

# NEW COVENANT JUSTIFICATION BY CARDIAC RIGHTEOUSNESS: AN AUGUSTINIAN PERSPECTIVE ON PAULINE JUSTIFICATION<sup>1</sup>

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## *Introduction*

### *Pauline Justification after Sanders*

Since the Reformation, few theological topics have been more polarizing than the debate concerning Paul's teaching on justification.<sup>2</sup> While the work of E. P. Sanders has served to initiate a shift in Pauline studies toward affirming participation in Christ as the center of Pauline soteriology,<sup>3</sup> one area that remains a major point of contention across the various "perspectives" on Paul is the nature of justification.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented in the Pauline Theology Section of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Boston. I would like to thank Michael Waldstein, Michael Barber, Nathan Eubank, James Prothro, and Nicolas McAfee for reading various drafts and offering invaluable input: it is a stronger work as a result.

<sup>2</sup> See Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); David E. Aune, ed., *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006); Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Trier, eds., *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004); Bruce L. McCormack, ed., *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006); James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, eds., *Justification: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> See Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, eds., "In Christ" in Paul, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); essays by Richard B. Hays, Stanley K. Stowers, and John Barclay in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. Fabian E. Udoh et al., Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 16 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> For a recent overview of the state of the question, see James B. Prothro, *Both Judge and Justifier: Biblical Legal Language and the Act of Justifying in Paul*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming), 1–26. For an account from within the so-called "old perspective," see Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004). For an account from within the "new perspective," see James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). See also N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), esp. 2:774–1032. For attempts to mediate between the old and new perspectives,

For the heirs of Sanders who belong to what has been called the “new perspective on Paul,” there is a basic consensus that justification centers on being included in the covenant community and that the final judgment is by works.<sup>5</sup> Such an account has served to challenge the “old perspective” in a rather pointed way. For many scholars aligned with the old perspective, justification occurs through the exclusively extrinsic imputation of Christ’s righteousness to be received by faith alone.<sup>6</sup> While “moral” righteousness and good works follow for the justified, justification is not about the moral transformation of the believer but about right standing before God through the work of Christ. Beyond the old and new perspectives, scholars aligned with the “apocalyptic” perspective argue that Pauline justification entails liberation from the powers of Sin and Death. As a result of such an eschatological liberation, sinners are made righteous through the saving power of God in the Gospel.<sup>7</sup> Against the backdrop of these seemingly irreconcilable views, the recent work of Michael Gorman and John Barclay has moved the conversation forward in important ways that deserve mention.

### *Gorman and Barclay*

As for the contribution of Gorman, his emphasis on Pauline soteriology as cruciform has undergirded much of his work to date.<sup>8</sup> In particular, Gorman

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see Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007); Stephen J. Chester, *Reading Paul with the Reformers: Reconciling Old and New Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> See James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 334–89; *The New Perspective on Paul*, 71–89; N. T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul,” in *Justification in Perspective*, 243–64; *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2:925–1037; *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> For a more standard expression of the old perspective account of imputation, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 189–217; D. A. Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation: On Fields of Discourse and Semantic Fields,” in *Husbands and Trier, Justification*, 46–78. For two more recent and sophisticated accounts that still lead to an extrinsic imputation of Christ’s righteousness in justification, see Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), esp. 388–405; Jonathan A. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation*, Supplements to the New Testament 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> For broadly “apocalyptic” perspectives, see Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011); Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, Anchor Yale Bible 33A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> See Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); “Paul’s Corporate, Cruciform, Missional Theosis in 2 Corinthians,” in Thate, Vanhoozer, and Campbell, *“In Christ” in Paul*, 181–208; *The Death*

argues that Pauline justification is juridical, participatory, and transformative, what Gorman calls justification by co-crucifixion.<sup>9</sup> Gorman is clear that, for Paul, there is no justification without justice, meaning that justification is about character transformation.<sup>10</sup> While Gorman argues that the entire process is “initiated and empowered by God,” how to best integrate initial justification by grace and final justification by works is precisely where the contribution of Barclay is particularly significant.

Simon Gathercole’s work on Pauline soteriology highlights the tension in Paul between initial justification by grace and final vindication on the basis of works and rightly says: “A simple waving of the ‘now/not yet’ wand over texts is not quite satisfactory.”<sup>11</sup> The recent work of Barclay has gone a long way to solving this problem by situating Pauline grace within the wider framework of gift-giving in antiquity.<sup>12</sup> Barclay demonstrates that while gift-giving could operate in various ways, the rather modern notion of a free gift would have been quite foreign in antiquity, for depending on both the nature of the gift and the identity of the giver, the recipient would be obligated to their benefactor. If this is the context for Pauline grace, what then is particularly unique about Paul’s account? According to Barclay, Pauline grace is unique in that it is both

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*of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant: A (Not So) New Model of Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014); *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> See Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 40–104; *Becoming the Gospel*, 212–25.

<sup>10</sup> See Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, esp. 212–60. For another account of Pauline justification centered on character transformation, see David A. deSilva, *Transformation: The Heart of Paul’s Gospel* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014), esp. 24–43.

<sup>11</sup> See Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 266.

<sup>12</sup> See John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015); “Grace and the Countercultural Reckoning of Worth: Community Construction in Galatians 5–6,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul’s Letter*, ed. Mark W. Elliot et. al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 306–317; “Under Grace: The Christ-Gift and the Construction of a Christian *Habitus*,” in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 63; “Believers and the ‘Last Judgment’ in Paul: Rethinking Grace and Recompense,” in *Eschatologie—Eschatology*, ed. H.-J. Eckstein, C. Landmesser and H. Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 195–208; “Manna and the Circulation of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 8:1–15,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. R. Wagner, C. K. Rowe, and A. K. Grieb (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 409–26; “Grace and the Transformation of Agency in Christ,” in Udoh et al., *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities*, 372–89; “‘By the Grace of God I Am What I Am’: Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul,” in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 140–57; *Obedying the Truth: A Study in Paul’s Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

countercultural and transcendent. As for the former, it is countercultural because the gift is given to the unworthy. As for the latter, it is transcendent because the gift itself empowers the recipient to meet the obligation required by the gift, namely, to do the works needed to be declared “just” at the final judgment and receive eternal life as recompense. On the whole, Barclay suggests that the gift of Pauline grace can be called the “Christ-gift,” a gift that brings and fosters the formation of a Christian *habitus*.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Barclay describes Paul’s understanding of grace as “empowerment”<sup>14</sup> and “energism.”<sup>15</sup>

Against the backdrop of the contributions of Gorman and Barclay, I would like to offer a reading of Pauline justification formed by a patristic reader of Paul, Augustine of Hippo. My goal is to highlight how an Augustinian perspective on justification can connect the insights of Gorman and Barclay in a manner that can offer another path forward for the post-Sanders world of Pauline scholarship. In order to accomplish this task, I will begin with a brief analysis of Augustine’s view of Pauline justification, particularly by focusing on his work *The Spirit and the Letter*. Next, I will assess whether Augustine’s account of Pauline justification aligns with the Pauline texts, particularly 2 Corinthians 3:1–11, before concluding with an analysis of what an Augustinian reading of justification offers the world of contemporary Pauline scholarship.

