and an *already resurrected* righteous one is a genuine *novum* of which the impetus was the first Easter.<sup>15</sup> To the first Christians the resurrection meant that the one true God had done for Jesus of Nazareth, in the middle of time, what Israel had thought he was going to do for her at the end of time. Israel had imagined that Yahweh would vindicate her after her suffering at the hand of the pagans. Instead he had vindicated Jesus after his suffering at the hand of the pagans.<sup>16</sup> This line of interpretation may have originated with the historical Jesus. In Mark 10:45 Jesus expected to suffer for “many” as a ransom for sins and that later he would be vindicated in his resurrection/exaltation (cf. Mark 8:31-32; 9:9; 10:32-34; 14:62b).<sup>17</sup> From reflection on this logion by the post-Easter community it would have been a simple inference to connect the “many being ransomed” of Mark 10:45 with the “many made righteous” in Isa 53:11 (cf. *T.Ben* 3:8).<sup>18</sup> This may have evolved into the formulation of hymns, creeds or liturgies as contained in Rom 4:25 and 1 Cor 15:3-5. A tradition following the

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<sup>13</sup> E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Pr., 1972) 19.

<sup>14</sup> Jer 26:12-15; 1 Kgs 19:14-18; 2 Chron 24:20-22; Job 13:18; Pss 18; 30; Isa 52:13-53:12; Dan 7:13-14, 27; Wisdom 1-5; 2 Macc 7:9-23; cf. Acts 2:23-24; 3:13-14; 4:10; 5:30; 8:32-35; 13:27-30; Phil 2:5-11; 1 Tim 3:16.

<sup>15</sup> Dunn, *Romans* 1-8, 238.

<sup>16</sup> A variation of a quote from N. T. Wright, *What Saint People Really Said* (Oxford: Lion, 1997) 36.

<sup>17</sup> I am probably in the minority by asserting that a form of Mk 10:45 preceded the composition of Rom 4:25 but a number of scholars accept its authenticity, in particular, Peter Stuhlmacher who changed his mind on the authenticity of the logion. See the arguments in P. Stuhlmacher, “Vicariouly Giving His Life for Many, Mark 10:45 (Matt. 20:28),” in *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 16-29; and S. Page, “Ransom Saying,” in *DJG*, edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991) 660-662.

<sup>18</sup> My thoughts on this point spring largely from Stuhlmacher, “Jesus’ Resurrection and the View of Righteousness,” 55; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994 [1989]) 64.

trajectory of Mark 10:45 ⇒ Reflection on Isa 53:11 ⇒ Traditional material ⇒ Paul is not entirely implausible. For if a pre-Pauline congregation is viewing Jesus' death and resurrection in light of this passage in Isaiah three things would be striking: (1) It would mean that God's righteousness has been made known in the resurrection. God has demonstrated his faithfulness by not allowing his Servant to languish in suffering and death but has vindicated him from the grave. (2) In view of his own status before God as vindicated, exalted and enthroned, it would be a logical consequence to see Jesus as the locus of righteousness and redemption (cf. 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7). (3) What would be even more striking is the idea that the justification that Israel longed for has already taken place in the resurrection of Christ (cf. Acts 5:30-31). The remnant of Israel has been justified in the resurrection of their Servant. The original author of the Rom 4:25b is arguably setting forth the case that in the resurrection of Christ the justification of the age to come has dawned. It may follow that since Christ's resurrection is his justification, others are justified in so far as the Servant's justification is distributed to them.<sup>19</sup> Notably a similar interpretation of Isa 53:11 as constituting the justification of Christ in his resurrection is found in 1 Clem 16:12 where it says, "And the Lord desires to take away the torment of his soul, to show him light and to form him with understanding, to justify a Just One who is a good servant to many. And he will bear their sins."

The thesis is provocative: the resurrection of Christ is his justification as Israel's Servant and Israel can be justified if only it will turn and recognize him as God's Messiah (cf. Rom 1:3-4; 10:9-10; Acts 5:30-31).

### **Context within Romans 1:3-4:25**

Paul's central thesis in the first four chapters is the coming and the nature of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ "righteousness of God". This is announced programmatically in 1:17 and explicated in 1:18-4:25. It is no coincidence that Rom 4:24-25 lies at the end of this section as it summarily encapsulates the meaning of the "righteousness of God", viz., the salvific nature of the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>20</sup> It is our contention then that 4:25 is not only an apt summary of 1:3-4:25 but that it also provides the

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<sup>19</sup> For a more in depth development of this idea see Richard B. Gaffin, *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Baker Biblical Monograph; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978) 123.

