Substitution and participation in the writings of Paul: a study of four texts

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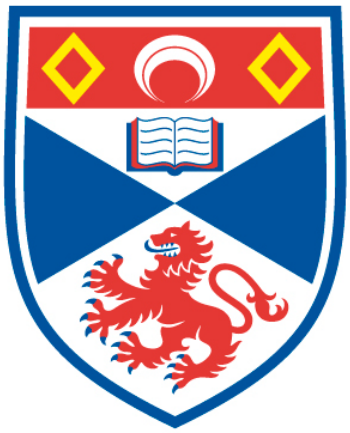

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Abstract

Contemporary Pauline scholarship has witnessed ongoing debate concerning the relationship between 'substitution' (Christ's death in place of sinners) and 'participation' (the mutual solidarity and identification of Christ and sinners) in the apostle's letters. This debate has proven intractable, in large part because both sides of the debate employ the language of substitution to denote a pre-determined model of atonement that is then attacked or defended on exegetical grounds, rather than considering the descriptive exegetical potential of substitutionary language in its own right. The following thesis employs the language of substitution in the broader sense of 'replacement in a functional capacity' to account for Paul's description of the soteriological relation that exists between Christ and believers, noting also how motifs of substitution in his letters relate to participation in Christ. Through a study of the four texts that have featured most prominently in current debates (Romans 3:25 and 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13), this study demonstrates that this soteriological relation exhibits a clear substitutionary pattern—one that, moreover, is logically dependent on the notion of participation in Christ. Through their participatory identification with him, Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life become functionally effective for believers in place of their own bodily agency and experience. This substitutionary relationship overlaps with, but is not identical to, the predominant model of evangelical penal substitutionary atonement that has featured in recent debates.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Since the earliest centuries of the church's existence, Christian worship, prayer, preaching, teaching and apologetics have given voice to the conviction that Christ acts somehow as a replacement for the people he saves—or, to employ the more common term, as a *substitute* for sinners, who does something for them 'in their place' that they cannot or will not do for themselves. What precisely this replacement involves, and what makes it necessary, are questions that have occasioned much discussion and debate in the history of dogma.[1] Until recent centuries, however, few in the church tradition would have denied altogether that Christ's saving work involves his replacement of sinners at some basic level.[2] What is more, the writings of Paul the apostle have always figured prominently in such discussions; indeed, one rarely if ever encounters treatments of the 'theology of atonement' in which Paul does not feature prominently, and references to his writings in works defending a certain idea of 'substitutionary atonement' in particular abound.[3]

Nevertheless, there exists considerable debate as to whether or not this tradition can

1. For an excellent survey of the history of atonement theory with a particular focus on the theme of substitution, see Vidu 2014.
2. As McGrath 1985 demonstrates, even Peter Abelard, to whom the 'moral influence' or 'exemplarist' family of atonement theories is credited, nonetheless held to some form of satisfaction in which Christ took the place of sinners to pay a debt owed to God's honour.
3. See below.

legitimately claim Paul as its representative. Especially during the past century, biblical scholarship has seen ongoing controversy regarding the apostle's understanding of Christ's saving action, largely due to a growing awareness that Paul's soteriology centrally involves *participation in Christ*, through which believers are said to die and rise *with* Christ, and so to benefit from his achievement.[4] How, if this is Paul's understanding, can Christ be said to die *in place of* others? Discussion along these lines coincides with (and is surely fuelled by) growing controversy regarding the legacy of the dominant strand of atonement theology in the western protestant theological tradition, the classic evangelical doctrine of 'penal substitution' which (granted a diversity of expressions) centres around the notion that God, in order to satisfy his justice, punished Jesus in the place of sinful humanity.[5]

However one might assess this conception's theological and ethical ramifications, though, the question remains: does Paul's thinking bear an appreciable resemblance to it? To this we may add a second, related question, based on the conceptual difficulty noted above: if the language of substitution *does* accurately describe the relation between Christ and others in Paul's understanding, how does this description relate to and cohere with the participatory themes that scholarship of the past century has also discerned in his writings?

As I will show in the present chapter, resolving these ostensibly *exegetical* questions demands a sensitivity to the hermeneutical challenges that surround the use of etic language and concepts in our interpretation of texts—that is, language and concepts that are not native to the context of our object of inquiry. The more immediate problem with which the current debate over substitution in Paul confronts us is how to employ our own concepts and categories (not only 'substitution', but 'participation' and 'representation' as well) in ways that are sufficiently transparent to the conceptual and narrative frameworks that structure the apostle's varied portrayals of God's saving action in Christ, rather than in ways that contort those frameworks and refashion Paul after our own likeness, treating his writings as though they concern precisely our questions. As we shall see, this is a problem to which present debates have not been sufficiently attentive, and the present impasse is one direct result.

In what follows, I will offer a critical survey of how the past half-century of scholarship

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4. For surveys of the theme of participation and union with Christ in modern Pauline scholarship, see Campbell 2012, 31-64; Macaskill 2013, 17-41; Vanhoozer 2014, 3-33.

5. For criticisms of this view, see e.g. Baker and Green 2011; Belousek 2011; Weaver 2011. In its defence, e.g. Boersma 2004; Hill and James 2004; Hood 2009; Jeffery et al. 2007; Marshall 2007; Packer 1974; Peterson 2001; Williams 2007. Many of the apologists for traditional substitutionary atonement nonetheless seek to re-situate the doctrine within a more nuanced and updated systematic or biblical-theological scheme: see e.g. Leithart 2016; McCall 2012; Smail 1995; Wright 2016b.

has handled the theme of substitution in Paul, taking note of its defining features and developing an assessment of its methodological pitfalls that will undergird my proposal for a substantive contribution to this conversation. Following this survey and analysis, I will propose an exegetical methodology that is based on a more nuanced account of the language of substitution, and of its bearing on related questions regarding the meaning of participation in Christ. After establishing the focus and limits of the study, I will summarise the thesis.

1.2 Debating Substitution in Paul: Survey & Analysis

The following critical survey will provide an overview of recent scholarly discussion regarding substitution and participation in Paul. The scholars included in the survey are roughly divisible into two groups based on their affinity or antipathy toward substitutionary readings of Paul. Interestingly, both groups tend to lay claim to the same Pauline texts[6] (particularly Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3) and many of the same putative Pauline backgrounds (sacrifice, Isaiah 53, martyrdom and noble death) in support of their readings. As I will show in the following survey, the way in which scholars on both sides frame the interpretative issue makes it clear that the real bone of contention is not the language of substitution *per se*, but a particular *application* of this language that resembles the 'penal substitutionary' theory of atonement espoused by many contemporary evangelicals. Scholars' typical use of the term 'substitution' (on both sides of the debate) to denote a particular theory or model of atonement, moreover, arguably ignores a great deal of the term's exegetical potential, while also obscuring certain ambiguities in their own accounts of that theory's bearing on Paul's texts. Along similar lines, I will highlight related ambiguities in how scholars employ the language of 'participation' and 'representation' in the debate, which complicates the question of how these concepts may or may not problematise 'substitution' in Paul's writings.

1.2.1 Arguments against 'Substitution' in Paul

Scholarly opposition to a substitutionary reading of Paul has risen to prominence especially within the past half century or so, carried along in large part by scholarly trends toward a more participatory reading of Paul's soteriology. Detractors from the traditional protestant reading of Paul include some of the leading names in the guild of Pauline studies—

6. Unless otherwise noted, translations of the NT are my own; citations from the OT follow the NRSV.

most notably Morna Hooker and James Dunn, whose construals of Pauline participationism and objections to substitution have exerted much influence. The common refrain among the participationist strand of interpreters of which they are a part is that Paul understands salvation in Christ to involve a mutual 'sharing of experiences' between Christ and those he saves, whereas substitution posits a discrepancy of experiences as one of its defining features. Their objections to substitution are also echoed among 'apocalyptic' readings of Paul, which go further in attributing something like 'substitutionary atonement' in a traditional sense to the *opponents* with whom Paul is in conflict, whose concern with the forensic judgment and acquittal characteristic of substitution is foreign to Paul's 'apocalyptic' theology. Meanwhile, the Anglophone discussion also parallels debates in German scholarship regarding the concept of *Stellvertretung* ('place-taking'), which has been employed in a variety of ways that evoke but do not precisely mirror the concerns of English-speaking interpreters.

1.2.1.1 Participationist Objections

The most common exegetical objection to a substitutionary reading of Paul, which has persisted in relatively stable form over the past half-century, is that Paul's participationist soteriology entails a 'sharing of experiences' between Christ and those whom he saves—a sharing that 'substitution', almost by definition, rules out. In his treatment of Pauline theology, D.E.H. Whiteley summarises this reading of Paul as follows: 'Christ shared all our experience, sin alone excepted, including death, in order that we, by virtue of our solidarity with him, might share his life'.[7] This stands in contrast with the substitutionary view which, in Whiteley's understanding, supposes that believers *escape* death because 'God accepted [Christ's] death instead of ours' and 'transfer[red] to him the punishment due to us on account of our sin'.[8] Whiteley's understanding of participation in Christ is echoed in the later works of Morna Hooker, who uses the language of 'interchange' to describe the relationship of mutual solidarity that Paul identifies between Christ and those who participate in him: 'he became what we are, in order that we might become what he is'.[9] This she places in contrast with the imagery of 'exchange', which she takes to be essential for substitution: 'It is not that

7. Whiteley 1964, 130. The content of his chapter appears also in Whiteley 1957.
8. Whiteley 1964, 130-31. Whiteley adds that such a transfer would render punishment 'impersonal'.
9. See e.g. Hooker 1990b, 16, 19, 22, 26, 42. The latter expression comes from the preface of bk. 5 of Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* (*factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse*), and is often repeated in participationist readings of Paul. It is worth noting that the common translation is somewhat imprecise, and the Latin rather reads 'he became what we are, that he might *bring us to be* what he himself is' (so e.g. Schaff). The stress throughout the statement thus falls upon the agency of Christ, not on the reciprocal action of Christ and believers.

Christ is cursed and we are blessed. Rather he enters into our experience, and we then enter into his, by sharing in his resurrection'.[10] 'Substitution', then, almost *consists* in the discrepancy between the experiences of Christ and those of believers.

More recently, Daniel Powers employs similar language in a detailed participationist reading of the Pauline *Sterbensformeln*: 'Christ participated in all the consequences of sinful man's alienation from God, including death, so that believers might participate in the consequences of Christ's own act of righteousness'.[11] Like Hooker, Powers regards the image of exchange as basic to the meaning of 'substitution', and associates this closely with the idea of 'double imputation': 'Christ becomes sin and humanity becomes righteousness. This is the essence of the theory of substitution. Through substitution, the substitute takes the place of another so that the other does not personally participate in the condition which is rightfully his'.[12] The demand of death is alleviated, because its requirement has been met by a third party who exchanges his innocence for their guilt.[13] But the forensic character of this exchange, in Powers' view, would preclude participation: 'Christ does not really participate in the sin of the sinner, nor does the sinner really participate in the righteousness of God. Sin and righteousness, by means of substitution, are both the result of imputation'.[14] In contrast, for Paul, '[e]very notion of an exchange, whereby Jesus is perceived as being imputed with the believers' sin and the believers imputed with Jesus' righteousness, is absent. Nor is the notion present that Jesus' death for others means that the others no longer need to die'.[15] For each of these interpreters, then, Paul's understanding of salvation in Christ directly undermines the assumption that Christ's death sustains an impending penalty in the place of others. Paul assumes that believers still undergo the death that sin imposes on fallen humanity, and Christ's death provides a non-destructive means by which this death can be experienced: dying with Christ in baptism and living in ongoing solidarity with him, believers are assured of a resurrection like his.