### *Pauline Justification in Augustine’s The Spirit and the Letter*

Written in the last part of 412, *The Spirit and the Letter* is Augustine’s second extended response to the Pelagian controversy. The proximate reason for the work was that Augustine’s friend Marcellinus found an argument from a previous work untenable, namely, that one could be sinless yet no one other than Christ has ever been so. Augustine responds by offering a number of examples of what is genuinely possible for God, such as protecting Christ from death, yet nonetheless did not occur. Yet Augustine is well aware of an important limitation in his response: the possibilities he offered were dependent on divine activity, while true righteousness is dependent on human activity.

In reply, Augustine offers a critically important principle for his reading of Pauline justification when he states: “Though it pertains to a human being to do this (work), it is also the gift of God and hence, you ought not to doubt that it is a work of God. It is God, after all, who produces in you, says the Apostle, both the willing and the action in accord with good will (Phil

<sup>13</sup> See Barclay, “Under Grace,” 59–76. For a recent work that emphasizes the importance of virtue for unpacking Pauline soteriology, see Colin D. Miller, *The Practice of the Body of Christ: Human Agency in Pauline Theology after MacIntyre*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 200 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Barclay, “Grace and the Transformation of Agency,” 384.

<sup>15</sup> Barclay, “Grace and the Transformation of Agency,” 388n38.

2:13).<sup>16</sup> Here Augustine follows directly in Paul's footsteps by affirming that justification is entirely the work of grace. Yet the inner logic of Augustine's account can often be difficult for contemporary readers to grasp. As Lewis Ayres rightly notes:

The hardest thing for the modern reader to grasp in the account . . . is how Augustine thinks that grace and human freedom intertwine. . . . Here we find what I want to highlight as one of the fundamental principles of Augustine's theology of grace: our willing, our delight in appropriate objects of desire, is given us in grace. Grace should be understood as the gift of what is most deeply our own, our own true will. . . . All that we have we should now receive as divine gift, even what is most our own. Augustine is able to use this principle as a hermeneutical key to the whole of the Pauline corpus.<sup>17</sup>

It would be hard to overstate the significance of Ayres's reading of Augustinian grace for contemporary Pauline scholarship, for as we noted in the introduction, one of the most important questions in the post-Sanders world of Pauline studies is how to best account for initial justification by grace and final justification by works. Ayres's account bears a certain resemblance to the account of Barclay noted in the introduction, for Barclay argues that Pauline grace empowers believers to be truly obedient so that divine and human agency work together in a noncompetitive manner, allowing the final judgment of believers to be according to works. For both men, the way this life of grace operates is by the gift of faith, yet it is here that Augustine's reception of Paul is particularly valuable in comparison to Barclay.

While at points Barclay speaks about faith in ways that follow directly from his account of grace as empowerment, at other points he seems inconsistent. For example, Barclay states:

Faith is not an alternative achievement nor a refined human spirituality, but a declaration of bankruptcy, a radical and shattering recognition that the only capital in God's econ-

<sup>16</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 2.2 (CSEL 60:156): ". . . quamuis ad hominem, id agere pertineat, hoc quoque munus esse diuinum atque ideo non dubitare opus esse diuinum: deus est enim qui operatur in nobis, ait apostolus, et uelle et operari pro bona uoluntate"; unless otherwise noted, English translation is taken from *The Spirit and the Letter*, trans. Roland Teske, S.J., in *Answer to the Pelagians I*, Works of Saint Augustine 1 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Lewis Ayres, "Augustine," in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 350–351.

omy is the gift of Christ crucified and risen. Faith directed to, and centered on, Christ recognizes, under the impact of the good news, that there is *no element of value located in the human being*.<sup>18</sup>

Augustine certainly would agree with Barclay to a degree: nothing good lies in believers that is not a gift and, in particular, that believers are entirely dependent upon God's gift of Christ crucified. However, Augustine's principle that grace is a *gift that is most our own* allows him not to downplay the reality of graced faith in the believer, viewing faith rather as a virtue that grants the believer a divinely empowered capacity for obedience. It would be a mistake to read Augustine as suggesting that God gives the power and then leaves believers to act autonomously. Rather, all acts are both fully a gift and fully our own, produced by a comprehensive empowerment. We can see this dynamic at work when Augustine turns to address the Pelagian claim that one is able, through the effort of the will and the guidance of the law alone, to achieve righteousness.<sup>19</sup> In response, Augustine draws on Romans 5:5 and claims that the Holy Spirit must be poured into one's heart in order to achieve righteousness.<sup>20</sup> In order to validate this claim, Augustine draws on 2 Corinthians 3, particularly 3:6—"the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Rather than taking 2 Corinthians 3:6 as a hermeneutical principle, in *The Spirit and the Letter* Augustine takes it as principally a soteriological one, and, as a result, makes a particularly Pauline argument that true righteousness is possible only as a divine gift through the work of the Spirit. In section 5.7 Augustine states that "human righteousness itself must be attributed to the action of God, though it is not attained without the human will."<sup>21</sup> In drawing on Romans to highlight the rationale as to why the law is unable to produce righteousness, Augustine notes:

But notice, people, what follows: "But now the righteousness of God has been revealed apart from the law, though the law and prophets have borne witness to it" (Rom 3:21). Is that not loud enough for deaf ears? He says, "the righteousness of God has been revealed." This is the righteousness to which they [Pelagians] refuse to be subject. He said, "The righteousness of God has been revealed." He did not say: The righteousness of human beings or of our own will. He

<sup>18</sup> Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 383–84 (my emphasis).

<sup>19</sup> See Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 2.4 (CSEL 60:156–7).

<sup>20</sup> See Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 2.5 (CSEL 60:157).

<sup>21</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 5.7 (CSEL 60:159): "ipsam humanam iustitiam operationi dei tribuendam esse claruerit, quamvis non fiat sine hominis uoluntate."

said: "The righteousness of God," not that by which God is righteous, but that with which he clothes a human being when he justifies a sinner. . . . They were not, then, justified by the law; they were not justified by their own will, but gratuitously justified by his grace. It is not that this comes about without our will; rather, the law shows that our will is weak so that grace may heal our will and so that a healthy will may fulfill the law, without being subject to the law or in need of the law.<sup>22</sup>

For our overarching purpose of seeking to illuminate how Augustine's account of justification can help the post-Sanders world of Pauline scholarship, it is important to ascertain how is it possible that, being justified by grace, the believer is able to "fulfill the law."