<sup>20</sup> K. Kertelge, δικαιοσύνη, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 1.326, correctly sees righteousness in Paul's thought as closely tied to the death and resurrection of Christ.

crucial nexus into 5:1-8:39. This means that Rom 4:25 is a critical juncture of the epistle and constitutes a theological and literary axis upon which Paul's argument turns.

Subsequent to the opening superscription in 1:1-2, Paul announces what is largely the theme of the epistle in 1:3-4: the gospel of Jesus Christ. The intertwining of christology and resurrection has the purpose of explicating the content of the gospel which concerns the end of God's contention against the ungodly and establishing their reorientation before God in a new redemptive arrangement as his people, in short, justification.

Paul moves on to detail his ministerial enterprises among the Gentiles in 1:5-15 and in 1:16-17 he returns to the thesis for the epistle. In the gospel the "righteousness of God" is revealed. Determinative for the meaning of "righteousness" in 1:17 is Paul's quotation from Hab 2:4. In Habbakuk it concerns the promise of deliverance through the duration of the Babylonian onslaught where life is promised on the basis of faith. For Paul this has become a typology of what is made manifest by faith in Christ. The righteousness of God is no mere verdict but has eschatological life as its goal. In the Jewish understanding vindication and vivification go hand in hand as it is life that is the concrete evidence of one's justification (cf. Rom 5:18, 21; 8:11). When transplanted into Paul's eschatological framework, it means that the life and justification of the age to come has dawned in the resurrection of Christ. The promise made to Habbakuk has been fulfilled by Christ who, through being raised from the dead, has defeated death and been vindicated for believers. Consequently, it is the resurrected Christ who is the object of the gospel (1:3-4) as it is his resurrection that constitutes the quickening verdict for God's people which provides them with life as its fruit. For God in his righteousness *vindicates* and gives life to the one who believes in the one he has raised. This righteousness also possesses a dual function beyond its vindicating and quickening role, as it arouses the divine contention against humanity. God's righteousness to deliver cannot be divorced from its *verdict* as God's judgment, so 1:18 does not introduce a whole new topic.<sup>21</sup> The righteousness of God is manifest in the verdict of God against all ungodliness and wickedness, regardless of race (1:18). Whether it is Gentile immorality and idolatry (1:18-32) or Jewish hypocrisy and covenant violation (2:1-3:20).

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<sup>21</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, "From Wrath to Justification: Tradition, Gospel and Audience in the Theology of Romans 1:18-4:25," in *Pauline Theology Volume III: Romans*, edited by David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 136.

In Rom 3:21-26 these two facets of God's righteousness, vindication and verdict,<sup>22</sup> dovetail together. God's righteousness is seen in his saving activity and deliverance of the ungodly. Concurrently the verdict against the ungodly is overturned by Christ who through redemption, sacrifice and propitiation achieves their justification before God. By removing the verdict against them declared in the Law, he is able to establish a single economy where Jew and Gentile become part of the new Israel on the basis of faith. Notably, the discussion of justification here is dominated by allusions to the cross with references to the resurrection completely absent on the surface. Yet elsewhere Paul can speak of redemption from being in 'bondage' to sin and death (Rom 6:17-23; 7:14-25) which the resurrection emancipates believers from (cf. Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7,14; 4:30).<sup>23</sup> What redeems and justifies is not merely Christ's death but his entire person, which is why he is the one "in whom we have redemption" (1 Cor 1:30; Col 1:14; Eph 1:7). It is by both death and resurrection that Jesus becomes redemption incarnate.<sup>24</sup> The juridical righteousness of God against the ungodly is transposed into the righteousness they gain by fact of his resurrection (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9-10).

The act of God in justifying the believer by faith with a view to re-creating life is reinforced with the example of Abraham. Just as Abraham was called to have faith in God's life-giving power to bring life to Sarah's dead womb, so too are the descendants of Abraham called to have faith in the life-giving power of God as exerted in the gospel, which centers upon the resurrection of the crucified one.<sup>25</sup> The birth of Isaac from the deadness of Sarah's womb parallels the resurrection of Christ. Paul is trying to draw a direct correspondence between the act of faith, the object of faith and the result of faith from Abraham to the present. Like the faith Abraham had in God's promise, it is faith in this righteousness that is revealed in Christ which transfers persons from the realm of sin, death and condemnation and into the sphere of life, righteousness and sonship. Finally, Rom 4:24 introduces the immediate application of the Abraham story, "It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." It emphasizes what God did to the earthly figure of Jesus and confession of his being "raised" is the basis of being counted as "righteous".