James Dunn develops the logic of this participationist theory to its fullest extent, linking it with a particular account of the representative significance of Christ's humanity. 'Representation', for Dunn, mainly describes the *instantiative* significance of Christ for humanity as a whole: 'Jesus represents what man now is and by his obedience what man

10. Hooker 1990b, 16.
11. Powers 2001, 82; cf. 234.
12. Powers 2001, 79.
13. See Powers 2001, 61, 83.
14. Powers 2001, 80; cf. 64.
15. Powers 2001, 82.

might become'.[16] By his action as a 'representative of fallen man…living out that fallenness to the death and overcoming it in resurrection he becomes representative of new life, of new man'.[17] Jesus thus *exhibits* to all of humanity what they are in Adam (bound inextricably to sin and to death), and what they *can become* in him if they identify themselves with his salvific traverse of the adamic path into death and beyond it into resurrection. In line with this construal, Dunn interprets salvation, in Paul's understanding, not primarily as an *event* that has taken place in the death and resurrection of Christ, but as a *process* that one must undergo by identifying with Christ in the whole course of one's own life and eventual death. In Dunn's reading, even those who identify with Christ have not yet fully shared in his death: '[t]he believer has been nailed to the cross of Christ, and is still hanging there!'[18] Paul's theology, in other words, does not mainly stress the completed state of affairs that has resulted from identification with Christ's death and resurrection; rather, co-crucifixion with Christ places one in the course of a process wherein 'the dying away of the believer in his dependence on this age can be accomplished', along with 'the destruction of the sinful flesh, the body of death'.[19] The 'old man' is, as it were, still writhing upon the cross. Only as one undergoes the process of sinful man's destruction for oneself can one then experience salvation. Though Dunn curiously draws back from explicitly denying any substitutionary quality to Christ's death in Paul, his reasoning mirrors that of the interpreters noted above, and appears to go even farther: 'fallen men do not escape death—any more than they escape wrath; *they die!* Either they die their own death without identifying themselves with Christ; or else they identify themselves with Christ so that they die his death—his death works out in their flesh'.[20] In effect, believers must themselves repeat or relive the death of Christ in order to experience salvation. Christ's resurrection functions, as Douglas Campbell puts it in his summary of Dunn's view, as 'an exit-point for those who have recapitulated [his] journey to execution'.[21]

In each of the above readings, the 'sharing of experiences' that participation in Christ

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16. Dunn 1991, 37.
17. Dunn 1991, 39, emph. removed. Like Hooker (and in contrast to Whiteley), Dunn argues for the full solidarity of Jesus with the sinful human condition, while also stressing (like Hooker and Whiteley) that Paul did not view him as actually committing any sin personally. See Dunn 1991, 37-38; Dunn 2003, 202-04; Dunn 1988, 421-22.
18. Dunn 1991, 47.
19. Dunn 1991, 48, emph. removed.
20. Dunn 1991, 51-52. It is important to note that Dunn does not understand the 'wrath of God' mainly to describe God's disposition toward the believer, but as 'a process willed by God' in which sin is consigned irrevocably to death, a process that is 'not so much retributive as preventative' (50).
21. Campbell 2005, 90.

entails makes it highly problematic to distinguish Christ's death from anyone else's: it is primarily to be understood as the completion of his *identification* with humanity—distinguishable from theirs only, perhaps, by his obedience in undergoing it.[22] Consequently, the death of Christ is not clearly a discrete act: in Powers' words, 'Christ participated in all the consequences of sinful man's alienation from God, *including* death'.[23] Meanwhile, Dunn's reading, which shares this emphasis, points also to a logical corollary: it becomes equally problematic to distinguish the suffering and death of believers from Christ's. For Dunn, this appears to mean that their experiences even take upon themselves the redemptive quality of Christ's death, condemning and abolishing adamic flesh in order to attain to resurrection life. In this respect, Dunn's account would appear to follow this participationist model to its logical conclusion: the experiences of Christ and of believers are functionally identical, the only difference being that the suffering and death of believers realise the potentiality that Christ's suffering and death antecedently create for them.

Accordingly, in the minds of these interpreters, Paul's participationist soteriology precludes the kind of experiential discrepancy that 'substitution' assumes to exist between Christ and believers. This, of course, assumes a certain proper use for the term 'substitution'. In the above discussions, this term relates to the exegetical task, not as *language* with which one might carry it out, but as a shorthand for a whole *model* or *theory* of atonement that is to be *tested against* the available textual evidence. This model presupposes a certain narrative framework (the diversion of an impending punishment onto Christ, in order to satisfy a theological necessity of some kind) and relies on certain images (particularly 'exchange' or 'transfer') to articulate it. At the same time, though, there are hints of an awareness of underlying semantic problems. Whiteley allows that others might use the language of substitution in a different sense, in which case his disagreement with them is 'merely verbal'.[24] Meanwhile, one of Dunn's main objections to 'substitution' would appear to be premised on a recognition of its exegetical potential as more than a mere shorthand for a theory of atonement: if we are going to speak in these terms, he says, we should be at least as attentive to how Jesus functions as a substitute for *God* as for humanity in Paul's thought,

22. So Hooker: 'The cross is of course vital, but it is the completion of the obedience which characterises the whole of Christ's life'. Hooker 1990b, 22, emph. orig. Hooker draws esp. on Rom. 5:12-19 to support this focus on Christ's saving obedience, for which he obtains God's justification/vindication (see Hooker 1990b, 26-33).

23. Emph. added.

24. Whiteley 1964, 131.

acting on his behalf as well as theirs.[25] But if we can appropriately employ substitutionary language in this manner, clearly we are no longer giving it a content that corresponds to the normally assumed definition (i.e. Christ's being punished in God's stead)! A more general sense of substitution—'action in the place of another', or something along these lines—appears to be in view. These observations raise the question of whether the language of substitution might possess an under-appreciated exegetical utility that extends beyond the lineaments of an atonement theory.

1.2.1.2 'Apocalyptic' Objections

The above emphasis on mutual solidarity characterises another distinct stream of interpretation in Pauline studies, which has gained increasing prominence in the past few decades: the so-called 'apocalyptic' reading of Paul.[26] Commenting on Galatians 3:13, for example, Martinus de Boer objects that '[t]he substitutionary meaning ("in our place" or "in our stead") would imply that Christ took upon himself a penalty that ought to be imposed on human beings. For Paul, however, human beings apart from Christ are already under a curse (v. 10a); the issue is redemption from this already-existing situation'.[27] 'Apocalyptic' objections to substitution stem from more than the participationist leanings of their proponents, however. For some of the leading figures in this school of interpretation, 'substitutionary atonement' *represents the view of Christ's death that Paul's opponents espouse*, to which the apostle's own writings constitute a polemical rebuttal. For J. Louis Martyn, Paul's understanding of Christ's death 'breaks the mold of the old sacrificial pattern'[28] in that he emphasises liberation from the power of sin more than the forgiveness of the guilt of sins.[29] This stands in contrast to the views of his opponents, who regard Jesus' death as the vicarious, sacrificial death of a martyr to accomplish forgiveness for Israel's sins and their restoration to covenantally-defined nomistic obedience.[30] Martyn does not quite *deny* a substitutionary quality to Christ's death in Paul altogether, but seeks to redefine it in terms of victory rather than sacrifice:

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25. Dunn 1991, 51.
26. The nomenclature of 'apocalyptic' used to describe this group is problematic, but evaluating it lies beyond our purposes here. See esp. Davies 2016; Matlock 1996; Shaw 2013; Wright 2015, 135-218.
27. de Boer 2011, 211.
28. Martyn 1997, 91, commenting on Gal. 3:13. Martyn says this also holds true for 2 Cor. 5:21. As I will argue in the chs. that follow, this presupposes an erroneous understanding of sacrifice in second-temple Judaism.
29. See Martyn 1997, 88-91, 97.
30. Martyn 1997, 101; see also 89-90. Martyn adduces Rom. 3:25; 4:25; and 1 Cor. 6:11 as evidence of this tradition. Cf. Martyn 1997, 143-44.

> To be sure, Christ became the Law's curse *in our behalf*. But he did that not simply by taking onto himself a punishment due us but by embodying the curse, in such a way as to be, in his crucifixion, *victorious* over its enslaving power. Paul places the thought of apocalyptic warfare in the foreground. There are not three actors—the guilty human being, Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice for that person's guilt, and God, who, accepting that sacrifice, forgives the guilty human being. There are four actors: the powerful, enslaving curse of the Law, human beings enslaved under the power of that curse, Christ, who comes to embody the enslaving curse, and God, who in this Christ powerfully defeats the Law's curse, thus liberating human beings from their state of enslavement.[31]

Similarly, for de Boer, Paul's 'cosmological' apocalyptic eschatology is to be understood in contrast with the 'forensic' view of his opponents, whose concerns lie not primarily with the defeat of sin (as in Paul) but with the forgiveness of sins.[32] The above quote also reflects another significant emphasis in the readings of Martyn and de Boer: both associate Paul's rejection of his opponents' views with his understanding of the law's bearing on the death of Christ. For Paul, Christ's death 'happened in *collision* with the Law' in order to liberate all of humanity from its enslaving power.[33] Whereas the law cursed Christ in his death, God vindicated him in his resurrection, and so God's redemptive aims must differ from those of the law.

The attribution of a substitutionary model of atonement to Paul's opponents finds its most detailed articulation in Douglas Campbell's massive 'apocalyptic' re-reading of Paul, *The Deliverance of God*, which interprets Romans 1–4 as an extended *reductio ad absurdum* that Paul plays out with an implied interlocutor, 'the Teacher'.[34] Over against the Teacher's foundationalist, contractual understanding of salvation, in which 'God redirects, generously, the punishment due sinners to Christ (who dies)',[35] Paul articulates a non-retributive, 'apocalyptic' understanding of salvation through Christ that Campbell elsewhere describes as a 'pneumatologically participatory martyrological eschatology'.[36] In certain respects, this alternative soteriology mirrors Dunn's reading of participation noted above: 'the Spirit "maps" or "moulds" people onto Christ's prototypical trajectory' of suffering, death and resurrection. Thus 'salvation is realized as the old state of bondage to Sin and Death in the Flesh is terminated, and a new resurrected eschatological state is effected'.[37] Like Dunn's view, this process involves the believer's recapitulation or repetition of the archetypal Christ-

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31. Martyn 1997, 318n.110, emph. orig.
32. See, most recently, de Boer 2013. De Boer's schematisation of Jewish apocalyptic along these 'forensic' and 'cosmological' lines exercised an influence on Martyn's thought in this regard. See de Boer 1988.
33. Martyn 1997, 273, emph. orig.; cf. 307-28. de Boer 2011, 213f. identifies the curse of the law in Gal. 3:13 closely with the law itself.
34. See Campbell 2009.
35. Campbell 2009, 29. Campbell's critique of contractualism is inspired esp. by Torrance 1970.
36. See Campbell 2005.
37. Campbell 2005, 59.

event: 'as the Spirit configures people to the template of Christ—specifically to his descent into death and ascent into glory—they too are thereby delivered'.[38] This transformation of the human condition still occurs 'by means of its termination in Christ's execution', but must nevertheless be actualised in the unfinished process of believers' suffering and death.[39]

As with the participationist readings noted above, here too one encounters certain issues of definition: Martyn is somewhat unclear as to whether substitution *must* necessarily be associated with the 'sacrificial pattern' from which he thinks Paul is departing. Campbell's evaluation of the western theological tradition raises the question of whether 'substitution' must carry with it the total freight of the western theological tradition's pitfalls, which Campbell traces to the 'Justification Theory' of salvation that centrally involves a penal substitutionary view of atonement. It is interesting to note, moreover, that Campbell's main source of inspiration in his critique of western contractualism—James B. Torrance—espouses a view of atonement that is arguably *more* radically substitutionary than the view Campbell critiques and that many evangelicals hold. Like his brother Thomas, James Torrance describes atonement in terms of the 'vicarious humanity' of Christ—that is, his radical replacement of humanity in the *whole* course of his reconciling obedience to God, all the way from his incarnation, through death, into resurrection and ascension.[40] This understanding, moreover, is of a piece with Torrance's objection to contractualism, because it attests the radically unconditioned nature of God's gift in Christ. At this point, for both J.B. and T.F. Torrance, participation in Christ becomes absolutely vital: it is the means by which Christ's vicarious response to God is appropriated and effects our renewal and transformation into his likeness. The theological roots of Campbell's application of an 'apocalyptic' paradigm to Paul, then, themselves challenge us to reconsider whether (1) soteriological motifs of substitution in Paul's letters might nonetheless be present *in a different form* than typically imagined, and (2) whether they *must* therefore conflict with participation in Christ.