In order to answer this question, it is helpful to return briefly to Augustine's previous statement that righteousness is both a gift *and* a human activity. What makes such a noncompetitive account of divine and human agency possible for Augustine? First and foremost, it centers on the role of the Spirit. Augustine states that, through the work of the Spirit, the will of the believer is "helped and raised up."<sup>23</sup> In fact, Augustine follows Paul's language in Romans 3:27–31 and suggests that through the law of faith believers are able to accomplish what the law commands.<sup>24</sup> At another point, Augustine connects these various pieces together and suggests that, "The law is not done away with, but strengthened by faith, because faith obtains the grace by which we fulfill the law. In the same way, free choice is not done away with by grace, but strengthened, because grace heals the will by which we freely love righteousness."<sup>25</sup> After citing 2 Corinthians 3:3, in section 17.30 Augustine underscores the difference between the Mosaic law and the new

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 9.15 (CSEL 60:167–8): ". . . sed, o homo, adtende quid sequitur. Nunc autem, inquit, sine lege iustitia dei manifestata est, testificata per legem et prophetas parumne insonat surdis? Iustitia, inquit, dei manifestata est hanc ignorant qui suam uolunt constitutuere, huic nolunt esse subiecti. Iustitia, inquit, dei manifestata est—non dixit: 'iustitia hominis uel iustitiae propriae uoluntatis'—iustitia dei, non qua deus iustus est, sed qua induit hominem, cum iustificat impium . . . non itaque iustificati per legem, non iustificati per propriam uoluntatam, sed iustificati gratis per gratiam ipsius; non quod sine uoluntate nostra fiat, sed uoluntas nostra ostenditur infirmis per legem, ut sanet gratia uoluntatem et sana uoluntas impleat legem, non constituta sub lege nec indigens lege."

<sup>23</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 12.20 (CSEL 60:173): ". . . adiuuetur et erigatur."

<sup>24</sup> See Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 13.22 (CSEL 60:175–6).

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 30.52 (CSEL 60:208): ". . . sicut lex non euacuatur, sed statuitur per fidem, quia fides inpetrat gratiam, qua lex impleatur, ita liberum arbitrium non euacuatur per gratiam, sed statuitur, quia gratia sanet uoluntatem, qua iustitia libere diligitur."

covenant by suggesting that while the Mosaic law is written outside of human beings, the life of the new covenant “is written in human beings so that it justifies from within.”<sup>26</sup> Augustine further clarifies what this means, namely, that God transforms the hearts of believers by grace and so justifies them, for “the New Testament he calls the ministry of the Spirit and the ministry of righteousness, because through the gift of the Spirit we do the works of righteousness.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, Augustine continues to argue that Paul’s account of salvation directly aligns with Jeremiah and his promise that God would write the law on the heart in the age of the new covenant.<sup>28</sup> It is here that Augustine’s account is able to build on the insights of both Barclay and Gorman by further specifying how justification actualizes character renovation in the believer. I would suggest that Augustine’s account of justification can be summarized as follows: the saving righteousness of God is a “cardiac righteousness” that is comprehensively empowered by grace and operative by the virtue of faith through the Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Augustine’s account sharpens Gorman’s by highlighting that justification brings the promised cardiac righteousness of the new covenant while also sharpening Barclay’s contribution by arguing that just actions are both entirely a gift and completely our own, produced by a comprehensive empowerment. This leaves us with the following question: does Augustine’s reading do justice to Paul’s account of justification?

### *Pauline Justification in Light of Augustine*

#### *2 Corinthians 3:1–11: The “Heart” of New Covenant Righteousness*

In 2 Corinthians 3:1–11, Paul offers a robust defense of his apostolic ministry by telling the Corinthians:

Are we beginning to recommend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? <sup>2</sup> You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men, <sup>3</sup> and you are shown to be a letter of Christ, administered by us, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets, but on tablets of fleshly hearts. <sup>4</sup> We have such confidence through Christ in relation to God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we credit ourselves

<sup>26</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 17.30 (CSEL 60:183): “. . . ut cum intrinsecus iustificet.”

<sup>27</sup> Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 18.31 (CSEL 60:184): “. . . hanc autem, id est noui testamenti, ministrationem spiritus et ministrationem iustitiae dicit, quia per donum spiritus operamur iustitiam.”

<sup>28</sup> See Augustine, *De spiritu et littera*, esp. 19.33–21.40 (CSEL 60:186–94).

<sup>29</sup> See also Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 25.42 (CSEL 60:195–6); 26.45 (CSEL 60:199–200); 28.49 (CSEL 60:204–5); 29.51 (CSEL 60:207–8).

sufficient with anything as coming from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup> who made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive. <sup>7</sup> If the ministry of death, carved in letters on stones came in glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look into Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a [glory] now set aside, <sup>8</sup> will not the ministry of the Spirit have more glory? <sup>9</sup> For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. <sup>10</sup> Indeed, that which has been glorified has not been glorified in this case because of the surpassing glory. <sup>11</sup> For if that which passes away (came) through glory, much more (does) that which remains (consist) in glory.<sup>30</sup>

In 2 Corinthians 3:2, there is a textual question as to whether the letter of recommendation is written on Paul's heart or on the Corinthians' hearts. However, in 3:3, it is clear that Paul's letter of recommendation from God is written on "fleshly" hearts. This is more than simply a creative metaphor, for it speaks precisely to Paul's validation as a minister of God. Taken by itself, Paul's statement that his recommendation letter is written on fleshly hearts does not necessitate an allusion to either Ezekiel 36:26, the promise that God will remove Israel's corporate "heart of stone" and replace it with a "heart of flesh," or to Jeremiah 31:31–34 (LXX, 38:31–34), the promise of a new covenant wherein the law would be written on the heart. However, 2 Corinthians 3:6 makes both allusions explicit when Paul states that he is a minister of "a new covenant, not of letter but of Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive." In other words, the Corinthians are a letter from Christ, yet written in a certain way that validates Paul's apostolic ministry, namely, the letter is written on the Corinthians' fleshly hearts by the Spirit of God.