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<sup>22</sup> I am particularly indebted to Mark A. Seifrid for the terminology of "verdict" and "vindication".

<sup>23</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, our righteousness: Paul's theology of justification* (NSBT; Downers Grove: IVP, 2000) 64-65.

<sup>24</sup> David Michael Stanley, *Christ's Resurrection In Pauline Soteriology* (Analecta Biblica; Rome: Pont Bib Inst, 1961) 271.

This in turn is followed by the formula in Rom 4:25 that builds on the resurrection motif by linking justification precisely with Jesus' resurrection. The text is perhaps a concise and formulaic summary of the meaning of Rom 3:21-26 where trespasses are removed and a sentence of justification pronounced. God's wrath has been brought to an end by the righteousness of God as expressed in the handing over and raising up of Christ by God. Through Christ the sins of the old age have been dealt with and the sinner is incorporated into the new reality which the risen Christ creates by virtue of his resurrection.<sup>26</sup>

Rom 4:25 then appears as a fitting summary by bringing 1:3-4:25 to its climatic end, opening and closing with traditional material concerning Christ's resurrection. It discloses God's verdict against sin in delivering Christ to the cross and God's justification of the ungodly in raising Christ. In turn it prepares the way for the development of the theme in 5:1-11 which explicates its meaning in a variety of ways. In 5:9 Paul argues that if God has justified the ungodly by the blood of Christ (a hard thing) then it follows that the future wrath has also been averted against the justified by Christ (an easier thing). The prepositional phrase *διὰ αὐτοῦ* "through him" makes the crucified and risen Christ the sphere of the consummated salvation (though without saying how). In 5:10 the disjunction between *τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ* "the death of his Son" and *ζωῆς/ αὐτοῦ* "his life", as in 4:25, differentiates the function of Christ's death and resurrection. Reconciliation is contingent upon the cross but the continuing life of Christ is what secures escape from the eschatological judgment (cf. 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). N.T. Wright comments, "Paul here sees the cross accomplishing one task, and the resurrection or at least the risen life of the Messiah, accomplishing another."<sup>27</sup> One can also note how in Rom 5:12-21 it is Christ as the second Adam (a status he holds only in virtue of the resurrection) that effects justification and breaks the nexus between sin and death.<sup>28</sup> Additionally in Rom 8:34 it is the intercession of the resurrected Christ that ensures the application of the verdict for which he died and in Rom 10:9-10 it is confession of Jesus as the risen Lord that constitutes the basis of eschatological justification.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Rom 1:3-4; 10:9-10; 1 Cor 15:3-8; 2 Tim 2:8.

<sup>26</sup> Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1952 [1944]) 183; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 1.156-57; Käsemann, *Romans*, 129; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 75; Seifrid, *Christ, our righteousness*, 47.

<sup>27</sup> N. T. Wright, "Romans," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002) 10:520.

<sup>28</sup> Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988).



### The Meaning of the διὰ Clauses in Rom 4:25

The meaning of the two prepositional διὰ clauses has prompted debate whether they are to be taken retrospectively or prospectively. This is particularly crucial in the case of the second clause of v. 25; for if we take the clause to be retrospective then it would appropriately be translated, "He was raised *because* of our justification". Here the sequence of thought is: (1) man's sin; (2) Jesus' death; (3) man's justification; and (4) Jesus' resurrection. This would imply that the resurrection is the confirmation that justification has taken place through the atonement. By contrast, if we take the second clause as prospective then it would usually be translated as "He was raised *for* (i.e., "with a view to") our justification". The train of thought runs: (1) man's sin; (2) Jesus' death and resurrection; and (3) man's justification.<sup>29</sup> This would suggest that the resurrection is the very means of attaining justification. But at the same time we must take into account the fact that the second clause cannot be understood in isolation from the first clause concerning Christ being handed over because of/for our sins. The problem is then exacerbated if we ask whether διὰ should be translated the same way in both clauses, which some argue that the parallelism demands.<sup>30</sup> This Gordian Knot of Greek translation has three different possibilities regarding how to take the two prepositional διὰ clauses: (1) Prospective + Prospective; (2) Retrospective + Retrospective; and (3) Retrospective + Prospective. In light of these stark alternatives it is worth exploring them in order to assess the merit of each.

