

# *The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans*

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The Pauline hope of the unification of all peoples through the gospel of transforming love that produces respect between groups as diverse as the Jews and the Gentiles urgently needs to be placed on our agenda.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES to current scholarship on Paul's letter to the Romans is to come to terms with an interpretive tradition marked by largely unacknowledged anti-Semitism while remaining true to Paul's purpose in writing the letter. If a "paradigm shift" is occurring in the study of Romans,<sup>1</sup> stimulating scholars to revise the traditional anti-Judaic approach, the task is to provide a more adequate alternative. I believe that we are now in a position to suggest that this alternative involves a respectful coexistence between Jews and Gentiles in the context of a mission of world conversion and unification.

My plan is to begin with a response to the debate over the past decade about the role of Pauline theology in the rise of anti-Semitism. In two subsequent sections, I deal with the major issues that comprise the core of the problem: Paul's view of the future of Israel, and the debate whether

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1. Calvin L. Porter, "A New Paradigm for Reading Romans: Dialogue Between Christians and Jews," *Encounter* 39 (1978), 257-72; cf. also John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 198-201.

Romans 10:4 refers to Christ as the “end” or the “goal” of the law. These details will lead to some concluding reflections on the contemporary implications of Paul’s doctrine of tolerant pluralism.

### I. PAUL AND THE LEGACY OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Rosemary Radford Ruether’s book, *Faith and Fratricide*, provided the provocative starting place of the current discussion of the role of Romans in the formation of Christian anti-Semitism.<sup>2</sup> She discusses Paul under the rubric of “the Philosophizing of Anti-Judaism,” which involves a fusion of Philonic, gnostic, and apocalyptic dualism.

Paul’s theological thinking is governed by a remarkable fusion of Gnostic and apocalyptic dualisms . . . . Paul has fused this Gnostic world picture with the apocalyptic dualism between this “present age” of world history, dominated by the powers of wickedness, and the new “age to come,” which Paul sees as eternal and spiritual in character.<sup>3</sup>

The model for this dualism is Galatians 4:21–31, which contrasts the offspring of Hagar and Sarah, flesh and spirit, the present Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem, slavery and freedom.<sup>4</sup> That this material sustains Ruether’s contention that “Paul’s position was unquestionably that of anti-Judaism”<sup>5</sup> is plausible as far as Galatians and Philippians are concerned, the letters where Paul is engaged in polemic against the Judaizers. However, Ruether uses this dualistic model to interpret the entirety of Pauline theology, overlooking the very real differences in the perspective of Romans. While Galatians suggests that “the reign of Torah is equivalent to the reign of these demonic powers and principalities of the finite realm,”<sup>6</sup> Romans 7:7 denies that “the law is sin” and Romans 3:31 contends that Paul and his theology “uphold the law.”

A particularly controversial aspect of Ruether’s interpretation relates to the conversion of Jews in Romans 11. Her forthright reading of Paul’s “mystery” concerning the conversion of the Jews leads her to reject ecuminists who suggest he defended the ongoing validity of the Mosaic covenant.

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2. *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 95–107; a recent comprehensive response to Ruether’s challenge, with extended references to the intervening scholarly debate, is Franz Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews: The Significance of Judaism for Christian Faith*, trans. L. Swidler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

3. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, p. 101.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 102–03.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

In this sense, he enunciates a doctrine of the rejection of the Jews (rejection of Judaism as the proper religious community of God's people) in the most radical form, seeing it as rejected not only now, through the rejection of Christ, but from the beginning. The purpose of Paul's "mystery" is not to concede any ongoing validity to Judaism, but rather to assure the *ultimate vindication of the Church*.<sup>7</sup>

I believe she is correct in acknowledging that Paul did expect "that all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26) through acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, but this did not necessarily entail the abandonment of Jewish culture or obedience to the Torah as Romans 3:30; 14:1—15:8 reveal. It is hard to maintain that Paul eliminates the ongoing validity of Judaism in light of Romans 3:1—2 and 9:1—5, where he acknowledges the "advantage" of possessing the "sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises . . . the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ . . ." Yet the difficulty in providing a satisfactory explanation of these data is evident in the subsequent debate over Ruether's provocative sketch of the radical kind of anti-Judaism that can be derived from selections of Paul's writing.