It is particularly interesting that Paul connects his new covenant ministry with the Spirit, for the Spirit is not present in Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant. In contrast, the role of the Spirit is central in Ezekiel, particularly in 36:26–37:10. In Ezekiel 36:26–38, God promises to give Israel his Spirit upon return from exile, removing their stony hearts and giving them fleshly hearts. The result is that God himself will cause Israel to be obedient and they will be cleansed from their iniquities. In 37:1–11, Ezekiel prophesies a "spiritual resurrection" for Israel, for he proclaims that, when the valley of dry bones that is Israel returns from exile, they will once again live. While 37:26 mentions the coming of a "covenant of peace" and an "everlasting covenant," new covenant

<sup>30</sup> Translation mine.

language is not explicitly present. This leads to the question of why Paul connected Jeremiah's new covenant and Ezekiel's eschatological Spirit.

### *The Promise of Heart Restoration*

A number of Second Temple texts draw on the aforementioned sections of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in looking forward to an age when God will empower Israel to be obedient through his Spirit.<sup>31</sup> In fact, sources as diverse as the Dead Sea Scrolls and Baruch connect together Deuteronomy 29–30, Jeremiah 31–32, and Ezekiel 36–37 in anticipation of an eschatological deliverance by God. As for the Dead Sea Literature in particular, Kyle Wells notes, “Whether of sectarian origin or not, the Dead Sea Literature demonstrates how Deuteronomy 29–30 could be read alongside Jeremiah’s new covenant (31–32) and Ezekiel’s promised spirit (36–37), and had a profound influence on the identity of ancient Jews who utilized these texts.”<sup>32</sup> What allows for these passages to be legitimately connected is the word “heart,” for both Jeremiah and Ezekiel view the promised eschatological deliverance of God to entail that Israel’s corporate heart problem would be solved. Therefore, Paul is telling the Corinthians that his new covenant ministry is one that serves to actualize the promised heart restoration of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. However, in order to be able to rightly account for what this deliverance constitutes and what it might mean for Paul’s account of justification, it is worth briefly examining the nature of “the heart.”

The heart (καρδία) is the inner core of the embodied person, the primary place of either obedience or rebellion.<sup>33</sup> As a result, it stands as one of the central metaphors in Israel’s scriptures. In fact, true obedience to the law must come from the heart, and perhaps no part of Israel’s scriptures makes that as clear as Deuteronomy. While God chose Israel, they are not free to confess that it is due to their own righteousness (δικαιοσύνη; Deut 9:4). Instead, Israel is to circumcise their collective heart in order to be obedient to the law (Deut 10:16). However, within Deuteronomy itself it is clear that this will not happen, and instead, Israel will go into exile. Not only is the ultimate cause of the exile linked to the heart (Deut 29:19; cf. 10:16); the ultimate solution to the exile is also connected to the heart. In Deuteronomy 30:1–6, the Lord

<sup>31</sup> For more in this regard, see Kyle B. Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*, Supplements to the New Testament 157 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 65–206; Rodrigo J. Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 41–77.

<sup>32</sup> See Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 102–3. On 134–47, Wells also examines the place of Deut 29–30, Jer 31–32, and Ezek 36–37 in Baruch.

<sup>33</sup> See Johannes Behm, “καρδία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:608–14; see also Wells, *Grace and Agency*, esp. 232.

promises to return Israel from exile and, in the process, circumcise the hearts of his people so that they will love him with all of their hearts and so live (Deut 30:6). This Deuteronomic tradition helped to shape the eschatological hope mentioned above in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that God would solve Israel's corporate heart problem upon return from exile.<sup>34</sup> In fact, Jeremiah records the promise that God will establish a new covenant wherein Israel will no longer be subject to the condemnation that follows from ἀδικία (unrighteousness), for the law will be written on their corporate heart (Jer 31:33–34 [LXX: 38:33–34]). It should come as no surprise that the heart plays an important role in Paul's corpus. It is the location where the Spirit resides in believers (Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5), as well as an object of assessment at the final judgment (Rom 2:5; 1 Cor 4:4; see also 1 Thess 2:4; 3:13). However, for our purposes there is a question that still must be answered: is the promised heart restoration of the new covenant connected by Paul to justification?

In order to determine whether Paul links justification to heart restoration, it is important to look more closely at 2 Corinthians 3:7–11, where Paul states:

7 If the ministry of death, carved in letters on stones came in glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look into Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a [glory] now set aside, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit have more glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. 10 Indeed, that which has been glorified has not been glorified in this case because of the surpassing glory. 11 For if that which passes away (came) through glory, much more does that which remains (consist) in glory.<sup>35</sup>

Here Paul offers a series of antitheses that compare the "old covenant" (Torah) to the new covenant. Ralph Martin offers the following chart to help illustrate Paul's argument:

|                                                 |                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| θάνατος, "death" (v 7)                          | πνεῦμα, "Spirit" (v 8)                             |
| κατάκρισις, "condemnation" (v 9)                | δικαιοσύνη, "righteousness" (v 9)                  |
| τὸ καταργούμενον, "what is disappearing" (v 11) | τὸ μένον, "what is remaining" (v 11) <sup>36</sup> |

<sup>34</sup> See Wells, *Grace and Agency*, 25–72.

<sup>35</sup> Translation mine.

<sup>36</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary 40 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 201.

This chart helps to make clear that while the disappearing old covenant (Torah) brought death and condemnation, the remaining new covenant comes through the Spirit and brings righteousness. For our purposes, it is the middle antithesis found in 2 Corinthians 3:9 that is particularly important, for Paul tells the Corinthians that “if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.” In order to answer the previous question of whether Paul connects justification to heart renovation, two things must follow from 3:9. First, when Paul speaks of “righteousness,” he is referring to justification. And second, if this righteousness does refer to justification, it is connected to heart restoration.

### *The Nature of Righteousness in 2 Corinthians 3:9*

In his work *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, J. A. Ziesler suggests that Paul uses δικαιοσύνη in a double-sided manner, namely, juridical (theological) and moral. Ziesler argues that while the juridical and the moral are distinct, “they are not really alternatives, for the chronological priority does not arise. . . . What matters is that God’s saving righteousness does two things for men and does them inseparably: it restores their relationship with God and it makes them new (ethical, righteous) beings.”<sup>37</sup> The basic premise behind this suggestion has been adopted by many Pauline scholars, particularly those who belong to the old perspective on Paul. For many adherents to the old perspective, a two-pronged account of Pauline δικαιοσύνη is underwritten not only by Paul’s distinct ways of employing the noun δικαιοσύνη but also by the manner in which he employs the verb δικαίω. While I will address the question of how to best account for δικαίω below, here it is important to tackle how Paul employs the noun δικαιοσύνη in 2 Corinthians 3:9. For the sake of argument, let us assume that Paul employs δικαιοσύνη in *either* a juridical/theological or a moral manner. In what sense is Paul employing δικαιοσύνη in 2 Corinthians 3:9?