### Two Prospective Clauses

One view is that both of the clauses are to have a prospective meaning: "He was handed over *with a view to* taking away our transgressions and was raised to life *with a view to* our justification." Murray argues for a prospective meaning in both clauses on the grounds that the idea of Jesus being παρεδόθη "delivered" and ἡγέρθη "raised" (which are divine passives) signifies God's perspective where they denote the divine activity *for* salvation. We are also justified by our faith in Jesus (Rom 3:22, 26) but only as the living Lord can Jesus be the object of our faith. It is through union with Christ that we are justified for only as active through the

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<sup>29</sup> Murray J. Harris, "Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by C. Brown (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978) 3.1184; Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal* (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983) 75.

<sup>30</sup> Murray, *Romans*, 1.154.

resurrection can virtue proceed from Christ to us and only in a living relationship with Christ can our union with him maintain any efficacy. Additionally, only the living Christ can be the embodiment of righteousness and be made for us righteousness from God (1 Cor 1:30). Therefore, if the second clause should be taken as prospective, and if both clauses should have identical form due to the parallelism, then it follows that the first clause should also be translated prospectively.<sup>31</sup>

This however raises a serious problem. For if we take the first clause as prospective it requires an additional phrase such as ‘to take away our sins’ or ‘to deal with our sins’ which is an unwarranted addition and an over-translation. Secondly, Murray’s appeal to the parallelism may undercut his argument. If it can be shown that the first clause must be taken retrospectively, then that would necessitate that the second clause should also be interpreted in the same way. This goes to show that a double prospective or even a double retrospective interpretation requires questionable additions and translation.<sup>32</sup> Third, the  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$  in the first clause should be translated causally as this is the plain sense of  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$  with the accusative. Fourth, the first clause should be taken in continuity with the early Christian understanding of the sacrificial nature of Jesus’ death with Jesus being crucified on behalf of (i.e., because of) others.<sup>33</sup> For even if Paul is using the preposition  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$  only because it is part of traditional material, he is unlikely to be departing from his normal emphasis of Christ dying “for” others.<sup>34</sup>

### Two Retrospective Clauses

An alternative position is that both clauses should be taken retrospectively: “He was handed over *because of* our transgressions and raised *because of* our justification.”<sup>35</sup> Normatively  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$  with the accusative means “because of” which *prima facie* calls for

<sup>31</sup> Murray, *Romans*, 1.156-157.

<sup>32</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 289.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 11:50; 2 Cor 5:15, 21; Gal 3:13; Heb 2:9; 9:28; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Rom 5:6, 8; 8:32; 14:15; 1 Cor 1:13; 5:7; 11:24; 15:23; 2 Cor 5:14-15, 21; Gal 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; Eph 5:2, 25; 1 Thess 5:10; 1 Tim 2:6; Tit 2:14.

<sup>35</sup> The major proponents of this view are F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1881); Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody: Hendriksen, 1995 [1935]); Harris, “Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament”; Harris, *Raised Immortal*; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Schreiner, *Romans*, 243-44.

a causal interpretation. Taylor points out that the prospective meaning of *διὰ* is rare in classical Greek, the Papyri and in the LXX.<sup>36</sup> Godet contends that to take a prospective meaning for the second clause is a roundabout way of explanation which asserts that the resurrection of Christ is required as the object of faith where belief in the resurrection is the condition of justification. Additionally, if Paul wanted to imply a final or purposive sense for either clause he would use the accusative prepositions *εἰς* or *πρός* as he does in 3:25-26.<sup>37</sup> The point is that Jesus died because of our transgressions and was resurrected because of our *accomplished justification*. His resurrection authenticates and confirms that our justification has taken place in the cross.<sup>38</sup> The resurrection is proof that the justifying power of the cross delivers sinners from judgment. Indeed, Schlatter contends that the believer's justification even precedes Christ's resurrection.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the crucifixion of Christ for our sins is the grounds of justification and the resurrection serves as its kerygmatic confirmation. As Godet wrote:

Now, in view of this divine fact [of Christ's death], a corresponding change must necessarily be wrought in the person of Christ Himself. By the same law of solidarity whereby our condemnation had brought him to the cross, our justification must transform His death into life . . . Our lot is as it were interwoven with His: we sin, He dies; we are justified, He lives again . . . His resurrection is the *proof* of our justification only because it is the necessary *effect* of it . . . For this resurrection is the incarnation of my justification. If death is the payment of my debt, resurrection, is as it were, the acknowledgment of it.<sup>40</sup>