The response to Rosemary Ruether's construal of Paul has been less vigorous than to other aspects of her thesis. According to the recent study by John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*,<sup>8</sup> most scholars have accepted her view. As the major predecessor of the reinterpretation Gager wishes to offer, Lloyd Gaston is cited.<sup>9</sup> Both scholars flatly reject the contention that Pauline theology contains elements of anti-Judaism and that Pauline Christology leads to anti-Semitism. Though quite different in their approach, one could consider the recent work of J. Christiaan Beker<sup>10</sup> and Ed P. Sanders<sup>11</sup> as offering alternatives to Ruether's perspective. The first issue that arises from this debate concerns the status of Israel and her relation to faith in Jesus as the Christ.

## II. THE DEBATE ABOUT PAUL AND ISRAEL

Although the question of Paul's attitude toward Israel has been debated rather intensively for the past thirty years,<sup>12</sup> a provocative starting point

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

8. See n. 1.

9. Lloyd Gaston, "Abraham and the Righteousness of God," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 2 (1980), 39–68; "Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology," *NTS* 28 (1981–1982), 400–23.

10. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 328–47.

11. Ed P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

12. Cf. Johannes Munck, *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, trans. I.

for the recent discussion is the work of Krister Stendahl.<sup>13</sup> He argues persuasively that Romans research has long been “out of touch with one of the most basic of the questions and concerns that shaped Paul’s thinking in the first place: the relation between Jews and Gentiles.”<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the traditional view of justification by faith as the theme of the letter, he argues that “the real center of gravity in Romans is found in chapters 9—11,” which describe the divine plan for Paul’s mission involving the inclusion of Jews and Gentiles.<sup>15</sup> This interpretation offers a striking alternative to the widespread view that Paul’s opponent in Romans is the pious Jew.<sup>16</sup> It is therefore understandable that Stendahl rejects the traditional interpretation of Jewish conversion that Ruether had advanced, insisting that the “salvation of the Jews” in Romans 11:26 does not imply their acceptance of Jesus as the Christ.<sup>17</sup> Stendahl’s contention that Paul intentionally fails to mention the name of Jesus Christ in this context is considerably less convincing than Ruether’s forthright exegesis, particularly in light of the prominent references to Christ in the crucial, early stages of Paul’s treatment of the status of Israel (Rom. 9:1—10:17) and his insistence that the gospel of Christ must be preached “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

Nils A. Dahl advanced this discussion by placing Paul’s statements about the future of Israel in the context of the rhetoric of Romans and the situation of the early Christian mission.<sup>18</sup> Some of the distinctive features of Romans 9—11 are explained by reference to the unique “epistolary situation” which required the Apostle “to refute false rumors that Paul had rejected the law and his own people.”<sup>19</sup> It follows that Romans 9—11 deals not with theodicy but with the issue of divine faithfulness to Israel, advancing the thesis in Romans 9:6 that God’s word has not failed. By a detailed analysis of the argument, Dahl shows that faithfulness to the

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Nixon from a 1956 German ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967); Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969); Christoff Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: eine Untersuchung zu Röm. 9—11* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964).

13. Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

14. *Ibid.*, p. 1; cf. also Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul’s Understanding of God in Romans* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), pp. 78—107, 216—30.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

16. Cf. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 69—104.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

18. Nils A. Dahl, “The Future of Israel,” *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publ. House, 1977), pp. 137—58.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 141—42.

divine promises to Israel is consistent with the inclusion of the Gentiles and with faith in Christ, hence with the doctrine of justification of the ungodly by faith. When Paul maintains that “all Israel will be saved,” he “does not affirm that every individual Israelite will attain salvation, but that God will grant salvation to both parts of his people, to those who have rejected Christ as well as to those who have believed in him.”<sup>20</sup> Dahl acknowledges, however, that a historical reversal of Paul’s hopes occurred after writing Romans. The Jerusalem offering failed to provoke the envy of Israel, encouraging conversion, and the gentile Christians continued the tendency to make themselves “great at the expense of Israel.”<sup>21</sup> Ultimately Christians came to believe that God had rejected Israel and, with the emergence of Christianity as a state religion, that discrimination against unconverted Jews was required. Dahl goes some distance to raise questions about the legitimacy of Christian missionizing of Jews: “Paul does not envision any mission among the Jews by Christians of Gentile origins.” Yet he quickly qualifies this by admitting that “this does not necessarily mean that such a mission is wrong, even though it has more often been pursued with zeal than with understanding.” His conclusion is a modest effort to coordinate historical observations with ethical reflection: “What Paul hoped for has not happened, and no one can reproach the Jews for that . . . . There is no Jewish problem, but there is a Christian problem.”<sup>22</sup>