In light of Paul’s use of the term “condemnation” (κατάκρισις) for the first side of the antithesis in 3:9a, there seems to be a clear juridical bent to

<sup>37</sup> J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Inquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 189. While it is correct to suggest that Paul’s use of righteousness language is both juridical and ethical and that they are inseparable, it is incorrect to suggest that God is doing “two things.” Rather it is one thing with at least two dimensions. This is not merely a semantic distinction, for if the two sides of Pauline righteousness are essentially different, then there is a justifying righteousness that is not moral. In fact, Ziesler appears to confirm a bifurcated account of righteousness in the very same discussion on 189 when he notes: “Justification is by grace through faith, not even by the believer’s works.” The problem with this view is that Paul states that final justification is by works, thereby making the climax of justification both juridical and moral without any hint of difference between the two. Instead, it is my contention that Pauline justification is by the cardiac righteousness of graced faith, wherein the juridical and moral are two dimensions of the same reality.

Paul's use of δικαιοσύνη in 3:9b. In general, κατάκρισις means "a judicial verdict involving a penalty, condemnation,"<sup>38</sup> which is how Paul employs the term later in the same letter (cf. 2 Cor 7:3). Before moving to the second side of the antithesis, it is important to ask on what basis this juridical verdict is made in 3:9a. The answer is not explicitly given in the passage itself, although the answer is implied in 2 Corinthians 3:2–3. The ministry of condemnation comes on tablets of stone, and this is a problem because of Israel's heart problem, referred to by Ezekiel as hearts of "stone" (Ezek 36:26).<sup>39</sup> As a result, the Torah is a ministry of condemnation because it is unable to effect heart renovation. As Richard Hays notes:

The problem with this old covenant is precisely that it is (only) written, lacking the power to effect the obedience it commands. Since it has no power to transform the readers, it can only stand as a witness to their condemnation. That is why Paul remarks aphoristically, "The script kills, but the Spirit gives life" (cf. Rom 7:6–8:4). As Paul's earlier allusion to Ezekiel 36 and 37 indicates, the life-giving power of the Spirit is shown forth precisely in the creation of the enfleshed eschatological community. That is the sense in which the Corinthians are a letter from Christ: they are a breathing instantiation of the word of God. Paul is a minister of the new covenant of the Spirit because he proclaims the message that brings this eschatological community into being.<sup>40</sup>

To build directly on Hays's suggestion, the letter from Christ is written by the Spirit on the tablets of "fleshly" hearts, the same language used by Ezekiel to describe how God overcomes Israel's heart problem (Ezek 36:26). As a result, it appears to follow that the ministry of righteousness is the work of the Spirit within the new covenant community producing the promised heart renovation of Deuteronomy 30:1–6, Jeremiah 31:31–34, and Ezekiel 36–37. If so, it also seems right to conclude that Paul's ministry of righteousness actualizes righteousness within the hearts of believers in a way that could be termed the "cardiac righteousness" of the new covenant. This is not to negate a juridical element to Paul's use of both condemnation (κατάκρισις) and righteousness

<sup>38</sup> "κατάκρισις," in Walter Bauer, Frederick Danker, William Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd Edition [BDAG] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 519.

<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Isa 46:12 (LXX) directly connects Israel's heart problem to being "far from righteousness."

<sup>40</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 131.

(δικαιοσύνη). Rather, it is to highlight that Paul's *a fortiori* argument requires a genuine moral realism in order to overcome the ministry of condemnation (at the final judgment), for as we just noted, the heart will be judged at the final judgment (Rom 2:5).

The apparent moral realism of Paul's use of δικαιοσύνη in 2 Corinthians 3:9 is remarkably consistent with the moral nature of δικαιοσύνη language in antiquity, as can be seen both throughout the Septuagint and in various Hellenistic sources. For instance, it was commonplace to regard δικαιοσύνη as a moral quality or virtue, as can be seen in Aristotle's definition of what "everybody means by justice" when he states, "Now we observe that everybody means by justice (δικαιοσύνη) that moral disposition which renders men to do just things, and which causes them to act justly and to wish that which is just."<sup>41</sup> While one may be tempted to dismiss this account of δικαιοσύνη as merely "Hellenistic," it bears a certain resemblance to a common way of accounting for δικαιοσύνη in the Septuagint.<sup>42</sup> To offer a few examples, in Genesis 18:19 the Lord states that Abraham will teach his sons to keep his ways, that is, "by doing righteousness" (δικαιοσύνην), and two chapters later Abimelech pleads his moral rectitude toward Sarah by saying he acted with both a "pure heart" and "righteousness of hands" (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ χειρῶν; LXX: Gen 20:5). In fact, Deuteronomy 9:5 states that it was not due to Israel's righteousness or holiness of heart that they came to inherit the land of Canaan; it was due to God's faithfulness to Abraham. Moreover, in 1 Samuel (LXX: 1 Kingdoms) 26:23 David tells Saul that God will return to each "his righteous deeds and his faith" (τὰς δικαιοσύνας αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν αὐτοῦ), while in 1 Maccabees 14:35, the people see the faith of Simon (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Σίμωνος) and make him high priest due to the righteousness and faith (τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν πίστιν) he preserved in the nation. Many more examples could be marshaled, but suffice it to say, δικαιοσύνη very often carries with it moral weight in the Septuagint and could rightly be called a virtue in its own right.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, when Paul speaks about the ministry of righteousness, I

<sup>41</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics* 5.1.3. For more on δικαιοσύνη in antiquity, see Gottlob Schrenk, "δικη, δίκαιος, κτλ.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), esp. 2:192–96.

<sup>42</sup> This is very clearly seen in 4 Maccabees, where δικαιοσύνη is the quality whereby one is able to act justly and not be dominated by the passions; see 1:4, 6, 18; 2:6; 5:24.

<sup>43</sup> For texts that employ δικαιοσύνη to signify moral character or activity, see Gen 21:23; 24:49; 30:33; Lev 19:15; Deut 9:4, 5; Josh 24:14; 1 Sam (1 Kgdms) 2:10; 2 Sam (2 Kgdms) 22:21, 25; 1 Kgs (3 Kgdms) 3:6; Tob 1:3; 2:14; 4:5; 12:8; 1 Macc 2:52; 4 Macc 1:4, 6, 18; 2:6; 5:24; Pss 7:9; 10:7 (MT 11:7); 14:2 (15:2); 16:1 (17:1); 17:21, 25 (18:20, 24); 22:3 (23:3); 37:21 (38:20); 57:2 (58:1); 105:3 (106:3); 118:121 (119:121); Prov 1:3; 2:9, 20; 10:2; 11:5, 6, 21, 30; 12:28; 13:2, 6; 14:34; 15:6, 9; 16:8, 11, 12, 17, 31; 17:23; 20:7; 21:21; Wis 1:1; 8:7; 15:3; Sir 16:22; 26:28; 44:10; Hos 10:12; Isa 1:21, 26; 5:7; 26:2, 9, 10; 32:16, 17;

would contend that this ministry brings about the justification of believers by what could be termed the “cardiac righteousness” of the new covenant. With this being said, there are three alternative ways of accounting for Paul’s ministry of righteousness that need to be addressed in order for our reading to stand.