In response it needs to be questioned just to what degree the justification of the believer causally affects Christ. Yet this pushes the idea of Christ-Believer solidarity just too far. Not only that, it is often stated in the NT that it is God or the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, not the justification of any believer.<sup>41</sup> For believers are the recipients of the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection, not the agents of its execution. Against Schlatter, it is difficult to see how justification can precede resurrection. Granted that the verdict is "executed" at the point of Christ's death, but

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<sup>36</sup> Vincent Taylor cited by Morris, *Romans*, 215.

<sup>37</sup> Godet, *Romans*, 1.311; cf. Morris, *Romans*, 215-16.

<sup>38</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 244.

<sup>39</sup> Schlatter, *Romans*, 118.

<sup>40</sup> Godet, *Romans*, 1.312-13; cf. Harris, *Raised Immortal*, 75, 165.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37; Rom 6:4; 7:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:4, 12, 15, 20; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:19-20; Col 2:12; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Pet 1:21.

justification for Paul and Judaism is more than a verdict as it is manifested in life. Such life is only provided by the act of God in raising Christ. What is more, Moo points out that Paul's reference to justification is always in the context of the subjective appropriation of faith in Christ's death and resurrection. This means that the resurrection cannot be the necessary effect of justification as it is the resurrection that constitutes the very object of justifying faith.<sup>42</sup> This is not a roundabout argument but nothing other than Paul's belief in justification by faith in Christ, who is both crucified and risen.

### First Clause Retrospective and Second Clause Prospective

By far the majority of commentators and Bible translations prefer to take the first clause as retrospective and the second as prospective, hence a translation as: "He was handed over *for* our transgressions and was raised *for* our justification." By translating *διὰ* as "for" in the second clause it runs the risk of ambiguity as "for" could mean either 'on behalf of' (i.e., causally) or 'for the sake of' (i.e., finally). This is simply the trade off that has to be made by translators in order to maintain the parallelism between the two clauses. Instead, it is perhaps better to simply abandon the parallelism as the GNB, REB and NEB do in order to convey the implied meaning.<sup>43</sup> Several arguments are rallied in support of this view: (1) In spite of the parallelism, there is no demand that the *διὰ* in the second clause be taken in the same way as in the first. For it is unclear if the poetic parallelism requires a further parallelism in meaning.<sup>44</sup> This is even more likely to be the case if the poetic parallelism is to some extent rhetorical. (2) The prospective meaning of the second clause can also be defended on grammatical grounds. *διὰ* with the accusative can often have a prospective reference as it does in Matt 24:22; Mark 2:27; John 11:42; 12:30; 1 Cor 11:9.<sup>45</sup> Oepke believes that the meaning of Rom 4:25 should be taken in the sense of

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 1 Thess 4:14; Rom 1:3-4; 4:17, 24; 10:9-10; 1 Cor 15:1-8. So Moo, *Romans*, 288-89; Seifrid, *Christ, our righteousness*, 142.

<sup>43</sup> Dunn (*Romans 1-8*, 225) argues against abandoning the parallelism as it fails to convey the poetic dynamics of the verse. Yet at the end of the day it is the meaning and not the structures that translators should endeavour to impart. Structures are not ends in themselves but comprise part of the process by which meaning is distributed to the reader.

<sup>44</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 288-89; G. Schrenk, *δικαίωσις* in *TDNT*, 2.224-25.

<sup>45</sup> BAGD, 181; Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 3.268; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: CUP, 1963), 55; Moo, *Romans*, 289 n. 10.