J. Christiaan Beker’s study, *Paul the Apostle*, takes up this “problem” within the context of the thoroughly apocalyptic theology of the Apostle to the Gentiles. He defends Paul as the only New Testament writer “who is passionately engaged with the Jews as the people of the promise and who, notwithstanding his radically different understanding of messianism, keeps his thought anchored in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the destiny of Israel as God’s people.”<sup>23</sup> The insistence of Paul on the priority of Israel in the divine plan of salvation must be understood within the context of his struggle for unity between Jewish and gentile Christians. Beker contends that this unity “is undergirded by a theological principle: the faithfulness of God to his promises to Israel.”<sup>24</sup> If the divine promises to Israel are abrogated, the justification and the inclusion of Gentiles lose their foundation. “The church of the Gentiles is an extension of the promises of God to Israel and not Israel’s displacement.”<sup>25</sup> Since the Jerusalem offering

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20. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

23. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 340.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

was designed in part to symbolize the spiritual indebtedness of the gentile Christians to their Jewish origins, Beker notes how closely Paul's death was connected with this principle.

On the basis of Romans 9—11, Beker contends that "Israel's strategic position in salvation-history is not confined to its past, as if Israel is now absorbed by the church. Israel remains a distinct entity in the future of God's purpose."<sup>26</sup> Thus when Paul referred to the "mystery" of Israel's salvation in Romans 11:25, he wished to express the "undulating dynamic of God's salvation-history," in which successive periods of Jewish and gentile disobedience and conversion would ultimately result in the conversion and unification of the world.<sup>27</sup> Within this framework, Beker insists that "Israel's salvation ('all Israel will be saved' [Rom. 11:26]) does not mean Israel's conversion as the result of Christian missions. 'All Israel' is not a designation for the Jewish-Christian church, because it points clearly to an eschatological event."<sup>28</sup> The apocalyptic framework allows Beker at this point to take up the tentative question of Dahl concerning the legitimacy of Christian missionizing of Jews, eliminating all equivocation. In connection with the insistence that the "priority" of the Jews remains intact, Beker repudiates Jewish conversion and calls for a renewed dialogue about the problems of apocalyptic messianism. The peculiarity of Paul's position was the "bifocal tension of his Christology. The Messiah has come, but without his kingdom."<sup>29</sup> That is, the fulfillment of the messianic promises is left to the future because Paul refused the solution of later Christianity which identified the messianic fulfillment the creation of the institutional church. On this modest—even fragile—foundation, Beker calls for Christians to enter into respectful dialogue with their Jewish partners. While I remain skeptical about whether Paul's expectation that "all Israel" would be saved was originally intended to rule out Christian missionizing, I think Beker's portrayal of a central issue for dialogue is sound.

There are some striking affinities both with Beker and Stendahl in the recent essay by Pinchas Lapide in *Paul: Rabbi and Apostle*.<sup>30</sup> Acknowledging a measure of "ambivalence" in Paul's attitude toward the law, Lapide insists that the encounter on the Damascus Road implied:

... the great turning point of God's plan of salvation, predestined since

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26. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 334.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

30. Pinchas Lapide and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul: Rabbi and Apostle*, trans. W. W. Deneff from the 1981 German ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publ. House, 1984).

Abraham, which was to bring about the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles. The dawning of the new age was regarded neither as a breakaway from the traditions of Israel nor as an invasion into the Gentile world, and certainly not as the abolition of the Torah.<sup>31</sup>

In the interpretation of this modern Jewish scholar, Paul advocated two routes to salvation, one for Gentiles and another for Jews: "Jesus became the Savior of the Gentiles *without* being the Messiah of Israel . . ." <sup>32</sup> So long as Pauline theology retains the ultimate unification of the human race as a hope rather than an achievement, it will refrain from writing off "the Jews as unbelieving, unsaved, and everlastingly obstinate."<sup>33</sup> Just as in Beker's proposal, the basis of dialogue here is the messianic future. It therefore follows that Paul should be viewed as "neither an anti-Semite nor an anti-Judaist."<sup>34</sup> This conclusion is justified, it would appear, even if it remains unlikely that Paul's hope for the salvation of "all Israel" implied that Jews would never accept Jesus as the Messiah.