### *Three Alternative Explanations for Paul’s Ministry of Righteousness*

First, it is possible to argue that the “righteousness” in view in 3:9 is God’s righteousness and not the righteousness granted in justification.<sup>44</sup> This objection is closely connected to viewing the genitive phrase “righteousness of God” as a subjective genitive rather than a genitive of origin or as an objective genitive. While granting the possibility that God’s own righteousness could be in view in Paul’s phrase “the ministry of righteousness,” the context makes it unlikely that Paul has *only* God’s righteousness in view and not *also* the righteousness given to believers in justification. While it is true that the Spirit at work is God’s Spirit, the work of the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:1–11 is inseparably linked to bringing “life” to the “heart” in order to overcome the ministry of condemnation. In fact, the new covenant itself is defined by solving Israel’s heart problem (Jer 31:31–34), and Paul has already linked his new covenant ministry to both the Spirit and the heart. Therefore, it would seem that the ministry of righteousness would necessarily include heart restoration through the Spirit.

Second, there is the suggestion of James Prothro that righteousness in 3:9b is an action noun like *κατάκρισις* in 3:9a, thereby making both sides of the comparison about either divine condemnation or vindication.<sup>45</sup> While the validity of this suggestion can be affirmed as far as it goes, in order for the condemnation side of the comparison to be overcome, the ministry of righteousness *must* include heart restoration, for as we have already noted, the heart is judged at the final judgment.

The third and final alternative view is the most comprehensive of all: justification occurs through the exclusively extrinsic imputation of Christ’s righteousness.<sup>46</sup> As for the biblical rationale for imputation, scholars normally

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33:5, 6, 15; 46:12; 48:1; 54:14; 56:1; 58:2, 8; 61:3, 8, 11; Jer 4:2; 22:3, 13, 15; Ezek 3:20; 14:14, 20; 18:5, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27; 33:12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19; Dan 9:18.

<sup>44</sup> This objection was raised by Douglas Campbell when this paper was originally presented in the Pauline Theology Section of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Boston.

<sup>45</sup> See Prothro, *Both Judge and Justifier*, 39.

<sup>46</sup> For recent articulations of the old perspective view of imputation, see Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 399–405; Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation,” 46–78; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 102–25.

base their case on a number of passages from the Pauline corpus, particularly 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:2–11, 1 Corinthians 1:30, and Romans 4:3–5, together with Paul’s use of the verb δικαιόω. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul states that Christ was made to be sin and, in him, believers become the righteousness of God. In short, the argument is that just as Christ was considered to be a sinner and was not, so believers are only considered to have righteousness. As for Philippians 3:2–11, it is argued that Paul states that he does not have a righteousness of his own, but that which comes through Jesus Christ. The source of this exclusively extrinsic righteousness can be found in 1 Corinthians 1:30, where Paul states that Christ is “our righteousness.” Proponents of the old perspective account of imputation argue that an exclusively alien righteousness is necessary due to the sinfulness of man, for no one can be justified by the works of the law (Rom 3:20), but instead only by a faith like Abraham’s in Romans 4:3–5.

In reply to the case for an exclusively extrinsic imputation of Christ’s righteousness, it is important to state up front that in 1 Corinthians 1:30, Philippians 3:2–11, and 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul is indeed arguing that believers’ righteousness is extrinsic and alien in *origin*, for it comes through Christ, who is “our righteousness.” However, nowhere does Paul argue for an *exclusively* extrinsic imputation of Christ righteousness, but only that it is extrinsic in origin. In 1 Corinthians 1:30, Paul’s statement about Christ being “our righteousness” says nothing about whether that righteousness remains extrinsic to the believer, only that it is *originally* extrinsic. In fact, the passage itself points toward a transformative reception of righteousness, for Christ is not only the source of the Corinthians’ “righteousness” but also their “holiness.” As a result, if believers receive real holiness from Christ, why would they not also receive real righteousness?<sup>47</sup>

As for Philippians 3:2–11, it is important to recognize that the primary contrast Paul is making is between two different *sources* of righteousness: righteousness through the law and righteousness through faith in Christ. As Jean Noël Aletti notes, “the believer’s justice is not exterior to himself, *only its origin*, which may be either the Law or God.”<sup>48</sup> Instead, the righteousness that Paul has from Christ comes by means of faith, and as we will see below, Pauline faith includes fidelity. As for 2 Corinthians 5:21, it is crucial to recognize that Christ “becoming sin” is directly connected to the sacrifice of the Cross. This means that God did not merely consider Christ as having died for sin, but Christ really bore in his body the consequences of sin on the cross. In

<sup>47</sup> Or put differently, if righteousness is exclusively extrinsic, then why is holiness not imputed?

<sup>48</sup> Jean Noël Aletti, *Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul: Keys to Interpretation*, trans. Peggy Manning Meyer (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2015), 184n43 (his emphasis).

fact, I would argue that becoming “sin” in 2 Corinthians 5:21 is very likely a “sin-offering,” meaning that Christ’s sacrifice was “atoning.” As Jay Sklar has shown, atoning sacrifice in the Old Testament both pays the penalty of sin and purifies the worshipper, such that atoning sacrifice is inherently transformative.<sup>49</sup> Viewing Christ’s death as an atoning sacrifice helps to clarify Paul’s statement in the second half of 2 Corinthians 5:21 that believers *become* the righteousness of God.<sup>50</sup> Since Christ’s death is an atoning sacrifice, it should come as no surprise that Paul could state that believers actually *become* the righteousness of God, for the gift of Christ’s death is able to be applied to believers such that they are empowered to become truly righteous. This leaves only Romans 4:3–5, the most difficult of the four passages. To rightly account for its content requires accounting for πίστις (faith).