1 Tim 3:16 advocating that Christ died “because of our sins and in order to expiate them.”<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the preceding context supports a retrospective/prospective contrast as it is found in vv. 23-24 where διὰ is also used in a dual retrospective/prospective sense. In v.23 it says “these things were not written (διὰ) *because* of him only” (retrospective) and in v.24 it states “but also (διὰ) *for* us” (prospective).<sup>47</sup> The meaning is that Gen 15:6 was composed with future believers in mind. Grammatically, the juxtaposition of the retrospective and prospective uses of the preposition διὰ is continued on in v.25. (3) Along the same line is another grammatical argument revolving around the meaning of δικαίωσις “justification”. Normally Paul uses δικαιοσύνη or δικαίω to speak of justification. This makes the presence of δικαίωσις all the more exegetically significant. Dunn argues that in 5:18 δικαίωσις appears again, but only for the purpose of avoiding needless repetition of phrases.<sup>48</sup> Yet elsewhere Paul has no problem in doubling up in his use of the word (cf. Rom 3:21-22, 25-26; 6:18-19; 9:28-31; 10:3-6; 2 Cor 9:9-10). Since Paul could have easily exchanged δικαίωσις with δικαιοσύνη his retention of δικαίωσις in v.25 stems not only from the fact that Paul is using traditional material, but also because the finer nuance of δικαίωσις corresponds to his overall point. This point is enhanced by the specific meaning of δικαίωσις which stresses the *process* of justification in addition to the *result*.<sup>49</sup> This process commences with Jesus’ death and resurrection and the initial confession of faith yet at the same time it looks forward to the eschaton where the verdict will be implemented. Thus Paul can speak of justification/righteousness as a present experience (Rom 3:24; 5:1, 9, 17, 8:30; 9:30; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:21) and a future event (Rom 2:12-13; 3:30; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:12-13). No ‘double justification’ is implied because the eschatological nature of justification means that the verdict of judgment day has been declared in the present; the end time justification Judaism anticipated has been proleptically manifested through faith in Christ. When Paul chooses to speak of either the present or future dimension he uses δικαιοσύνη or δικαίω but when he envisages the entire span of justification from crucifixion to judgment or from the declaration of the verdict to its implementation, he uses

<sup>46</sup> A. Oepke, διὰ, in *TDNT*, 2.70.

<sup>47</sup> W. Hendriksen, *Romans* (NTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 161.

<sup>48</sup> Dunn, *Romans* 1-8, 225.

<sup>49</sup> BAGD, 198; Schrenk, δικαίωσις, *TDNT*, 2.224-25; and *pace* Stanley (Stanley, *Christ’s Resurrection In Pauline Soteriology*, 173) who argues that δικαίωσις is a synonym for δικαιοσύνη and is imported “without any appreciable change of meaning”. Although both words derive from the same δικαι- word group, they do differ slightly in their semantic range.

δικαίωσις. In Rom 4:24-25 the linking of resurrection with the event of justification is made explicit. Similarly, in Rom 5:18-21 justification leads to eternal life where δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί “many will be constituted as righteous” which implicitly associates the eschatological verdict with resurrection. Those who are declared righteous by faith are later made righteous through life. The resurrection of the ungodly represents the end of the process of justification as resurrection is the incarnation of their justification. It is the formal enactment of God’s verdict in their resurrection.<sup>50</sup> (4) Even if we maintain the prospective meaning in the second clause this does not require us to jettison the notion that the resurrection vindicates Christ.<sup>51</sup> What is demanded, however, is that we must not think of Jesus’ resurrection *solely* in terms of his vindication, but concurrently recognize that the resurrection possesses a genuine soteriological function in relation to producing justification.<sup>52</sup> As Dunn comments, “The vindication of Christ was also the vindication of those whom he represented.”<sup>53</sup> Just as Jesus represents believers in his death he also represents them in his resurrection (cf. 2 Cor 5:15). This point is clearly legitimated by the background of Isa 53:11 concerning the Servant’s vindication into new life which, by view of his solidarity to Israel, he is able to bestow upon others. (5) Although the resurrection is clearly the object of justifying faith, the absence of the phrase διὰ πίστεως in 4:25 implies a more direct relation between justification and resurrection.<sup>54</sup> (6) Jesus’ death and resurrection should be regarded as being inseparably part of the one salvific event. Death and resurrection are not two detached events loosely connected by their divine authorship as both events are connected via their revelation in Christ where they are invested with salvific power and historical meaning. Death without resurrection is martyrdom, but resurrection without the cross is a miraculous intrusion into history and a salvation-historical enigma. But together they constitute the fulcrum of God’s righteousness that is revealed in Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ are two sides of the same coin proclaiming God’s verdict against the ungodly and God’s vindication of believers.

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<sup>50</sup> Seifrid, *Christ, our righteousness*, 71.

<sup>51</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 241; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 75.

<sup>52</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 225.

<sup>53</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 236.

<sup>54</sup> Stanley, *Christ’s Resurrection In Pauline Soteriology*, 173.