1.2.1.3 'Place-Taking' Objections

Before turning to the proponents of a substitutionary reading of Paul, we lastly take note of a related discussion in German-speaking circles that is beginning to make inroads into Anglophone scholarship. In the past half-century, a group of Tübingen scholars (most notably

38. Campbell 2005, 59.
39. Campbell 2005, 59.
40. For J.B. Torrance's account of this theory, see Torrance 1981; for his brother's work, see esp. Torrance 2008; 2009.

Hartmut Gese, Bernd Janowski and Otfried Hofius) have employed the language of *Stellvertretung* ('place-taking') to describe representative relationships in the biblical texts. Although, in ordinary German, the idea of *Stellvertretung* would suggest the *dis*-placement of the person whose place is taken,[41] these scholars have specified two distinct senses (exclusive and inclusive) in which one person can be said to 'take the place of' another, one of which corresponds more closely to the normal sense in which Anglophone debates have used the word 'substitution'. For reasons of space, and because it is not my intention to employ this conceptuality directly in the present study, I will focus on one scholar in particular (Hofius), who has explicitly developed the conceptuality of *Stellvertretung* in such a way as to preclude a substitutionary reading of Paul in the traditional sense.[42]

Hofius develops his understanding of Pauline *Stellvertretung* most fully in connection with Isaiah 53, which he regards as a background to Paul (and other NT writings).[43] In contrast with the pattern established in the rest of the OT, which represents the sin as something bound up in the sinner's very being (*person-Sünde*), the Isaianic servant 'suffers the penal consequences of *alien* guilt',[44] such that his death is an act of *exclusive* place-taking (*exkludierende Stellvertretung*).[45] Hofius regards this uniquely Isaianic phenomenon to be 'theologisch schlechterdings undenkbar!', and argues that the only real solution to the problem of sin is the divine act of new creation envisioned in Psalm 51:10.[46] The latter view, in turn, determines the NT writers' perception of the Christ-event and so conditions their appropriation of Isaiah 53: in Christ's saving action they discern an act of 'inclusive place-taking' (*inkludierende Stellvertretung*) in which 'Christ takes the place of sinners in such a way that he does not displace them (as in the substitutionary model) but rather encompasses them as *persons* and affects them in their very being'.[47] Isaiah 53 thus becomes, in Paul's hands, 'a *new* text', no longer concerned with the transfer of forensic guilt from one party to another, but with Christ's transformation of humanity through his death and resurrection'.[48]

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41. Bailey 1998, 237-38; so e.g. Breytenbach 1993, 68 (following Henk Versnel) understands 'Stellvertretung' to mean 'an Stelle von' (i.e. occupying one's place in one's stead). The flexibility of ὑπέρ-language in reference to death '[läßt] die Frage aufkommen, ob der Tod "für" in der urchristlichen Tradition immer zugleich als Stellvertretungstod aufzufassen ist'. In Breitenbach's view, the Pauline texts that can be understood in this sense are Rom. 5:1-21; 2 Cor. 5:14, 21; Gal. 2:19-20; Gal. 3:10-13; 1 Thess. 5:9-10.
42. See also Gese 1981; Janowski 2005; 2007; Park 2015; Röhser 2002.
43. See Hofius 2004 (Hofius 1993 for the German original).
44. Hofius 2004, 166, emph. orig.
45. See Hofius 1993, 419.
46. Hofius 1993, 422. The other OT texts he adduces are Exod. 32:32-33; Ezek. 18:20.
47. Hofius 2004, 173, emph. orig.; see Hofius 1993, 422ff..
48. Hofius 2004, 188, emph. orig.

While this account of Pauline soteriology does not lay the same stress on 'experience' or 'interchange' as the Anglophone participationist readings noted above, there are clear affinities between the two views. Christ's solidarity with others is the means by which his death and resurrection are effective for them, in contrast with the substitutionary view's apparent concern with removing a burden or diverting a penal consequence from others onto Christ. Additionally, like the 'apocalyptic' views noted above, Hofius' discussion of *Stellvertretung* seeks to emphasise the *ontological* character of Paul's assertions about Christ's saving role, expressly contrasting his emphasis with the *forensic* character of the Servant's place-taking role in Isaiah.

For our purposes, the main significance of the Tübingen discussion is that it alerts us further to the underlying problem of how the conceptual language that features in the above discussions relates to the exegetical task. While it is possible for these terms to denote something like a soteriological theory, the specification of 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' senses in which 'place-taking' is possible nevertheless exhibits a greater degree of sensitivity to the flexibility and exegetical potential of etic conceptual language than is normally seen in Anglophone debates on substitution in Paul.[49] Given space, a more extensive survey could show greater flexibility still, particularly in light of the work of Günter Röhser, who observes that scholarship on this issue ignores the fact 'dass es eine von allen Seiten völlig unbestrittene und breit belegte Gestalt exklusiver Stellvertretung in der Bibel tatsächlich gibt: die Fürbitte, verstanden als stellvertretendes Gebet für andere'.[50] As our discussion in chapter 3 will show, this observation is particularly significant for understanding Christ's soteriological role in Romans 8, where the continued security of believers depends ultimately on Christ's ongoing intercession for them at the right hand of God. Still, as I will explain more fully below, our aim should not be simply to appropriate the language of Tübingen, but to consider how our own ways of using the language of substitution in English can inform our exegetical aims and method.

1.2.1.4 Conclusion

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49. While the language of inclusivity and exclusivity occasionally makes an appearance in Anglo-American biblical scholarship and theology in ways that parallel the Tübingen discussion, the exegetical utility of the language of substitution has nowhere been assessed in great detail, much less formed the basis of a methodology. On 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' substitution in connection with participation in Christ, see e.g. Gaffin 2004, 144-45; Morris 1955a, 278-80; Smail 1995.

50. Röhser 2002, 29. Röhser gives the following instances as clear examples: Jer. 29:7; Matt. 5:44; Acts 7:60; 1 Tim. 2:1f.; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Clem. 61:1f.

The objections to a substitutionary reading of Paul noted above proceed mainly on the assumption that the language of substitution, if employed in the exegesis of Paul's texts, would denote something like a full penal substitutionary 'model' of atonement as espoused by contemporary evangelicals. Nevertheless, this assumption sits alongside various ambiguities regarding the term's exegetical potential, which have yet to be explored. In what follows, I will take note of similar tendencies in scholarship advocating a substitutionary reading of Paul.

1.2.2 Arguments for 'Substitution' in Paul

Due to the doctrine's complex history in the past few centuries, arguments that attribute a substitutionary view of atonement to Paul tend to address a wide array of apologetic concerns, many of which lie beyond the purview of this study.[51] For the purposes of the present discussion, I limit our focus to two topics in particular: (1) how interpreters attempt to demonstrate the presence of 'substitution' in Paul and (2) how they attempt to meet the specific objections involving representation and participation in Christ, noted above. Like the anti-substitutionary readings noted above, advocates of a substitutionary reading of Paul use this language of in ways that generally correspond to the model or theory of penal substitution, but in this case argue that Paul describes or presupposes this conception of Christ's soteriological role at various points in his writings. Argument along these lines commonly takes the form of seeking to demonstrate the presence of a set of interrelated *concepts* in Paul that figure prominently in the substitutionary theory (e.g. sin, wrath, propitiation), as well as the presence of that theory's structuring *narrative*. As with the above body of scholarship, however, there is only limited discussion of how the language of substitution works apart from and prior to its specific implementation with reference to Paul. As I will argue, this leads to a truncated understanding of this language's exegetical potential.

1.2.2.1 Finding Substitution in Paul

In his influential collection of lexical studies, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, Leon Morris understands 'substitution' along the lines of the traditional protestant atonement theory: it means that 'Jesus has died in the stead of those who deserved death', so that

51. J.I. Packer describes the 'almost mesmeric effect' that Faustus Socinus' critique of the protestant version of *satisfactio* in *De Jesu Christo Servatore* (1578) had on Reformed articulations of this doctrine. The rehearsal of many of Socinus' objections in subsequent evaluations of substitutionary atonement through the centuries has perpetuated this tendency toward a primarily apologetic focus. Packer 1974, 3-5.

'instead of our death there is His, instead of our slavery there is His blood'.[52] In Paul's understanding, '[b]y the blood of Christ a propitiation is effected so that those who are of faith no longer need fear the wrath. Thus we see that, whereas originally sinners were liable to suffer from the outpouring of the wrath of God, Christ has suffered instead of them, and now they may go free'.[53] Morris's lexical study repeatedly seeks to emphasise that, although many of the concepts that Paul and other NT writers employ (redemption, covenant, blood/ sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation and justification) do not *in themselves* necessarily convey the idea of substitution, their application to the saving action of God in Christ normally does carry this sense.[54]

More recent arguments in favour of substitution in the Pauline writings understand the concept in the same terms, sometimes in ways that attest Morris's influence. Jarvis Williams offers a detailed definition, describing atonement in Paul as 'violent penal substitution'. By this, he means

> that Jesus died a violent, substitutionary death to be a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of Jews and Gentiles. By this death, he took upon himself God's righteous judgment and wrath against the sins of those for whom he died. By dying as their penal substitute, Jesus paid the penalty for their sins, and he therefore both propitiated God's wrath against their sins and expiated their sins so that the sins of Jews and Gentiles would be forgiven and so that they (Jews and Gentiles) would be justified by faith, forgiven of their sins, reconciled to God, participate in the resurrection, and saved from God's wrath.[55]

Thomas Schreiner offers a similar definition:

> The penalty for sin is death (Rom 6:23). Sinners deserve eternal punishment in hell from God himself because of their sin and guilt. God's holy anger is directed (Rom 1:18) against all those who have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). And yet because of God's great love, he sent Christ to bear the punishment of our sins. Christ died in our place, took to himself our sin (2 Cor 5:21) and guilt (Gal 3:10), and bore our penalty so that we might receive forgiveness of sins.[56]

Particularly in Schreiner's definition, the implied theological narrative structuring the concept of substitutionary atonement is evident. For Schreiner and others, moreover, this structuring narrative serves, in turn, to structure their *argument* for the theory as well. They seek to demonstrate, from a variety of Pauline texts, (1) that Paul regarded all humanity as sinful, (2) that their sin evokes the wrath of God and (3) that Christ's death propitiates God by bearing his judgment on sin. Thus Schreiner, having established the above definition, then defends