#### THE NATURE OF PAULINE FAITH

As the recent work of Teresa Morgan has ably demonstrated, πίστις (faith) language in antiquity signified more than simply belief in content or persons. While πίστις language is employed to signify belief, it is also employed to signify both trust and fidelity or faithfulness. Ranging from friendships, patron–client relationships, military oaths, and familial bonds to divine–human relationships, πίστις language is used to signify a virtue of profound social, political, and cultic significance.<sup>51</sup> In general, Morgan concludes that πίστις is never used “purely in instrumental terms. It is always a virtue: an intrinsic good; an end as well as a means.”<sup>52</sup> For our purposes, it is particularly important to note that the Septuagint employs πίστις language in a similar manner.<sup>53</sup> As we noted above, in 1 Samuel (1 Kingdoms) 26:23, David tells Saul that God will return to each “his righteous deeds and his faith” (τὰς δικαιοσύνας αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν αὐτοῦ), while in 1 Maccabees 14:35, the people see the faith of Simon (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Σίμωνος) and make him high priest due to the righteousness and faith (τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν πίστιν) he preserved

<sup>49</sup> See Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, and Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 2 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005); “Sin and Impurity: Atoned or Purified? Yes!” in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, ed. Baruch J. Schwartz et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> For more on Paul’s account of atonement and its connection to a realistic account of justification, see Brant Pitre, Michael P. Barber, and John A. Kincaid, *The Apostle Paul: Catholic Perspectives on Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, forthcoming 2019).

<sup>51</sup> See Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), esp. 36–175.

<sup>52</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 76. Morgan further suggests πίστις plays much the same role in early Christianity as it did in the wider Greco-Roman world.

<sup>53</sup> See Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 176–211.

in the nation.<sup>54</sup> As Morgan notes, “overtones of both hope and obedience are common in Septuagintal *pistis* language; above all, obedience to God and hope in what Israel’s relationship with God will bring.”<sup>55</sup>

In turning now to Paul’s use of πίστις language, we find that he employs the term in ways that demonstrate both profound continuity and Christocentric discontinuity (uniqueness) with his wider context. As for continuity, Paul employs πίστις language to signify not only content believed and personal trust, but also fidelity.<sup>56</sup> In fact, God himself has πίστις in Romans 3:3. As for Paul’s Christocentric discontinuity with his wider context, Paul employs πίστις language in a properly apocalyptic manner to signify the “revelation” of an eschatological age defined by the coming of God’s own Son. In fact, in Galatians 3:23–25, Paul uses πίστις and Christ interchangeably, such that he can speak of the revelation of the coming of faith together with the coming of Christ. Therefore, it is important to recognize that Pauline πίστις cannot to be limited simply to belief in Christ, but is remarkably comprehensive and Christocentric. As for comprehensive: Paul tells the Galatians that his entire existence in Christ is defined by living by faith (Gal 2:20–21), yet that is not to be simply unique to Paul, for he tells the Romans that anything that does not come from faith is a sin (Rom 14:23). As for Christocentric: not only is Christ the object of faith within the Pauline corpus, but in Galatians 3:23–25, he *is* faith.<sup>57</sup> As a result, it seems right to connect Paul’s statements about Christ’s entire life of obedience to his identity as “faith” in Galatians 3:23–25, such that Pauline faith entails full obedience to the will of God. Or as Paul himself puts it, he himself is called as an apostle to call all nations “to the obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5).

In summarizing faith in the Pauline corpus, Joseph Fitzmyer rightly suggests that, in the end, Pauline faith “far transcends the OT idea of fidelity.”<sup>58</sup> This accords very well with our analysis of the cardiac righteousness of the new covenant noted above, for true πίστις allows one to live according to the righteousness called for by the law, or put differently, to have the law written on one’s heart. In Romans 10:10, after a Christocentric rereading of

<sup>54</sup> For texts that link faith to fidelity, see Deut 32:20; 2 Kgs (4 Kgdms) 12:16 (MT 12:15); 22:7; 1 Chr 9:22, 26, 31; 2 Chr 31:12, 15, 18; 34:12; Pss 32:4 (33:4); Prov 3:3; 12:17, 22; 14:22; 15:28; Jer 5:1; Hab 2:4.

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 210.

<sup>56</sup> For texts that link faith to fidelity, see 1 Thess 1:3; 1:8–10; 3:2–10; 5:8; Gal 5:6; Rom 1:5; 16:26; 3:31.

<sup>57</sup> For more on Christ as “faith,” see Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), esp. 200–204.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Paul and His Theology: A Brief Sketch* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1987), 84–85.

Deuteronomy 30:12, 14, Paul states that whoever believes in their heart has righteousness. In light of the close proximity of Deuteronomy 30:12 and 14 to Deuteronomy 30:6, it is certainly plausible to suggest that one's heart is circumcised through justifying faith. However, it is also clear that faith comes only by grace (Rom 12:3), a grace that is both comprehensive and empowering (1 Cor 15:8–10; Eph 2:8–10). As a result, when Abraham believes God and it is considered righteousness (Rom 4:3–5), it is Abraham's faith that allows the divine reckoning to be realistic, for as Paul states just verses before, faith upholds rather than nullifies the law (Rom 3:31). Therefore, when one has true faith they have true righteousness. Against the backdrop of Paul's manner of speaking about faith, we are now in the position to briefly address Paul's use of the verb *δικαίω*.

### *Paul's Use of Δικαίω*

While it is far beyond the scope of this paper to offer a comprehensive overview of how to best account for *δικαίω*, it is first important to account for why Paul's use of the verb could be seen as an objection to our account. In general, *δικαίω* is used in the Septuagint to signify a positive decision or action in favor of someone else, often in juridical settings. As Prothro notes, "*δικαίω* always indicates an action in favor of a personal object, and does so especially in judicial contexts."<sup>59</sup> This certainly seems to be how Paul uses the verb in a passage like Romans 2:13. Therefore, if *δικαίω* means "consider righteous," and if in justification God considers not the righteous but sinners to be "just," then the justified are in need of an exclusively extrinsic imputation of Christ's righteousness. If this is correct, then Ziesler's suggestion that Paul employs righteousness language in two different senses also appears necessary because, in contrast to when Paul employs righteousness language to signify the moral character of believers, there is the juridical manner of speaking of the righteousness of those who are declared righteous on behalf of Christ alone through faith.