In both of his books on Paul, Ed P. Sanders has provided a bulwark against an anti-Semitic interpretation.<sup>35</sup> His basic contention is that Paul's critique of Judaism rests entirely on his Christian experience and thus has nothing to do with the actual contours of Jewish practice in his time. To understand Paul's counterposing of gospel against law as a polemic against an alleged legalism in contemporary Judaism, following the mainstream of Pauline interpretation, is thus perceived to be a dangerous distortion. Starting from the premise of faith in Jesus as the Christ, Paul's only criticism of Judaism was that it did not accept this premise. Insisting on the single "entrance requirement" of faith in Jesus Christ for both Jews and Gentiles, Paul established a kind of "third race," the "true Israel" mentioned in Galatians and Romans.<sup>36</sup> The double covenant theory favored by Lapidé and others is therefore rejected by Sanders: "The simplest reading of [Rom.] 11:13–36 seems to be this: the only way to enter the body of those who will be saved is by faith in Christ . . ." <sup>37</sup>

While Paul was perhaps not conscious of having broken with Judaism, his thought remaining thoroughly grounded on the Hebrew Scriptures, Sanders nevertheless points to a denial of "two pillars common to all forms

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31. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

35. Ed P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); Sanders, *Paul, the Law*.

36. Sanders, *Paul, the Law*, pp. 171–74.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

of Judaism: the election of Israel and faithfulness to the Mosaic law.”<sup>38</sup> This contention is somewhat problematic, because Paul explicitly affirms Israel’s election in Romans 3:1–2, 9:4–5, and 11:1–11 and defends the legitimacy of the Torah in Romans 7:7, 9:4, and 13:8–10 and of Torah obedience among Christian believers in Romans 14:1–15:6. Yet there is overwhelming evidence in support of Sanders’ basic contention that Paul criticized Jewish religionists who rejected the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.

The most thoroughly revisionist perspective currently available rests on the foundations prepared by Stendahl and Gaston. John G. Gager contends that Paul did not expect the conversion of Jews nor question the authenticity of Torah for them as a way of salvation.<sup>39</sup> Citing Romans 3:30 that God “will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised because of their faith,” Gager argues that “Paul uses faith here not as the equivalent of faith in Christ but as a designation of the proper response to God’s righteousness, whether for Israel in the Torah or for Gentiles in Christ.”<sup>40</sup> Paul’s main concern was to defend Christ as the means of salvation for the Gentiles. Paul’s “argument with the Jews” related to their “boast” in an exclusive relationship with God, excluding Gentiles. Paul’s polemic about the law was aimed at Christian Judaizers, not at non-Christian Jews. As Gager sees it, neither in Romans 3 nor 10 does Paul “intimate that the failure of the Jews lies in their refusal to become Christians. What he does say is that their boasting and their failure to attain righteousness comes from a single cause, lack of *pistis*.” So the reason the Jews were perceived to have “stumbled” was because they had not accepted the “legitimacy of Paul’s gospel to and about the Gentiles.”<sup>41</sup> When Paul decries the “unenlightened zeal” of the non-Christian Jews in Romans 10, he is simply describing their refusal to accept the gentile mission.<sup>42</sup>

Despite its appeal as a basis for Jewish-Christian dialogue, the cogency of Gager’s case must be questioned at several points. For those who are skeptical about his rejection of the authenticity of I Thessalonians 2:13–16, it remains difficult to deny the degree to which it shares with Galatians 4:21–31 a polemical attitude not only toward Judaizers but toward non-Christian Jews. That Romans 3:30 implies the possibility of justification through Torah obedience is contradicted by the thesis it was intended to prove, that “a person is justified by faith apart from works of

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38. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

39. Cf. nn. 3 and 4.

40. Gager, *Origins of Anti-Semitism*, p. 262.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–52.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 164.



law" (Rom. 3:28). That "faith" in Romans involves acceptance of the gentile mission rather than a relationship to Jesus as the Messiah rides roughshod over such key passages as Romans 1:1–17, 3:21–26, and 10:5–13. Ed Sanders provides a more solid exegesis by insisting that Romans 11:25–26 implies the acceptance by Jews of Jesus as the Christ. Yet Gager is on target in showing that Paul's argument does not entail a repudiation of the Torah or the election of Israel. As Beker and others have shown, the authority of the Torah is required to establish Paul's case about the justification of the ungodly in the earlier chapters of Romans.