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52. Morris 1955a, 48-49. Both of these statements refer specifically to substitution as an act of "ransom" or "redemption".
53. Morris 1955a, 173.
54. See Morris 1955a, 35, 48-49, 55-56, 173, 185, 203-4, 223, 272-74.
55. Williams 2010b, 583.
56. Schreiner 2006, 72-73.

this view of atonement 'by appealing to three theological themes: (1) the sinfulness and guilt of humanity, (2) the holiness of God, and (3) the sacrifice of Christ'.[57] Richard Gaffin structures his discussion similarly, according to the successive stages of 'Sin', 'Wrath', and (after an intervening discussion of metaphors in atonement theology) 'The Efficacy of the Cross'.[58] A similar pattern is observable in I. Howard Marshall's treatment of atonement, which first establishes the nature of God's penalty against sin before proceeding to describe Christ's death as a substitute who discharges the penalty.[59]

Although this methodology might seem to encourage one to pluck Pauline texts from their argumentative context in order to fit them into the structure, most who develop and defend a substitutionary reading of Paul along these lines also argue that Romans 1–3 articulates precisely this narrative logic, moving (in Andrew Lincoln's phrase) 'from wrath to justification' by means of the penal, substitutionary death of Christ.[60] D.A. Carson summarises the argument of these chapters in the following terms: 'The problem is…the wrath of God directed against every human being, Jew and Gentile alike—a wrath elicited by universal human wickedness'.[61] In Romans 3:25, Paul explains that God has provided Christ as a 'propitiation' that turns away this wrath by means of his blood. As in the traditional theory of substitution, then, Paul's argument thus 'explains the need for Christ's propitiating sacrifice in terms of the just requirements of God's holy character'.[62] Granting some diversity in matters of detail, this basic handling of the narrative logic of Romans 1–3 appears in the work of numerous evangelical interpreters, such as C.E.B. Cranfield, Richard Gaffin, Douglas Moo, Thomas Schreiner, and others.[63]

The above discussions can be contrasted with the conceptual minimalism of Simon Gathercole's recent *Defending Substitution*, which seeks to distil the idea of substitution down to an essence, in order then to demonstrate its presence in two Pauline texts: 'I am defining *substitutionary* atonement for the present purposes as Christ's death in our place, instead of us'.[64] Although he goes on to unfold the significance and contours of this

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57. Schreiner 2006, 72.
58. See Gaffin 2004.
59. See Marshall 2007, 1-67. Marshall seeks to go beyond this traditional emphasis in several ways, particularly by highlighting the role of Christ's resurrection in justification (see 97).
60. See Lincoln 1995. Throughout these discussions of Rom. 1–3, particularly as regards the theme of propitiation, the influence of Leon Morris is felt; see esp. Morris 1955a, 167-74 and Morris 1955b.
61. Carson 2004, 120; cf. similarly Williams 2015, 105, 116.
62. Carson 2004, 138.
63. See also e.g. Gathercole 2004; Mody 2008.
64. Gathercole 2015, 15, emph. orig. Elsewhere, Gathercole defines substitution more fully as the infliction of 'God's infallible punishment of sin' on Jesus in his crucifixion, so that his death has a penal

description at some length, Gathercole deliberately limits himself by bracketing out the question of precisely *what* Christ 'bore' in place of others (i.e. punishment, wrath, etc.). The more recent work of Jarvis Williams also employs a shorthand definition that contrasts somewhat with the more extensive one given above: 'that Jesus, a Torah-observant Jew, died in the place of non-Torah-observant Jewish and Gentile sinners in order to accomplish specific soteriological benefits for them' (from which he deduces parallels between Paul and Jewish martyrological traditions that portray the deaths of martyrs in a similar manner).[65] In both of these cases, though, it is presupposed that 'substitution', as applied to Christ's soteriological role in Paul, refers specifically to his *death*, understood (in Gathercole's language' as the 'theological consequence' of sinful actions.[66] A similar conceptual minimalism is noticeable in the argument of Rohintan Mody, who simplifies even further by first explaining the basic idea of 'substitution' in itself, *before* discussing its reference to the death of Christ: substitution, according to Mody, means that 'person X excludes person Y and takes his place in an act Z'.[67] But rather than seeking then to *ascertain* what the sorts of 'acts' in which Christ replaces others in Paul's letters, he immediately proceeds to fill in the details, in order *then* to demonstrate the concept's presence in Paul: 'Thus, *in terms of penal substitutionary atonement*, it means that Christ, by his death on the cross, excluded sinners from the punishment due for their sinful transgressions. This means the transference of the whole penalty for sin from the sinner to Christ'.[68]

Even more clearly than with Gathercole and Williams, Mody's approach raises methodological questions: rather than limiting its descriptive potential at the outset by establishing its frame of reference (e.g. Christ's death) in advance of exegesis, could we not apply the language of substitution in a way that is attentive to broader motifs of substitution that characterise Christ's soteriological role? Might this approach also provide us with more nuanced ways of talking about the relationship between 'substitution' and 'participation' in Paul's writings? The prevalent arguments in favour of a substitutionary reading of Paul warrant these questions further because, as with the anti-substitutionary readings, there exists

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substitutionary character that enables the justification of sinners while maintaining the justice of God. See Gathercole 2004, 175-83. Gathercole also stresses that the punishment and divine wrath are to be understood 'as transcendent, divine action *ab extra,* not as based on an immanentist conception of cause and effect' as C.H. Dodd classically interpreted them (169, emph. removed).

65. Williams 2015, 1. Williams work in this volume develops farther the argument of his doctoral dissertation; see Williams 2010a.

66. See Gathercole 2015, 47-53, 68-74.

67. Mody 2008, 116.

68. Mody 2008, 116-17, emph. added; emph. removed from second sentence.

an observable ambiguity as to the 'essential' features of a substitutionary reading, and the degree to which they must fully correspond to the theory of penal substitution. In Morris, for example, 'substitution' can refer to the averting of an *impending* fate from those to whom it is due: so, for Paul, 'there is a substitutionary process at work in the method of justification—the wages of our sin are averted by the substitution of the Christ, and He suffered what we could not suffer'.[69] In some instances, however, Morris appears to describe the removal of an *already*-existing condition *from* sinners and Christ's assumption of it in their stead.[70] Additionally, Morris's emphasis on the substitutionary nature of YHWH's reception of the Levites in place of Israel's firstborn (cf. Num. 3:40-51), as well as the substitutionary character of a generic ransom-gift (כֹּפֶר), points to a broader set of phenomena that the word 'substitution' might describe in exegesis, even though his application of this term to Paul always follows the structure of the full atonement theory.[71] In a similar way, Stephen Finlan distinguishes between 'abstract, penal, or monetary' senses of substitution.[72] Although Gaffin, like Morris, argues for the presence of penal substitutionary atonement in Paul, his identification of what actually *makes* this construction substitutionary is decidedly simpler than the theory itself: 'Christ's death does for sinners what they cannot do for themselves'.[73] So also Marshall: 'Substitution means that Christ acts instead of us, and does something that, as a result of his doing it, we do not need to do'.[74]

But would not these descriptions easily apply to far more in Paul's writings than the bearing of a penalty? If this is how the concept of substitution is to be defined in itself, it is not clear why our analysis should be limited *only* to those elements of Paul's thinking that bear the closest resemblance to the traditional penal theory. Finally, the description of substitution in terms of *action* in place of another contrasts somewhat with the more qualitative emphasis on alternate *experiences* that seems implied in Gathercole's definition and in those of the anti-substitutionary readings we have considered. Which is primary, and are both equally essential to a 'substitutionary' idea of atonement? Marshall's explicit reliance on the atonement theory of P.T. Forsyth (1848–1921) to formulate his own model highlights just this problem: for Forsyth, it is not the infliction of penal suffering *per se*, but

69. Morris 1955a, 273.
70. Cf. e.g. Morris 1955a, 53.
71. See Morris 1955a, 15, 19.
72. Finlan 2004, 178.
73. Gaffin 2004, 158. He continues '…it clears them from the just punishment of death issuing in eternal destruction'.
74. Marshall 2007, 91.

the manner in which Christ endured suffering, that makes him an atoning agent in place of others. His act was a perfect 'confession' of the holiness of God's judgment upon sin, made in the place of sinful humanity.[75] But if this constitutes 'substitution', then we are faced with the question of precisely *what replaces what* in Christ's relation to others, and whether this should in fact require a radical differentiation between his 'experience' and theirs.

The narrative aspect of substitution's meaning in the above discussions raises similar questions: does a substitutionary understanding of Christ's redemptive action demand a particular narrative framework? If so, what is it? As I showed above, evangelical interpreters tend to lean heavily on Romans 1–3 as the central articulation of Paul's atonement narrative. N.T. Wright, on the other hand, who also identifies a form of penal substitution in Paul's writings, has argued that this reading misses Paul's main point in this text, which concerns Christ's fulfilment of Israel's vocation through his faithfulness in death.[76] While this reading has proven controversial in many quarters—Carson's own summary of the through-logic of these chapters seems at times to be specifically directed against what he regards as Wright's over-emphasis[77]—it does highlight the ways in which varying readings of Paul's narrative framework have the potential to reshape our understanding of his soteriology. In the case of Romans 3, this impinges directly on the question of substitution: although Wright has recently changed his position on Romans 3:25, insisting that we must go elsewhere in Paul (most notably Rom. 8:3) to find penal substitution, in his interpretation it is still Christ's faithfulness *in Israel's stead* to the point of death that brings about the fulfilment of God's promises.[78] Even if it must be framed in terms of *vocation* rather than *punishment*, it would appear arbitrary to deny the exegetical utility of the language of substitution in this passage, even on Wright's reading.

But all of this depends, of course, on the validity of this reading of Paul's narrative: precisely *how* does it structure his account of Christ's 'saving' death? The question can be expanded to encompass Paul's writings and, indeed, those of the NT as a whole. Michael Gorman has recently argued that the church's whole tradition of atonement theology needs to be set back within the 'new covenant' framework of the NT writers, which establishes the

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75. See esp. Forsyth 1910. Forsyth's version of atonement is consciously modifying that of John McLeod Campbell (1800–1872) on certain points.

76. See Wright 2016a.

77. So Carson 2004, 120: 'The problem is not first and foremost the failure of Israel (national or otherwise), or inappropriate use of the law, or the urgency of linking Jews and Gentiles (all genuine themes in these chapters), but the wrath of God directed against every human being, Jew and Gentile alike—a wrath elicited by universal human wickedness'.

78. Compare the discussions of this passage in Wright 2016a and Wright 2002.

ultimate aim of atonement (creation of the eschatological people of the new covenant, characterised patterns of life that correspond to that covenant), for which the various atonement theories describe the penultimate means.[79] As with Wright, Gorman's argument presses us to consider how the narrative context of a theory or concept such as substitution might be reshaped in accordance with this larger context.

1.2.2.2 The Coherence of Substitution and Participation

The proponents of a substitutionary reading of Paul have not found that establishing their view requires a total rejection of the participatory readings that call their view into question. As Gathercole observes, the participatory character of Paul's soteriology 'has become an uncontroversial axiom in biblical scholarship and Christian theology', and even strongly substitutionary accounts reflect this consensus.[80] What they reject, rather, is the notion that these participatory themes stand in conflict with the form of substitution they attribute to Paul. But, despite insisting on the compatibility of these concepts, there presently exists no account of Pauline soteriology that demonstrates, at the exegetical level, *how* they actually interrelate. Exegetical work has sought to affirm the compatibility of substitution and participation by demonstrating their *coexistence* in Paul, but the clearest accounts of their *integration* operate at the conceptual rather than exegetical level.