In light of our analysis to date, we are in the position to offer an admittedly preliminary response to the objection that Paul's use of the verb *δικαίω* cannot be reconciled with our account of cardiac righteousness. There is no doubt that Paul employs the verb *δικαίω* juridically, particularly in Romans 2:13. However, Paul is not employing *δικαίω* in reference to Christ or Christ's righteousness, but in regard to believers, and in particular in regard to their works in accord with their heart. As a result, it is crucial to highlight that Paul's use of *δικαίω* in Romans 2:13 is *realistic*, not *counterfactual*. The

<sup>59</sup> James B. Prothro, "The Strange Case of Δικαίω in the Septuagint and Paul: The Oddity and Origins of Paul's Talk of Justification," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 107, no. 1 (2016): 48–69, at 56. For example, see Exod 23:7; Deut 25:1; 2 Sam (2 Kgdms) 15:4; Pss 81:3.

significance of this point cannot be overestimated for rightly accounting for Pauline justification, for as many scholars across a wide range of Pauline perspectives suggest (old perspective in particular), justification is something like a preview of the final judgment. If this is correct and the final judgment of the “righteous” is in accord with having cardiac righteousness, then it would seem to follow that justification must include the cardiac righteousness required to be accounted righteous at the final judgment. However, it is possible to object to this line of reasoning and suggest that Paul’s use of the verb *δικαίω* is normally in reference to faith rather than works as in Romans 2:13, a passage that some scholars argue is meant by Paul as a hypothetical.<sup>60</sup> In reply, in light of the nature of Pauline faith itself, when one has true faith they also have true cardiac righteousness, for Pauline faith includes fidelity/obedience. As a result, when Paul employs *δικαίω* in regard to one who has faith, it functions much as it does in Romans 2:13, where it is realistic rather than exclusively counterfactual.<sup>61</sup> What is more, it is absolutely clear that Paul does hold to a real judgment by works, for in a context unrelated to setting up a merely hypothetical scenario, Paul states that each person will receive recompense from Christ at the final judgment according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil (2 Cor 5:9–10). Therefore, it is my contention that Paul employs the verb *δικαίω* *realistically*, that is, in a manner that *either* confirms or creates the cardiac righteousness that comes by faith.<sup>62</sup>

A realistic account of *δικαίω* is also confirmed by the way Paul’s use of the verb is connected to cultic settings, especially in connection with baptism

<sup>60</sup> For an overview and critique of the position that the final judgment by works in Rom 2:1–16 is hypothetical, see Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God*, 159–60.

<sup>61</sup> Put positively, when Paul employs *δικαίω* in regard to one who has faith, he is using the verb realistically rather than counterfactually. See Rom 3:24–26; 4:3–5; 5:1; Gal 2:15–21; 3:23–26.

<sup>62</sup> Prothro argues that Paul employs the verb *δικαίω* in order to signify that the contention between God and the sinner has ended with an eschatological trajectory. Moreover, Prothro astutely notes the close connection between *δικαίω*, faith, and baptism, leading him to argue for a robust account of justifying faith. See Prothro, *Both Judge and Justifier*. For scholars who take *δικαίω* in realistic rather than a counterfactual manner, see Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 476; David A. de Silva, *Galatians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 42, 105; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Romans*, Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 347. Building on Prothro’s analysis, it is my contention that Paul’s use of *δικαίω* is not counterfactual but realistic, due to the nature of faith itself. However, my account goes beyond Prothro in also suggesting that Paul’s use of *δικαίω* *can* also be causative in that it *can* create the cardiac righteousness that comes by faith. Without insisting that *δικαίω* *must* be causative, the close connection between *δικαίω* and baptism suggests that Paul *may* be using the verb to mean “make righteous.” At the very least, I would contend that Paul is using *δικαίω* realistically to signify that the believer is now righteous by faith through baptism. For more along these lines, see Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *The Apostle Paul*.

in Romans 6:7, in 1 Corinthians 6:11, and in Galatians 3:24, 27. As Prothro rightly notes:

In every undisputed letter in which δικαιόω occurs, it occurs in proximity to baptismal traditions (1 Cor 6:11; Gal 3:24, 27; Rom 6:3–4, 7). This connection extends beyond Paul's Law-polemic, which is not prominent in 1 Cor and is certainly not the impetus for his justification-talk there. Especially given that in these letters Paul assumes his audiences have been baptized, it is unsurprising if Paul assumed they would have been familiar with his vocabulary.<sup>63</sup>

As a result of such a connection between baptism and δικαιόω, Douglas Campbell has suggested that δικαιόω is employed by Paul in a baptismal manner, exclaiming: "How much changes if we carry this liberative, 'baptismal,' and basically 'resurrectional' meaning of the verb δικαιόω into the other texts where it occurs in Paul!"<sup>64</sup>

### ***Augustine's Contribution: Justification by the Grace of Cardiac Righteousness***

To conclude, I began by suggesting that Augustine's view of Pauline justification can offer the various contemporary perspectives on Pauline soteriology an important path forward. In order to highlight what this path might constitute, I offered a brief overview of Augustine's *The Spirit and the Letter* and argued that Augustine's account of justification centers on the cardiac righteousness of the new covenant. Of particular importance was the suggestion that Augustine understands grace as enabling all just activity of the believer through a comprehensive empowerment.

In order to assess whether Augustine's view of Pauline justification does justice to Paul, I turned to 2 Corinthians 3:1–11 and argued that Paul's ministry of righteousness entails the promised heart renovation of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Against that backdrop, I argued that δικαιοσύνη in 2 Corinthians 3:9 is both juridical and moral, a δικαιοσύνη that could be rightly

<sup>63</sup> Prothro, "The Strange Case of Δικαιόω," 67. This accords well with Augustine's close connection between justification and baptism throughout his corpus. Moreover, Prothro's cultic reading of δικαιόω also serves to soften McGrath's well-known critique that the Augustinian position suffers from a linguistic problem in regard to justification, since the Latin term *iustificare* means "make righteous" (*Iustitia Dei*, 18–21, 46–47). However, if Paul's use of δικαιόω is realistic and linked to baptism, McGrath's critique ultimately misses the mark.

<sup>64</sup> Douglas A. Campbell, "Rereading Paul's ΔΙΚΑΙΟ-Language," in *Beyond Old and New Perspectives on Paul: Reflections on the Work of Douglas Campbell*, ed. Chris Tilling (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock), 211–12.

called the cardiac righteousness of the new covenant. In answering potential objections to this account, I focused on the nature of the final judgment as an assessment of the condition of the heart, thereby not only demonstrating that Paul's use of *δικαίω* is realistic and not counterfactual, but also showing that justification includes cardiac righteousness. David deSilva rightly captures the nature of Pauline *δικαιοσύνη* when he notes that "the common and natural sense" of the term is "the moral quality manifested in a particular set of commitments and practices (that will, incidentally, be recognized as "just" at the Last Judgment)."<sup>65</sup>

As for what an Augustinian reading of justification offers the world of contemporary Pauline scholarship, I would suggest that it is able to connect together aspects of Pauline justification that are often disconnected, particularly the juridical and moral dimensions of Pauline *δικαιοσύνη* and initial justification by grace and final judgment by works. The reason that Augustine is able to connect these areas together is his understanding of grace as both entirely a gift and entirely belonging to the believer. Through the gift of cardiac righteousness, believers are both truly righteous and comprehensively empowered to do the works required to be righteous at the final judgment. As a result, it is my contention that an important way forward for the post-Sanders justification debate is to look back, not to the old perspective on Pauline justification, but to the ancient perspective, particularly as articulated by Augustine.

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<sup>65</sup> DeSilva, *Transformation*, 29n30.