An important point needs to be remembered in this debate, namely, that in his most important—and probably last—doctrinal statement, Paul defended the integrity of Jewish culture, and of Jewish-Christians. In Romans Paul advances beyond the polemical stance of some of his earlier letters, particularly on the relation to Judaism. There is no doubt about his anguish for his fellow Jews expressed in Romans 9:1–5; he defends the prerogatives shared by all Jews in Romans 3:1–2 and insists on the acceptance of the Jewish Christians in Romans 14:1–15:6. Their obedience to kosher food laws and celebration of Jewish festivals is not to be "despised," according to this passage. The integrity of both the "weak" and the "strong" is defended in principle, as I point out in *Christian Tolerance*.<sup>43</sup> The consequence is that conversion to belief in Jesus as the Messiah does not entail the abolition of cultural distinctions or theological tendencies. This is a side of Paul's mature work that seems worth preserving when the precise expectations he had about Jewish conversion were not fulfilled. I see no justification in denying that Paul's hope in Romans 11:26 did not materialize. The same could be said about his anticipation of the parousia. In this connection, I think that Lapidé is right to stress that Paul's vision of the "mystery" of Israel's conversion was followed by the paean to the inscrutable mind of God (Rom. 11:33–36). I do not think that Paul wished to exclude himself—or us—from the rhetorical question, "Who has known the mind of God?" In fact, as the evolution of Jewish-Christian relations over the past two thousand years has demonstrated, the answer is "No one!"

### III. THE STATUS OF THE LAW IN ROMANS 10:1–4

The most problematic issue in the relation between Jews and Christians is the status of the Torah. Several recent studies survey the entire range of Paul's use of the term "law."<sup>44</sup> Since there is no space here for an exhaus-

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43. Robert Jewett, *Christian Tolerance: Paul's Message to the Modern Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 126–42.

44. Sanders, *Paul, the Law*; Gerard Sloyan, *Is Christ the End of the Law?* (Tübingen: J.C.B.

tive survey, I have decided to discuss the crucial text concerning Christ as the end or fulfillment of the law in Romans 10. The three basic positions that have been taken on the definition of *telos* (end, goal) in this passage have very substantial implications for the relation between Jews and Christians. The view that *telos* means “end” in this verse is most characteristically advanced by Lutheran scholars, though its widespread appeal is visible in the RSV translation, “For Christ is the end of the law . . . .” The expression “the end of the law” is a famous title for Lutheran studies on Pauline theology.<sup>45</sup> It finds classic expression in Käsemann’s Romans commentary which rejects every connotation but “termination” as fatally flawed with unchristian moralism. Paul understands law and gospel “as mutually exclusive antitheses” shaped by the apocalyptic “contrast and contradiction of the old and new aeons.”<sup>46</sup> While Käsemann recognizes the semantic range of *telos*, he insists on the translation “end” because it embodies what is interpreted as Paul’s anti-Judaistic theology in Romans.

The Mosaic Torah comes to an end with Christ because man now renounces his own right in order to grant God his right (3:4). In the eschatological change the creature who wants to possess his own right is replaced by the Creator who has the right and who is acknowledged in the obedience of faith. Even for Israel no other possibility of salvation exists. Failing to understand the law, it falls into illusion and is overthrown. Christ exposes the illusion.<sup>47</sup>

With this approach, it is understandable that Käsemann’s student, Peter Stuhlmacher, presents the “end of the law” as the explanation not only of Pauline theology but also of his conversion, “the quintessence of what God at Damascus had impressed upon the legalistic zealot Paul in the shape of the crucified and resurrected one.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore to preach the resurrected Lord as the end of the Torah is to preach the justification of the ungodly,

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Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983); Hans Hübner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus: Ein Beitrag zum Werden der paulinischen Theologie*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980). The English translation of Hübner’s book has been announced by S.P.C.K. but for some reason has not appeared.

45. Cf. Günther Bornkamm, *Das Ende Des Gesetzes: Paulusstudien: Gesammelte Aufsätze I* (Munich: Kaiser, 1963); Rudolf Bultmann, “Christ and the End of the Law” in *Essays, Philosophical and Theological*, trans. J.C.G. Grieg (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955); Peter Stuhlmacher, “Das Ende des Gesetzes’: über Ursprung und Ansatz der paulinischen Theologie,” *ZThK* 67 (1970), 14–39; a Roman Catholic title using the same motif is Franz Mussner, “‘Christus (ist) des Gesetzes Ende zur Gerechtigkeit für jeden, der glaubt’ (Röm 10,4),” in *Paulus—Apostat oder Apostel? Jüdische und christliche Antworten* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1977), pp. 31–44.

46. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 282.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

48. Stuhlmacher, “Das Ende des Gesetzes,” p. 30.

which sets people free from “the power of Sinai’s law that had fallen into sin.”<sup>49</sup> Stuhlmacher boldly proclaims this anti-Judaistic theology as the proper foundation for Protestant theology as a whole.<sup>50</sup> The lack of a detailed exegesis of the context in Romans 9:30—10:13 indicates that theological preference rather than exegetical principles are the dominant consideration in the selection of “end” as the appropriate translation.<sup>51</sup>

The view favored by Calvinist interpreters and many others is that *telos* means “goal” or “fulfillment.”<sup>52</sup> This perspective receives its most extensive defense among recent commentators in the work of C.E.B. Cranfield. Like his Lutheran counterparts, Cranfield rests his case not so much on the contextual details in the passage, or a general consideration of the range of semantic possibilities, as on the picture of Pauline theology as a whole. The fundamental conviction is rather defensive, “that there is no statement in any of Paul’s epistles which, rightly understood, implies that Christ has abolished the law.”<sup>53</sup> In an extensive concluding essay, Cranfield observes that the modern terms for “legalism” were not available in Paul’s day. Thus he concedes that some of Paul’s statements “which at first sight seem to disparage the law, were really directed not against the law itself but against that misunderstanding and misuse of it for which we now have a convenient terminology. In this very difficult terrain Paul was

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49. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–36.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15, 39; in *Paul: Rabbi and Apostle*, pp. 24–26, 59–64, Stuhlmacher denies the anti-Judaistic implications of his position while maintaining the translation “the end of the law.”

51. My suggestion about the characteristic correlation between Lutheran theology and the translation “end of the law” should not be taken to imply that everyone favoring it is Lutheran or that all Lutherans agree. Several Roman Catholic scholars also argue for this translation: Andrea van Dülmen, *Die Theologie des Gesetzes bei Paulus* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1968), pp. 126–27; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Paul and the Law” in *A Companion to Paul: Readings in Pauline Theology*, ed. M. J. Taylor (New York: Alba, 1975); Mussner, “Christus (ist) des Gesetzes Ende” and *Tractate on the Jews*, p. 23.

52. Representatives of this view are Andrew John Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul’s Teaching* (Kampen: Kok, 1964), pp. 101–06; Rangmar Bring, “Paul and the Old Testament: A Study of the Ideas of Election, Faith and Law in Paul with Special Reference to Romans 9:30—10:30,” *StTh* 17 (1964), 43–68; George E. Howard, “Christ the End of the Law: The Meaning of Romans 10:4ff.,” *JBL* 88 (1969), 331–37; C. Thomas Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 95–116.

53. C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), II, 519; for a more nuanced view of the very real discrepancies between Paul’s polemic against the law in Galatians and his defense against misunderstandings in Romans, cf. Hübner, *Gesetz*, where a developmental perspective is offered. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, perceives internal discrepancies within both Galatians and Romans, rejecting any developmental scheme: “contradictions and tensions have to be accepted as constant features of Paul’s theology of the law,” p. 11 (italics in the original).

pioneering.”<sup>54</sup> In drawing theological conclusions from this argument, the preference for a Calvinist rather than a Lutheran perspective comes through clearly. Cranfield insists that Pauline authority cannot be adduced for “the view that in law and gospel two different modes of God’s action are manifested . . . . On the contrary, it is clear that we are true to Paul’s teaching, when we say that *God’s word in Scripture is one . . . .*”<sup>55</sup>

A more compelling presentation of this position is provided by Paul W. Meyer, who disentangles it to some degree from theological biases. Observing that the “crucial decisions are made elsewhere and that this part of Paul’s text is in fact and in practice understood within and from a wider whole,”<sup>56</sup> Meyer rests his case on an examination of the argumentative context. From Romans 9:30 through 10:4 the metaphor of pursuing a goal is developed, with Israel pursuing “righteousness which is based on the law” but failing to achieve it because of a “false assumption with which the pursuit was undertaken (9:31–32).<sup>57</sup> This point is reiterated in Romans 10:2–3 where zeal for the Torah is described as misguided, which is interpreted in the light of Romans 7 where the capacity of sin to pervert the law is described. The proper sense of Romans 10:4 in the context of this argument is “the intent and goal of the law, to lead to righteousness for everyone who believes, is (nothing different from) Christ.”<sup>58</sup> Meyer observes that this interpretation “shows how unshakable his attachment to Torah . . . really was,”<sup>59</sup> which means that Paul should not be construed as “an apostate Jew.”<sup>60</sup> In a similar vein, C. Thomas Rhyne alludes to the implication of this interpretation for the relation between the church and the synagogue:

Therefore, *in its witness to righteousness by faith, the law as the object of the synagogue’s religious pursuits is upheld in the preaching and acceptance of the gospel in the church.* Though Pauline Christianity may not be continuous with the Judaism in which Paul had earlier so excelled, it is certainly continuous with Judaism to the degree that it finds its *raison d’être* in the law which witnesses to (and also promises) righteousness by faith.<sup>61</sup>

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54. *Ibid.*, p. 853.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 862 (italics in the original).

56. “Romans 10:4 and the ‘End’ of the Law” in *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God’s Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H. Silberman*, ed. J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel (New York: KTAV, 1980), p. 61.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 63; Meyer identifies the rock that causes Israel to stumble in its race (Rom. 10:33) as the Torah rather than Christ, which causes an unexplained discrepancy with the latter part of this verse, “and he who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

58. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

61. Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law*, pp. 119–20 (italics in the original).

A third approach to the issue of interpreting *telos* in Romans 10:4, the least defensible from the point of view of exegetical method, is to compromise between the two other positions. Commentators such as C. K. Barrett, Otto Kuss, Franz Leenhardt, and F. F. Bruce argue that Paul intended *telos* to convey both the end and the goal of the law.<sup>62</sup> The most succinct statement of this argument is:

The word 'end' (*telos*) has a double sense; it may mean 'goal' or 'termination.' On the one hand, Christ is the goal at which the law aimed in that He is the embodiment of perfect righteousness. . . . On the other hand (and this is the primary force of Paul's words), Christ is the termination of the law in the sense that with Him the old order . . . has been done away . . . ."<sup>63</sup>

Typical of this effort to have one's cake and eat it too is John W. Drane, who argues that Paul was "deliberately using the ambiguity of the word to cover up a subtle change in the direction of his thought on the matter . . . . Paul seems to be implying that, though the function of the law has been radically altered by the coming of Christ, it has not been altogether abolished."<sup>64</sup> This approach confuses the interpretive alternatives developed in modern debate with the original intentions of an ancient writer in a context lacking any hint of this particular ambiguity. As an unfortunate and unmethodical effort to gain the theological advantages of both the Lutheran and the Calvinist exegesis, it is the least satisfactory approach to this passage.

There is an urgent need for new semantic and linguistic data to resolve the impasse over the interpretation of *telos* in Romans 10:4, eliminating the necessity to decide the issue on the basis of theological preferences. An important new dissertation by Robert Badenas, forthcoming in published form from Great Britain, fills this need.<sup>65</sup> The original meaning of *telos* was "highest point, turning point," and its primary associations were with the ideas of intention and completion, but never with temporal fulfillment or cessation. The semantic range of the term thus encompassed (a) apex, (b) aim, and (c) completion. Badenas provides an authoritative survey of philosophical usage, showing that in the New Testament period, *telos* is a

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62. C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper, 1957), pp. 197–98; Otto Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1978), III, 752–53; Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. H. Knight (London: Lutterworth, 1961), p. 266; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1963), p. 203.

63. Bruce, *Epistle*, p. 203.

64. John W. Drane, *Paul: Libertine or Legalist?* (London: S.P.C.K., 1975), p. 133.

65. Robert Badenas, "The Meaning of *Telos* in Romans 10:4," Diss. Andrews University 1983.

technical term for final cause, goal, or purpose, a usage reflected in the verbal form *teleō* in Romans 2:27, “fulfill the law.” After a thorough discussion of the exegetical options, in which he rejects the polysemous, compromise option on methodical grounds, he shows that the argumentative context as well as the linguistic possibilities favor the option of Christ as the goal of the law. Two other recent dissertations arrive at the same conclusion.<sup>66</sup>

One consequence of this resolution is that Romans provides a much less polemical basis than otherwise thought for dialogue between Christians and Jews. Paul’s argument in 9:30–10:4 is that the ultimate purpose of the law was that all persons, Jews and Gentiles alike, might find righteousness. If Christ is the “goal of the law,” the path of faith can be pursued without repudiating the Torah. The crucial point is the avoidance of zealotism, the assumption that conformity to a particular standard guarantees superiority over those who do not conform. Such zealotism is a perversion possible to Jews as well as Christians.