The best representative of the latter, exegetical approach is Gathercole, whose defence of substitutionary atonement in Paul opens with the question (taken from the spiritual), 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?', to which he says the answer must somehow be *both* 'yes' (with respect to participation) and 'no' (with respect to substitution). This opening question bookends with the closing injunction: 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder!'[81] The intervening argument, however, provides no explanation of how these two are in fact 'joined together'. This is due to Gathercole's more modest aim: to demonstrate that they *must* cohere in some way (whatever that may be) since, in at least two Pauline texts (1 Cor. 15:3 and Rom. 5:6-8), substitution is demonstrably present. The closest Gathercole comes to dealing with this problem is in an excursus addressing the question, 'Why, then, do Christians still die?'[82] Here he stresses that 'there is an asymmetry or disparity

79. See Gorman 2014b. One might have hoped for an additional chapter dealing with the place of various theories in Gorman's model, but his discussion of these is very brief (224-32).
80. Gathercole 2015, 13.
81. Gathercole 2015, 13, 113.
82. See Gathercole 2015, 80-83.

between the kind of death that Christ died on the cross and the deaths that Christian believers die at the end of their lives'.[83] The same is true, Gathercole asserts, of the 'death' believers experience with Christ in baptism: 'following Christ's death there is a crucial sense in which we do participate in that death, but our death is "only" a metaphorical one'.[84] Substitution and participation are not at odds with each other, then, because Paul assigns a different value to the death(s) that believers experience and that which Christ experienced on the cross. This would appear to assume that the believer's participatory 'death' is something discrete and distinct from Christ's own, 'happening' subsequently at baptism. While this view coheres in some ways with the participatory readings we have already surveyed, it also contrasts (as we shall see) with the view of participation that some evangelical scholars assume when they seek to establish its coherence with substitution at the conceptual level. At any rate, Gathercole's concern in this discussion, as with his larger project, lies not so much with the integration of these concepts as with their non-contradiction.

This ambiguity concerning how substitution and participation interrelate at the exegetical level appears also in discussions of 'justification' and 'sanctification' among Pauline scholars who favour a substitutionary reading. Debates over the logic of Romans 8:1-4 serve to illustrate this bifurcation: Chuck Lowe argues that sanctifying participation in Christ, *rather* than Christ's justifying substitution for others, best explains believers' freedom from condemnation in these verses (though he says that the latter themes are nonetheless present elsewhere). With this disjunction comes an equally sharp one between the 'deaths' that Paul attributes to Christ and to believers: 'Deliverance comes *not* through the death of Christ on behalf of sinners, *but* through their *own* death in Christ and through their transformation by the Spirit'.[85] (In this respect, Lowe's view of participation is similar to Gathercole's, though he states it in much starker terms.) Kevin McFadden, in turn, replies that the emphasis on participation and sanctification in this text rests upon Christ's prior, forensic and justifying work; the basic dichotomy, however, is not challenged.[86] Furthermore, the logical relation

83. Gathercole 2015, 80.

84. Gathercole 2015, 83. Gathercole includes the scarequotes because he does not wish to give the impression 'that the content of the metaphorical death is unimportant—merely that it is not a literal death' (83n6).

85. Lowe 1999, 244, emph. added. Lowe immediately adds: 'These latter are, of course, not two different paths to freedom; for it is in (union with the dead and resurrected) Christ that the Spirit sets them free'. Still, unless he intends to erase the distinction just drawn, it would appear that the two deaths are clearly differentiated. In this sense, Lowe presupposes a view of participation that resembles the views of Dunn and Campbell above, even though this does not lead him to reject substitution.

86. See McFadden 2009. McFadden thus agrees with e.g. Moo 1996, 472-73 that the language of sin's condemnation in the passage is exclusively forensic.

between these two categories is not really *explained*: sanctification constitutes 'evidence' of justification and flows from it as a 'necessary result' of Christ's substitutionary death, but the reason for this causality is unclear.[87] Here too, it would seem that the employment of 'substitution' as a technical term for the penal atonement theory has had the effect of restricting its meaning-potential in exegesis, making it something in which more dynamic emphases (e.g. sin as dominating power), *by definition*, can have no part. Substitution and participation may not be in contradiction; neither, however, is the reason for their logical relation readily explicable.

Despite these exegetical difficulties, though, scholarship favouring a substitutionary reading of Paul has had considerably more success in accounting for the interrelation of these concepts at a more abstract, *conceptual* level—particularly regarding the relation between substitution and representation. Several scholars note their overlapping semantic fields, concluding that they do not need to be pitted against each other. In his study of union with Christ in Paul's writings, Constantine Campbell writes,

> According to normal English usage, representation denotes acting on behalf of another. It is difficult to imagine this concept without evoking something of what we normally mean by substitution. By its very nature, the phrase 'on behalf of another' speaks of standing in someone else's stead—acting for them so that they need not act for themselves. Thus, to speak of representation is to recognize substitution—at least to some degree. In this way, representation—with its attendant substitutionary overtones—protects Paul's understanding of participation from semi-Pelagianism (anachronism notwithstanding). While Paul is a participant with, and beneficiary from, Christ and his work, Christ remains Paul's representative in bearing sin and death—and in overturning them too.[88]

Wright uses the imagery of representative government to make a similar point, linking the notion of representation with that of messiahship:

> At the heart of this we find the strange combination of two apparently opposite ideas: the Messiah dies, therefore his people die with him; the Messiah dies, therefore his people do not die. Though these are often played off against one another ('representation' versus 'substitution')…they belong closely with one another. Substitution (he dies, we do not) makes sense within the context of representation (the Member of Parliament *represents* the constituents, and therefore is qualified to act, particularly to speak and vote, *in their place*). Representation is important not least because it creates the context for substitution.[89]

Here, however, the conceptual language that Wright employs proves somewhat inconsistent: whereas his description initially treats the participation in the Messiah's death as integral to the idea of 'representation' ('the Messiah dies, therefore his people die with him'), this participatory element drops out in the illustration that follows. In this illustration's

87. See McFadden 2009, 496.
88. Campbell 2012, 351-52; see 349-52. Campbell is engaging esp. with Powers 2001.
89. Wright 2013b, 310, emph. orig. Gathercole 2004, 20n14 uses the same illustration.

application to Christ, the representative role would appear logically to precede participation as well as substitution: *because* Christ represents his people, his death can be both their death and a death in their stead. But if participation *is* integral to representation, as Wright initially seems to indicate, and if representation 'creates the context for substitution', it would seem to follow that, for Paul, believers' participation in Christ, their representative, is actually part of the *basis* of his substitutionary relation to them, and not the *result* of it, as most interpreters assume. As the subsequent chapters will argue, this is precisely how Paul understands Christ's substitutionary relation to believers—as a consequence, and not a cause, of their solidarity with him.

Campbell's definition of 'participation', on the other hand, would appear to resolve its supposed tension with substitution completely: he describes it as a 'gracious inclusion in the achievements of another', thus defining participation chiefly in terms of *identification* with Christ.[90] A similar conception appears in Marshall:

> We thus have an understanding of the death of Christ as the means provided by God to take away human sin and its penalty. It is an action with which sinners can identify themselves. The death of Christ *is* the death of the sinners who accept what he has done on their behalf and instead of them, and yet may be said to identify themselves with it. They can reckon themselves to have died to sin.[91]

This identificatory view of participation contrasts somewhat with the descriptions of Lowe and Gathercole, who treat participatory death as something discrete and subsequent to Christ's—which raises, once again, the question of definition. *What sort of participation* do we find in Paul? The conceptual clarity that the identificatory reading of participation is able to achieve in its account of this concept's relation to substitution is noteworthy, but only relevant to the present debate insofar as this represents an accurate reading of Paul. If it does, then the above view represents a direct challenge to the anti-substitutionary readings surveyed above—particularly those of Dunn and (Douglas) Campbell. For both of these scholars (particularly Dunn), it is precisely Paul's point that believers' *own* experiences are functionally identical with Christ's, and must repeat or recapitulate his death if believers are to attain freedom from sin and sinful flesh. The 'representative' role that Christ plays in Dunn's account, accordingly, is representative, not with respect to vicarious action, but with respect to Christ's *exhibiting* role vis-a-vis humanity, whereby he *instantiates* the human condition in its respectively pre-eschatological and eschatological states through his death

90. Campbell 2012, 351.
91. Marshall 2007, 52, emph. orig. Similar emphases are found in e.g. Morris 1965, 224; Morris 1955a, 279-80.

and resurrection.[92] Indeed, Dunn's view might seem to fall precisely into the 'semi-Pelagianism' that (Constantine) Campbell rules out.

1.2.2.3 Conclusion

As the preceding survey of substitutionary readings of Paul has shown, the attempts of substitution's advocates to relate it to participation and representation raise the question of meaning more urgently than ever: *what, in fact, are we talking about?* This applies not only to the language of substitution, but to participation and representation as well. The capacity of these terms to denote a variety of phenomena makes the effort to establish their conceptual interrelation all the more problematic. Before addressing these issues directly and proposing a methodology to guide the exegetical discussion, however, we must first take note of the Pauline texts and putative historical backgrounds that have featured most prominently in the debate.

1.2.3 Texts and Historical Backgrounds

One of the main ways in which the foregoing debate displays its primarily conceptual and paradigmatic (rather than exegetical) nature is in its deployment of texts and historical evidence. For the most part, the debate has not involved scholars' marshalling competing and alternative bodies of evidence against each other; rather, they read the *same* evidence through the lenses of differing soteriological frameworks that depend (as we have seen) on subtly different assumptions regarding the concepts in dispute. This evidence, as I will now show, has proven malleable enough to these frameworks to prevent the emergence of any consensus. It is divisible into two layers: both sides in the discussion lay claim *to the same Pauline texts*, as well as *the same historical backgrounds* to Paul's thought. The fact that competing frameworks find sufficient agreement in these texts to adduce them in support of their respective positions reinforces the claim of the preceding critical survey: advancing the state of the question requires greater attentiveness to the *descriptive exegetical potential* of the terms in question, and an approach to exegesis that allows the texts themselves to suggest what would and would not fall into these categories.

1.2.3.1 Texts in Dispute

92. Williams 2015, 186 appears to assume a similar definition of representation when he says that '[a] purely representative death does not benefit those for whom the death was experienced. Rather, representation alone suggests that the one who dies becomes one of those with whom he dies'.

Three texts in particular appear most frequently and prominently in debates over substitution and participation in Paul: Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13. Whiteley, who refers to these texts as 'those three pillars, as it has been supposed, of the substitutionary theory', claims that these texts concern the *fact* of atonement, rather than its *modus operandi*, rejecting the traditional reading of them on this basis.[93] Nevertheless, readings both for and against substitution find evidence in these texts of their respective soteriological mechanisms.[94] In addition to these three main texts, others have featured in the debate and been read differently on both sides. We have already noted the prominence of Romans 3:25 within the traditional substitutionary reading of Paul, and how this is situated within a reading of the narrative logic of Romans 1–4 that presents Christ's death as the solution to the problem of divine wrath against sin. This reading has not gone unchallenged, however, as we have also seen.[95] For Dunn, it makes little sense to speak of Christ's death in the propitiatory sense often attributed to this verse, since death necessarily entails undergoing divine wrath, at least in some sense.[96] We have also taken note of Douglas Campbell's rhetorical re-reading of these chapters, which (if correct) would directly undermine the traditional evangelical reading.[97] Thus, while Romans 3:25, and chapters 1–4 more broadly, have featured prominently in evangelical accounts of penal substitution in Paul, they have not apparently been deemed incompatible with other schemes as well.