### Rhetoric

It is universally agreed that the parallelism is rhetorical to some degree. The juxtaposition of the effect of Christ's death and resurrection are features of antithetical Hebrew parallelism. This makes any distinction between the effect of Christ's death and the effect of Christ's resurrection rhetorical rather than logical.<sup>55</sup> Thus Bruce believes that we should not interpret the two clauses "woodenly" as to suppose that Christ's death and resurrection achieve different results.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, Cranfield insists that although we do not intend any rigid separation between the function of Christ's death and resurrection, "it would be a mistake to conclude that the formation of the two clauses has been controlled by rhetorical considerations." Cranfield further believes that the first clause denotes something regrettable (Christ dying) whilst the second clause notes something desirable (resurrection).<sup>57</sup> Yet given that Jesus' death is the means of atoning for sin it is hard to see in what sense it is regrettable when it constitutes the very basis of justification and reconciliation. Stanley is another who attempts to make a theological point out of the rhetoric, asserting that Christ's death relates to the forgiveness of sins whilst his resurrection is connected to man's justification.<sup>58</sup> However, the forgiveness of sins and justification are inseparable, almost indistinguishable, and are simply different ways of describing the one event, viz., the end of God's contention against sinful humanity and its positive reorientation towards God in a new redemptive arrangement (cf. Rom 4:6-9; Acts 13:26). Without driving a wedge between the effects of Christ's death and resurrection we can still maintain a minor distinction between their function by following Moo when he writes, "But when due allowance is made for rhetoric, there is still a theological point being established according to which Jesus' resurrection, as well as His death, is basic to the believer's justification (cf. 5:10)." Moo points out that they differ in two ways: (1) Christ's death is the ground for justification to proceed; and (2) By vindicating Christ and freeing him from the influence of sin God provides an on-going resource for

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<sup>55</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (MNTC; London/Glasgow: Fontana, 1960 [1932]) 92; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: A& C Black, 1991 [1957]) 94; Bruce, *Romans*, 113; Käsemann, *Romans*, 129; J. A. T. Robinson, *Wrestling with Romans* (London: SCM, 1979) 55; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 225; Brian McNeil, "Raised for Our Justification," *ITQ* 42 (1975):104-105; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 389.

<sup>56</sup> Bruce, *Romans*, 113.

<sup>57</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.252 n.1.

<sup>58</sup> Stanley, *Christ's Resurrection In Pauline Soteriology*, 172.

believers to overcome the power of sin by experiencing union with Christ.<sup>59</sup> Even so we can perhaps go a little further than Moo on this point. Whilst maintaining the inseparability of Christ's death and resurrection, we may propose a unity of effect despite a diversity of function. Death and resurrection both *effect* justification although their respective *functions* in doing so may not be identical. Christ's death constitutes the verdict against sin for justification to proceed, whilst resurrection 'enacts' or 'executes' the verdict both now and in the future.

### Conclusion

Rom 4:25 represents a key turning point in the argument of the epistle. It summarizes the argument of Romans 1-4 by locating the righteousness of God in the death and resurrection of Christ which provides the basis justification. In Christ, God's verdict against the ungodly and his vindication for them coalesce. It is in the handing over and raising of Christ that the sphere of God's righteousness becomes operative for the believer. Although the parallelism of Rom 4:25 should not be doggedly maintained the rhetoric is strong enough to imply that Christ's resurrection has a function which his death does not, viz., imparting justifying life into the believer and unite them to the justified Messiah. A concept which is largely explicated in 5:1-8:39. The foregoing arguments, if correct, should lead us to believe that the overall point being made by the Apostle is that Christ's death and resurrection are both basic to the believer's justification.<sup>60</sup> In addition, if coupled with other verses in the Pauline corpus, one could even conjecture that it is the resurrection of Christ, more so than the cross, that is the ultimate basis for justification at the eschatological judgment. Indeed, following E. P. Sanders, we could say that *the future justification at the end of the age is secured by Christ's resurrection*.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 290; and *pace* Stanley, *Christ's Resurrection In Pauline Soteriology*, 173.

<sup>60</sup> For a similar conclusion cf. Dodd, *Romans*, 92; Nygren, *Romans*, 184; McNeil, "Raised for Our Justification", 104-105; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 389; Moo, *Romans*, 289; Thomas R. Schreiner *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory* (Downers Grove: IVP; Leicester: Apollos, 2001), 190.

<sup>61</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 471, 491.