#### CONCLUSION

When one takes the historical setting and argument of Romans into account, it is plausible to suggest that “All Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26) implied not simply the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah but concurrently, as the preceding argument in 10:1–13 indicated, a turn away from zealotism and, as the succeeding argument in 14:1–15:13 shows, a turn toward tolerant coexistence between Jews and Gentiles. In the context of Romans, at least, being “saved” did not entail cultural or theological extinction. It involved preserving distinctive features of racial, cultural, and theological self-identity within the context of mutual acceptance.<sup>67</sup>

In none of these particulars was Paul’s hope precisely fulfilled within his lifetime or the generations that followed. A militant minority within the Jewish community refused the message of this anti-zealot thinker and entered into a maelstrom of violence against the gentile world. Paul himself was a victim of this violent campaign, his death resulting from the legal complications related to the riots in Jerusalem instigated by zealot opponents of his apostleship to the Gentiles. Succeeding decades witnessed the zealot uprisings in A.D. 66–73 (the Jewish-Roman War in Palestine), 115–117 (the Jewish revolt in Cyprus) and 132–135 (the Bar Kochba revolt in Palestine), revealing the suicidally destructive capacity of

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66. Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law*, pp. 104–16; John E. Toews, “The Law and Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Study of Romans 9:30–10:13,” Diss. Garrett-Northwestern 1978.

67. Cf. Jewett, *Christian Tolerance*, pp. 43–67.

the zealotism that Paul hoped would soon be ended.

After the first of these disastrous expressions of zealous crusading, Judaism turned away from this legacy under the leadership of the Jamnian rabbis, creating a non-nationalistic form of the Jewish faith. The long term consequence was that Israel was in fact “saved.” A remnant faithful to the Torah was preserved from zealotism, chauvinism, militarism, and violent apocalypticism. This salvation, to use Paul’s term in Romans 11:26, did not occur exactly as Paul had envisioned it. Yet some features of his program in Romans were embodied in the creation of Jewish institutions of education, legislation, and conflict resolution that were uniquely suited to the preservation of Jewish culture in a diaspora setting. By abandoning zealous violence as a means of bringing the messianic age, Rabbinic Judaism was able to preserve the vision of international peace as part of a messianic future. A large measure of tolerant pluralism was created in the establishment of the canon of Hebrew Scriptures and the subsequent development of the Mishnah and Talmud where the contradictory voices of the sages were respectfully catalogued. An ethic of individual responsibility for the transformation of the secular world was crafted out of the same biblical resources that Paul used in Romans 12–15, with striking similarities at almost every point. In view of the Pauline faith in the promises of God, it seems appropriate to value the remarkable development of Pharisaic Judaism and its creative, highly ethical contribution to world culture as evidence of the faithfulness and grace of God.

Insofar as Christian missionizing of Jews refuses to accept the divinely guided measures that were taken in the wake of the zealous wars, and insofar as such missionizing aims at destroying Jewish culture, self-identity, and loyalty to the Torah, it runs counter to the mysterious and inscrutable will of God to which Paul gave his final allegiance in Romans 11:33–36. To expect the fulfillment of Paul’s hope that “all Israel will be saved” in the sense of accepting gentile doctrine and self-identity is a misunderstanding of Paul’s original vision of a pluralistic world community. The entire question of “saving” the Jews needs to be reconceived in light of what God has accomplished since Paul wrote Romans, inspiring and sustaining humane institutions of loyalty to divine law. Yet this does not mean that the critical resources of Pauline theology are irrelevant either for Jews or for Christian missionaries.

With the restoration of the national state in 1948, elements of zealous nationalism that had been opposed by the rabbis for generations began to predominate in Israeli self-identity. A similar virus of zealous nationalism has long infected Christian America, and appears to be gaining in inten-

sity.<sup>68</sup> Other nations in the Western world have manifested these traits, as we were painfully reminded in connection with the Bitburg Cemetery controversy and in the South African tortures. The Pauline hope of the unification of the world (Rom. 15:7–13) through the gospel of transforming love that produces respect between groups as diverse as the Jews and the Gentiles urgently needs to be placed on the agenda. Purged of all triumphalism, and sobered by the recognition of the limitations of our own understanding, there is still a possibility to enter into the process of respectful dialogue, which is the direction the proper interpretation of Romans should impel us.

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68. Cf. Robert Jewett, *The Captain America Complex: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Santa Fe: Bear and Company, 1984).