The same is true of Romans 4:25, which many scholars understand in terms of its allusion to LXX Isaiah 53:12. For Gathercole, '[t]he sense of Romans 4:25 is that God hands over his Son to punishment, and in doing so, deals with human sin'.[98] So also Marshall, who relates the latter half of the verse to the substitutionary logic of Christ's death: 'God accepts that Christ has borne the penalty of human sin and does so by raising him from the death that he suffered on behalf of humanity'.[99] But according to Powers (who questions the influence of Isa. 53 on Rom. 4:25), '[t]he only presupposition which can make sense of Paul's argument in vv. 24-25 is the idea that Christ and those who believe in him form some kind of unity or

93. Whiteley 1964, 134.
94. See e.g. Dunn 1991, 40-43; Hooker 1990b, 13-15, 22; Irons 2015, 291; McLean 1996; Moo 1996, 481; Morris 1955a, 55, 59, 203-4; Powers 2001, 57-85; Ridderbos 1953, 125-29; Schreiner 2010, 203-19; Wright 2013a, 898.
95. As our above discussion noted, even Wright, who reads Romans 8:3 in a (somewhat modified) penal substitutionary light, has recently argued against the traditional reading of Romans 3:25, in large part on the basis of the sacrificial themes it contains (on which see below). See Wright 2016a.
96. Dunn 1991, 51.
97. See Campbell 2009.
98. Gathercole 2004, 183.
99. Marshall 2007, 85.

solidarity'.[100] Consequently, verse 25 is not to be understood in terms of substitution, but in terms of representation: 'Jesus identified himself with the believers in their trespasses; because he identified himself with the sins of the believers, Jesus died', and because believers are identified with him, they participate in his justification.[101] Meanwhile, whereas Powers sees similar themes of identification, solidarity and unity in 1 Corinthians 15:3 and Romans 5:6-8,[102] Gathercole argues that the former 'modifies a standard assumption in the Old Testament, namely, that sinning leads to one's own death'[103] to describe Christ's substitutionary experience of the consequences of others' sins, and that the latter draws on pagan traditions of 'noble death' in the place of family, friends or loved ones in order to characterise Christ's death for his enemies.[104]

1.2.3.2 Historical Backgrounds in Dispute

In addition to the same Pauline texts, both substitutionary and non-substitutionary readings of Paul adduce many of the same historical backgrounds as explanations for his soteriology. The 'usual suspects' within this discussion (as Powers calls them) are second temple traditions concerning sacrifice, Isaiah 53 and martyrdom.[105] To this we may add one background that has featured more prominently in substitutionary readings of Paul, namely the background of Mediterranean expulsion rituals (e.g. the scapegoat in Lev. 16). As with the Pauline texts under discussion, these backgrounds have (for the most part) been deemed agreeable to both soteriological paradigms.

According to Dunn, the sacrificial background reflected in most of the key texts concerning Jesus' death in Paul reflects the participatory character of Paul's soteriology. For at least some Jews of his day, the offerer of sacrifice was thought to identify himself with the animal through the hand-laying gesture, so that the death of the animal in sacrifice is viewed 'as the death of the sinner *qua* sinner, that is, the destruction of his sin'.[106] (Here Dunn's view mirrors that of the Tübingen scholars who employ the language of *Stellvertretung*.[107]) In Dunn's understanding, this enactment of sin's destruction, accomplished in an archetypal

100. Powers 2001, 132.
101. Powers 2001, 133.
102. See Powers 2001, 46-56, 94-97, 106-10.
103. Gathercole 2015, 68; cf. LXX renderings in in Num. 27:3; Deut. 24:16; Josh. 22:20; 1 Kgs. 16:18-19; Jer. 31:30.
104. See Gathercole 2015, 90-107.
105. See Powers 2001, 19-20.
106. Dunn 1991, 46; see 43-47.
107. See esp. Gese 1981; Hofius 1989; Janowski 1982.

sense in Christ's sacrificial death, then characterises all who identify themselves with him. Morris, on the other hand, reads the levitical cult in strongly penal substitutionary terms, arguing 'that what is ritually presented to God [i.e. blood] is the evidence that a death has taken place in accordance with His judgment on sin'.[108] Williams understands sacrifice similarly: 'the priest sacrificed the animals for the sins of Israel instead of sacrificing the people for their own sins'.[109] He applies this understanding, in turn, to Isaiah 53, which he regards as an appropriation of levitical sacrificial themes to describe the death of a human being as a sacrifice who dies in place of others.[110]

While Isaiah 53 has traditionally been understood in this light, we saw above how Paul's appropriation of this text has been interpreted in a drastically different sense, as a fundamental *transformation* of its meaning, rather than a simple appropriation of it. Thus, for Hofius, Paul adopts traditional formulae in Romans 4:25 and 1 Corinthians 15:3 without sharing their original authors' view of Christ's death.[111] Meanwhile, according to Hooker, even Isaiah 53 *itself* evinces the inclusive understanding that Hofius attributes to Paul.[112] Finally, Williams regards second temple martyr traditions as a further development of Isaiah's own application of sacrificial themes to the servant's death, interpreting the deaths of faithful Jews under foreign oppression through this Isaianic and levitical prism as a substitutionary means of Israel's reconciliation with God.[113] Powers, on the other hand, reads the same texts (as well as Judith and Testament of Moses) in non-substitutionary terms, arguing that the second-temple traditions portray the martyrs as suffering in solidarity with corporate Israel, who in turn are seen to share in the vindication of the martyrs as their representatives.[114] Thus, for example, the restoration of Israel coincides with the martyrs' exaltation to heaven.[115]

One reading of Paul's background influences that cuts across many of the above is Bradley McLean's.[116] He attributes a substitutionary meaning to Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians

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108. Morris 1965, 219; cf. esp. 108-24. Morris especially takes issue with views of the atonement that interpret the blood of sacrificial animals, on the basis of Lev. 17:11, as "life" *rather than* "death"; rather, he argues, 'blood *in separation from the flesh* is not life but death' (219, emph. orig.).

109. Williams 2015, 59.

110. See Williams 2015, 62-73. For a similar reading of Isa. 53, see Allen 2012.

111. See Hofius 2004, 177-82.

112. See Hooker 1998, 95-98, evaluating the views of Orlinsky 1967 and Whybray 1978; she notes Hofius' reading on p. 98.

113. See Williams 2015, 74-104.

114. Powers 2001, 194.

115. See Powers 2001, 203-10.

116. See esp. McLean 1996, 105-45. Finlan 2004 also follows McLean's reading at various points, though he does not follow him in denying the presence of sacrificial themes in Paul's writings.

5:21 and Galatians 3:13, but does so on the basis of a different historical background—namely, ancient expulsion rituals such as that of the scapegoat, which 'embod[y] the belief that once sin had blighted the people, it would work itself out upon them unless a substitute could be provided upon whom it might be discharged'.[117] In his view, the presence of this ideology in the above texts rules out participation in Christ, even though Paul does develop this theme elsewhere.[118] Of Romans 8:3, for instance, he says that 'Christ was not sent in sinful flesh to stand *in solidarity* with sinful humanity, but *in substitution for* it'.[119] (Somewhat confusingly, he then employs the language that Hooker uses to *rule out* substitution: 'The principle [*sic*] idea is that of interchange: the pre-existent sinless Christ becomes identified with human sin in order that humans might be made sinless, where God is the active agent in this double imputation'.) If correct, McLean's view would undermine the above readings in various respects: while a substitutionary portrayal of Paul would result, it would not be sacrificial—nor, it seems, Isaianic or martyrological.[120]

1.2.3.3 Conclusion

As I have shown in the preceding discussion, the same Pauline material is the object of drastically different interpretations, specifically as regards the question of substitution and the relevance of certain putative historical backgrounds. Each reading of these bodies of evidence, it seems, is able to account for at least enough of the evidence to keep a solid consensus beyond reach. The paradigmatic nature of this conflict, and the intractability of the debates surrounding it, suggest that a significant advance in the discussion will likely require more than just additional evidence, whether from Paul or one of his backgrounds. With this in mind, we can now turn to concluding remarks on the preceding survey.

1.2.4 Conclusion: The Problem of Definition and Exegetical Method

In the preceding critical survey of scholarship on substitution and participation in Paul, I have highlighted the manner in which these discussions assume that the language of substitution specifically denotes a certain function of Jesus' *death*—one that typically corresponds to certain forms of an evangelical theory of penal substitution. This theory carries with it a certain narrative framework that structures its logical relationships,

117. McLean 1996, 77.
118. On participation, see McLean 1996, 201-06.
119. McLean 1996, 143, emph. orig.
120. See McLean 1996, 49-50, 51n92. McLean denies that atoning sacrifice features in Paul's thought at all; see McLean 1992.

particularly regarding sin, divine wrath, and Christ's death. There exists a certain degree of underlying ambivalence, however, regarding the true exegetical potential of the language in dispute. It is often implicitly recognised that, in simplified form (e.g. 'acting in another's place'), the language of substitution may describe a variety of phenomena in Paul's writings, some of which lie beyond the purview of traditional theories. Similarly, the language of participation and representation proves multivalent: participation can describe believers' identification with Christ's own death and resurrection, or the functional equivalence of their experiences with his, to the effect that they repeat or recapitulate his death and resurrection in order to experience salvation. Representation, meanwhile, can describe the instantiative significance of Christ's humanity (i.e. he is a 'representative sample' of those he represents), or take a form that is more amenable to the idea of substitution, such that his actions in the place of others are effective for them. Lastly, we have seen that the same Pauline evidence—both the texts themselves, and their possible historical backgrounds—have been claimed and deployed in mutually contradictory ways by different groups of interpreters, who find a sufficient degree of correspondence between these bodies of evidence and their soteriological frameworks for reading Paul.

The point of these observations is not to preclude the possibility that some of the above readings may be preferable to others, or to suggest that the existence of ongoing disagreement *must* equally falsify both. It is perfectly legitimate to ask whether Paul's descriptions of Christ's death cohere with a particular theory or model of atonement. But we need to be aware of the methodological limitations such an approach imposes, and the dangers to which it is prone. In particular, the above discussions of substitution exhibit a tendency to confine their attention to Christ's *death* and, in particular, to the ostensibly *penal dimension* of this death, a focus that corresponds to that of traditional models. But this limitation runs the risk of obscuring broader substitutionary dynamics that appear in Christ's soteriological relation to others—dyanimcs that may have some clarifying value as regards the relationship between 'substitution' and 'participation' in Paul's writings. More nuanced questions are demanded, which apparently have yet to be posed in the discussion of this topic: what role do motifs and patterns of substitution play more broadly in his descriptions of Christ's redemptive action? And how do these substitutionary elements, if they are present, relate to his understanding of believing participation in Christ? We need, in short, to develop a methodology that is attentive to how the *language of substitution* functions in English and to how this language may fruitfully be employed in the description of the exegetical data—not only the data

concerning Christ's relation to believers, but also the narrative setting in which Paul makes sense of this relation. Doing so will allow for a more hermeneutically self-aware description of Pauline soteriology, and may shed further light on the sort of participation in Christ Paul's writings have in view.

1.3 Approaching the Question: Methodology & Aims

With the preceding discussion in view, I will now establish the approach of the present dissertation to the problem of substitution in Paul's writings. Advancing the state of the question in current scholarship demands a more reflective use of the etic conceptual language being employed in the debate. After considering how the object of study should constrain and determine the use of the language that is applied to it, I will offer an account of how the language of substitution functions in contemporary English and of how it may be employed most fruitfully in the exegesis of Paul's texts, noting also its conceptual relationship to the distinct senses in which the scholarship surveyed above has used the language of representation and participation. I will then provide a heuristic model of the 'typical form' of substitutionary atonement in contemporary scholarship, with which to compare and contrast our findings in Paul. Finally, I will establish the limits of the study and summarise the thesis.

1.3.1 Hermeneutical Considerations

In approaching the question of substitution in Paul's writings, it is imperative that we account for how this language, as well as that of representation and participation, relate to the object of study. In what follows, I will account for the role of etic conceptual language in exegesis, and then establish how the language of substitution, representation and participation is best employed in exegesis, on the grounds of these terms' basic meaning potential in contemporary English usage. I will also provide an account of these concepts' potential for logical conflict, as well as compatibility.

1.3.1.1 The Language of Substitution

When we speak of substitution in Paul's writings, we are engaged in 'etic' rather than 'emic' description—which is to say, we are describing Paul's thinking in our own terms and categories rather than in his.[121] The legitimacy of this procedure rests on critical realist

121. So Wolter 2015, 100. Potential emic equivalents would be the verbs ἀντικαθιστάνω or ὑποκαθίσταμαι, neither of which occurs in the NT; ἀντικαθίστημι can be used in this sense, but its single

epistemological assumptions: we need not, and indeed cannot, renounce our historical located-ness or the otherness of our categories of thought in order to make genuine epistemological contact with past phenomena, such as what a Jewish apostle and missionary of the first century thought about the revelation of Israel's God in the death and resurrection of Israel's anointed king.[122] But in the encounter of knowing, the object of knowledge summons us to reflect upon our own ways of thinking about it, modifying them where necessary in order to make them more suitable to their object.[123] So long as our etic concepts and categories are sufficiently malleable to that object of inquiry, they can serve as a helpful means of elucidating dynamics in Paul's thinking and arguing that might otherwise remain invisible.

Doing this requires that we think in broad terms about the way that the language of substitution actually works in ordinary English, and what in turn makes any particular theory or model of atonement 'substitutionary'. As J.I. Packer observes, 'Substitution is, in fact, a broad idea that applies whenever one person acts to supply another's need, or to discharge his obligation, so that the other no longer has to carry the load himself'.[124] We have seen this understanding reflected, with varying degrees of subtlety, throughout the preceding survey (e.g. Mody: 'person X excludes person Y and takes his place in an act Z'[125]). In English, this kind of language is typically used to describe a teacher replacing another in the classroom (a 'substitute teacher') or an athlete replacing an injured or exhausted one on the field ('subbing in'). Indeed, substitution can be used even more broadly than Packer suggests, and need not even refer to persons: we speak of making 'substitutions' in recipes, using ingredients in place of others that will perhaps confer some health benefit, while still achieving a similar effect in taste or texture. Alongside this quotidian example, we can add another that is more directly related to the study of Paul: it is not uncommon in scholarship to hear people describe ancient letters of the kind Paul wrote as 'a substitute for personal presence', the object replacing its author in communicating what the author intends to its recipient, and thus maintaining relations with that recipient despite the author's not being there in person.[126] One

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occurrence in the NT (Heb. 12:4) means 'resist' rather than 'replace'. The noun ὑποκατάστασις ('substitution') and related terms occur later and refer specifically to the appointing of an heir in place of another; see *Cod. Just.* 1.3.52.13; Just. *Nov.* 1.1.3; cf. 22.44.9.

122. On critical realism, see Wright 1992d, 31-46.

123. See esp. Torrance 2003 (orig. pub. 1982); cf. Torrance 1969.

124. Packer 1974, 17. Packer builds on Pannenberg 1968, who describes substitution as a basic underlying principle of social organisation.

125. Mody 2008, 116.

126. So e.g. Porter 2016, 136.

could easily employ the same language to describe an *amanuensis*, who writes on the author's behalf, as well as the bearer of the letter who speaks the author's words to the letter's audiences.

As these examples demonstrate, the language of 'substitution' employs spatial imagery ('in place of…') to describe a relationship in which one entity functions in another's stead with an adequate equivalence and for a given purpose. Put differently, 'substitution' denotes *replacement in a functional capacity*. The form that a particular substitution takes will then depend on several variables. As regards the phenomenon itself, the substitution will be discernible in terms of (1) what is replacing and being replaced, (2) what the replacement is doing in the other's stead and (3) how the replacement comes about. As a shorthand for these defining elements, we can use the terminology of substitution's *content*, *function* and *means*. These elements, in turn, make the sense that they do within a certain implied *narrative* that structures their relationships and generates the substitution's plausibility by accounting for the *purpose* that gives the function at the heart of the replacement its significance. To apply this schematisation to one of the above examples, a substitute teacher replaces another teacher (content) in the capacity of teaching a class (function) by being physically present to perform the task where the other is physically absent (means). The rationale for this substitution arises from the logic of an implied narrative: a teacher has gotten sick, but does not wish for the class to fall behind, and therefore asks someone else who is equally qualified (because of her own education and expertise in the topic) to teach the class for him.

We may apply this analysis to the understanding of 'substitution' that most of the scholars in the preceding survey assume or articulate—not, as we shall see, in order then to presuppose it in our own exegesis, but to establish a way of comparing our own exegetical findings with this traditional construction. In effect, what each of these scholars has done is determine some or all of the above variables on the basis of a received understanding of atonement theory, which is then tested in Paul's writings. This received understanding may be broadly defined along the following lines:

- ***Content*:** Christ's death, in the place of sinners' deaths[127]
- ***Function*:** to sustain the penalty that sin is due, in order to satisfy God's justice,

127. Here further detail would address the question of whether Christ's death fulfils these functions for all humanity, or only for an elect sub-group ('limited atonement'). Additionally, some might explicitly include Christ's obedient life in fulfilment of the law (his 'perfect active obedience') within the substitution; so e.g. Hodge 1867.

propitiating him and legitimating his forgiveness of sinners

- ***Means*:** a dual forensic imputation,[128] in which sinners' penal liability is attributed to Christ (who is then punished), and Christ's righteousness is attributed to those who believe in and are united to him (and are therefore justified)

This substitution takes place within the implied narrative that also runs through many of the above discussions: humans have sinned and provoked the wrath of the holy God. But God, who created humanity to live in obedience, desires and purposes to reconcile them to himself by dealing with their sin in a manner consistent with his justice, which demands a commensurate punishment.[129] Accordingly, he sends his Son to act on their behalf, faultlessly bearing the penalty of sin in their stead. While many scholars focus on particular aspects of this model—e.g. Gathercole on *content* ('Christ's death in our place, instead of us'), Powers on *means* (double-imputation)—it should be generally agreed that the above constitutes a broadly accurate description of the view of atonement in dispute.

We will presently consider how a broad understanding of the language of substitution, as well as this particular application of it, relate to the exegetical task before us. First, however, it is important that we also give attention to the language of representation and participation as well, noting in more precise terms how this language relates to that of substitution in the general sense.

1.3.1.2 The Language of Representation and Participation

In the case of substitution, we are dealing with a concept of fairly simple meaning (monosemy), albeit one frequently given a heavily pre-determined theoretical configuration in Pauline exegesis. But in the case of representation, we encounter a multivalent semantic potential (polysemy). On the one hand, this word can describe simply the representative's qualitative likeness to the group with which he, she or it is identified (i.e. a 'representative sample'). This instantiative meaning, as we have noted, is closer to the view of Dunn and several others: in his respective adamic and glorified states, Christ embodies the condition of two kinds of humanity, thus 'representing' them to people. On the other hand, representation can take on more vicarious overtones that appear to overlap readily with substitution. We

128. Here the imagery of *exchange* or *transfer* is often employed.
129. Some (e.g. Stott 2006) freely describe the cross as resolving a strife of attributes in God at this point, but most of the recent apologists for the theory deny that this is the case. See esp. Vidu 2014, 235-72.

have seen this, for instance, in the views of N.T. Wright and Constantine Campbell. In the discussion of substitution on which I draw above, Packer highlights this meaning in particular, noting the OED's definition of representation as 'the fact of standing for, or in place of, some other thing or person, esp. with a right or authority to act on their account; *substitution* of one thing or person for another', from which he concludes that we are dealing with 'a distinction without a difference'.[130] While such a conclusion arguably goes too far, the genuine difference that does exist between these concepts (thus understood) is relatively minor and simply a matter of emphasis: whereas *substitution* concerns the distinct function of the one in the other's stead, *representation* stresses the identification between the two. As many (like Packer) have observed, here there seems to be no logical point of conflict with substitution.

In fact, neither of these understandings of representation appears to be in any inherent logical contradiction with the idea of substitution. Rather, it is a certain understanding of *participation*, which some interpreters (most explicitly Dunn) wed to the idea of representation, that rules out a substitutionary aspect to the same phenomena. In ordinary use, participation denotes a 'sharing' or 'taking part' in something—though this often carries a more active nuance in contemporary English (e.g. 'participating' in a survey, election, game, etc.). In Dunn's account, the specific 'thing' shared between Christ and believers is precisely what other views would assign solely to Christ: the soteriological *function* of dealing with sin in death. The suffering and death of believers 'takes part' in the condemnation and destruction of sinful flesh that occurred in the death of Christ, with the result that they then 'take part' in his bodily glorification. This means that Christ's suffering or death cannot function in place of the believer's own, since the fulfilment of that function—the destruction of sin and the dissolution of the sinful flesh—depends precisely upon the repetition or recapitulation of those events in the believer's *own* experience.

This, in a nutshell, is the point of potential conflict between the concepts of substitution and participation: in that substitution identifies a functional *replacement*, it necessarily stands

130. Packer 1974, 17. Packer also notes the semantic overlap with the term 'vicarious'. Hooker 1998, 96 takes note of this definition as well, and contrasts it with another definition of vicarious describing action 'performed or achieved by…one person on behalf of another' and equating this with 'representation' *rather than* 'substitution'. This hardly seems to escape Packer's charge of distinction without difference, however; here the reasoning of Campbell 2012, 351-52 seems to apply: 'It is difficult to imagine this concept without evoking something of what we normally mean by substitution'. The difficulty, it seems, arises from Hooker's underlying assumption that a difference in *experience* is constitutive of the idea of substitution: if a vicarious agent is experiencing the same conditions as others for whom his or her action is effective, then that action cannot be substitutionary.

in contrast to any participatory *sharing* of the functions in question. If, on the other hand, a different functional value is assigned to the actions or experiences of Christ than to those of believers, there is no reason in principle why he cannot be their substitute—*even if* there is a qualitative likeness between his actions or experiences and theirs. To speak in terms of the traditional theory, if Christ's suffering and death *function*, rather than those of believers, to discharge the penalty of sin and propitiate God, then he is their substitute, *so long as their own suffering and death do not fulfil the same function*. It misses the point to reason (as many have) from the fact that believers still die to the conclusion that Christ cannot be their substitute—as though the atonement theorists of past centuries were unaware of the fact that Christians still experience suffering and death. Rather, the question we must ask regarding substitution's compatibility with participation in Paul's writings concerns the degree of *functional equivalence* between what Christ undergoes and what believers undergo: do their suffering and death function in the same capacities as his? In short, do their experiences *participate* in the redemptive functions of his? If so, he cannot be their substitute. If, however, Pauline participation in Christ entails a sharing of something other than these redemptive functions, the mutual compatibility and even interrelation of these concepts becomes possible.

1.3.1.3 Conclusion

I have argued that it is methodologically preferable to think in broader terms about the meaning-potential of substitution and its relationship to the language of representation and participation. As we saw, 'substitution' broadly describes a relationship of replacement in a functional capacity, which can be understood in terms of the replacement's *content*, *function* and *means*. While this concept is not inherently at odds with that of representation, a potential point of conflict arises with respect to participation, depending on what is said to be shared between the two parties concerned. In the next section, I will discuss how these considerations determine the approach of the subsequent chapters to the question of substitution in Paul's writings.

1.3.2 Approach of the Study

The aim of this dissertation is to ascertain what substitutionary motifs, if any, characterise the relation between Christ and believers in Paul's writings. Rather than attempting to substantiate or reject a received model of penal substitutionary atonement, I will seek to

derive the content, function and means of Christ's redemptive replacement of believers, as well as the narrative framework structuring this relationship, from Paul's writings themselves. In doing this, I will also explore two related questions that pertain to the respective sides of the present debate: how do these substitutionary soteriological motifs relate, on the one hand, to the 'typical' model of penal substitutionary atonement (outlined above) and, on the other, to participatory motifs found in the same contexts? Meanwhile, because the concept of representation demonstrably conflicts with substitution only as it is wedded to a particular view of participation, it will not figure prominently in our discussion.

Since an exhaustive account of substitutionary motifs in the letters of Paul would spread a study of this scale too thin, three limiting factors—textual, historical and thematic—will be imposed on the relevant material. First, the textual: as we have seen, debates on substitution and participation in Paul have revolved especially around three texts: Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13. To this we can add Romans 3:25 which features prominently in arguments favouring a substitutionary reading, specifically as Paul's articulation of the narrative logic that is basic to the typical substitutionary model. These four texts in their respective discourses will constitute the core of our discussion, and will be considered in this (canonical) order. While it would be possible to adopt a chronological approach, it is not our purpose in this discussion to hypothesise any *development* in Paul's thought over time. Additionally, whereas a chronological ordering would place Romans after 2 Corinthians (though the two letters, even allowing for various partition theories in the case of the latter, were written at roughly the same time), it will be helpful to consider Romans first, as this letter's discussion of 'the righteousness of God' will inform our interpretation of the other.

A second limiting factor concerns the putative historical backgrounds in which both sides of the present debate have found support. For purposes of the present discussion, we are not concerning ourselves with the *origins* of Paul's understanding of Christ's redemptive action, whether as regards substitution or participation. The preceding survey, moreover, has at least raised the possibility that Paul's own understanding differs from that of his sources (e.g. as Hofius argues in regard to Isa. 53), in which case their substitutionary or participatory motifs would not illuminate his writings as readily as some would hope. Our interest, rather, lies with the substitutionary and participatory phenomena that occur in Paul for whatever reason, and so I will address the question of Paul's background influences only in a partial and fairly *ad hoc* manner based on their relevance to the interpretation of specific texts.

The third, thematic limiting factor imposed on our study is the confinement of its focus specifically to *soteriological* substitutionary motifs that are directly pertinent to the redemptive relation that exists *between Christ and believers*, which has been the topic of contention in modern scholarship. We are concerned, in other words, not simply with motifs of 'replacement in a functional capacity' in general (e.g. Paul's letters as 'substitutes for personal presence'), but with 'replacement in a *redemptive* functional capacity' in particular. This leaves interesting avenues unexplored and various stones unturned (e.g. Dunn's suggestion that Jesus functions as a substitute, of sorts, for God). Thus, while much more could be said, it is hoped that the present study will model a way of talking about substitution in Pauline soteriology that may be fruitfully applied elsewhere in his corpus, as well as in biblical exegesis and theology more broadly.

The argument in each chapter will be structured as follows: after a brief overview of pertinent details in the text under consideration, I will summarise and critically evaluate the substitutionary reading(s) normally offered for them. Then, I will provide my own account of the soteriological function that Christ fulfils in the text in question and the implied narrative within which Paul locates this function. After this, I will consider what evidence in these soteriological statements and their contexts, if any, suggests that Paul understands Christ's relation to believers as one of redemptive functional replacement, considering also their relation to any motifs of participation in the same contexts. Finally, in my discussion of participation I will engage directly with the question of whether Paul supposes that believers' subsequent actions or experiences share in any of the redemptive functions that Paul attributes to Christ (recapitulative participationism). Throughout the argument, my primary conversation partners will be those whose readings of Paul reflect the dominant trends in scholarly discussion surveyed above—those, on the one hand, who read Paul along the lines of the typical substitutionary model and, on the other, who attribute to Paul a participatory soteriological model that rules out his substitutionary relation to believers. Among the latter, I will particularly engage with the model of Pauline participationism that James Dunn offers since, as we have seen, this is both the most detailed and most clearly in conflict with a substitutionary construal of Christ's soteriological functions in Paul.

With the basic approach of the dissertation outlined, we are now positioned to engage with Paul's texts in ways that will advance the discussion of substitution and participation in his writings. Before doing this, however, it will be helpful to summarise the dissertation's findings.

1.4 Thesis Summary

In this dissertation, I will argue that several interrelated motifs of substitution characterise the soteriological relation between Christ and believers described in the four texts considered below. These substitutionary motifs not only do not *contradict* the participatory motifs in the same contexts, but actually *depend* on them for their logical cogency. Moreover, while there are some points of overlap between the motifs of substitution in these texts and the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement, they are not identical.

In the contexts of their individual arguments, Romans 3:25 and 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13 each assume or say that Jesus Christ, through his death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life in the Spirit, fulfils a soteriological function for believers in their place. The 'means' of this substitution is the *participatory* relation that exists between believers and Christ. One way of putting this would be to say that, precisely in *sharing* himself with believers, Christ causes his death, resurrection and pneumatic life to function redemptively for them *in place of* their own. Christ's body and life are made functionally *theirs* and, precisely for this reason, functionally *replace* their own in the soteriological capacities that they fill. This tension between believers' inclusion in Christ and their exclusion from his redemptive agency is constitutive of Christ's soteriological role for believers in the texts this dissertation will consider.

Cumulatively, these texts' portrayal of Christ's soteriological relation to believers can be summarised as follows:

- ***Content*:** Jesus Christ, in his death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life, in the place of believers

- ***Function*:** to obtain and sustain their eschatological freedom from sin and for life to God in righteousness, as his people

- ***Means*:** through their participatory union with him, by the Spirit

Within this synthesis, however, lies a variety and complexity that it will be the task of this dissertation to unfold. The language of substitution describes not only Christ's death, but equally his resurrection and ongoing life, each of which contributes to the soteriological function that he fulfils. In his death, Christ undergoes the full eventuation of sin's penal consequences and, in doing so, abolishes the corrupt human condition ('the flesh') that is

subject to sin, condemnation and the curse of the law. Simultaneously, his death constitutes an act of obedience and faith in God's promise of life, which results in God's vindicating act of raising Christ from the dead. In his death and resurrection, then, Christ himself *is* the vicarious enactment of God's eschatological verdict concerning his people: his death and resurrection replace those of God's people in accomplishing their judgment and justification. But more still can be said: Christ's substitutionary role concerns not only these past events, but also his ongoing role in relation to the people of God, whom he sustains in eschatological freedom from sin and condemnation despite their continuance in bodies characterised by mortality and the presence of sin. As people indwelt by the risen Christ, believers are constituted as sons[131] of God and as Abraham's promised eschatological family, enabled to live in a manner pleasing to God as they await final bodily conformity to Christ at his return.

This substitutionary relation plays a distinct role in the arguments of each of the letters considered in this dissertation. In Romans, it discloses God's fidelity to his promises to Abraham and enables believers to live in obedience and freedom from impending eschatological judgment, despite not adhering to the 'letter' of Torah. In 2 Corinthians, it both animates Paul's apostolic ministry and demands that the Corinthians adopt a new epistemology, so that they learn to perceive Paul as a sharer and minister of the promised new covenant and new creation in Christ, notwithstanding the weakness of his mortal flesh. In Galatians, it serves the salvation-historical purpose of bringing Israel's narrative to its eschatological fulfilment and extending the promised blessing of Abraham to the nations. It also serves the purpose of relativising Jewish claims to eschatological Abrahamic kinship, so that Jews and Gentiles stand on equal footing. As these brief summaries also indicate, the implied narrative of God's dealings with Abraham and Israel constructs the plausibility of Christ's substitutionary soteriological role: the divine promise and covenant with Israel creates the framework within which (1) sin is condemned and (2) faith and obedience result in eschatological salvation. Christ, at God's behest, is the primary acting agent in this narrative, taking upon himself both the negative consequences of sin in death and enacting a faithful obedience that receives the fulfilment of God's promises through his resurrection from the dead.

One important corollary to this reading is that the participation of believers does not take

131. I employ the masculine noun because this preserves the closest connection with Christ's own unique sonship, a connection Paul himself seeks to maintain (cf. Rom. 8:14-15, 19; Gal. 3:26), though he also uses broader terminology (e.g. Rom. 8:16-17, 21).

part in fulfilling the specific soteriological functions that Paul attributes to Christ in these texts. In other words, their own experiences (e.g. suffering, death, resurrection) do not, as in the analysis of James Dunn, entail their soteriologically effective *recapitulation* or repetition of his archetypal death and resurrection. While participation in Christ does entail believers' ongoing conformity to Christ, in both his death and his resurrection, this conformity does not itself function to sustain the condemnation of sin, abolish sinful flesh or obtain eschatological life. Rather, these redemptive blessings have already become the possession of believers, in that Christ, their true bearer and mediator, has become their possession through the Spirit.

In content, function, means and implied narrative, this analysis of substitution in Paul's texts differs in notable ways from the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement, though there are substantial points of overlap. First, the substitutionary soteriological motifs that appear in Paul involve more than simply Christ's death, but include the function of his resurrection and ongoing eschatological life, which equally replace the agency of believers in obtaining and mediating soteriological benefits. Second, the means of this substitution (participation in Christ by the Spirit) contrasts with the means of forensic 'double imputation' in the typical model (this, however, is not to deny the importance of forensic language in Paul's descriptions of Christ's soteriological role). Third, the interplay of inclusive and exclusive dynamics that results from the pneumatological means of substitution in Paul—the body of *another*, functioning as *one's own*—is not usually reflected in the typical model, which tends to treat Christ's substitutionary role and participation in him as distinct (the latter, perhaps, as the 'application' of the former). Fourth, while the typical model may accurately identify hidden Pauline assumptions regarding the 'necessity' of sin's punishment in Christ's death, the narrative framework that constructs this necessity in Paul differs in its emphasis on the themes of covenant and promise, rather than on the need to establish the coherence of certain divine attributes (e.g. justice and mercy). Nevertheless, granting these differences, the typical substitutionary model does rest on the fundamentally correct insight that, in Paul's understanding, Christ's death functions in the place of believers' deaths to sustain the penalty of sin.

Chapter 2
Substitution & Participation in Romans: Part I

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter established an exegetical methodology with which to address the question of substitution and its relation to participation in Paul's writings. Defining 'substitution' as 'replacement in a functional capacity' and further parsing this definition in terms of the content, function and means of that replacement, I established the study's objective of identifying substitutionary motifs in Paul's writings and constructing a positive account on the basis of information Paul himself provides, rather than relying on a pre-conceived model of substitutionary atonement.

The following discussion applies this methodology in the early chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans. As we saw in the introductory survey, Paul's portrayal of Christ as an ἱλαστήριον in Romans 3:25 features prominently in arguments favouring a substitutionary reading of Paul, especially because of the place that this soteriological statement is thought to occupy within the assumed narrative flow of Romans 1:18–3:20. Our discussion will begin with a consideration of this narrative framework, which will help us to establish the soteriological function that Paul attributes to Christ in Romans 3:25 before we proceed to the question of substitution (i.e. whether Christ is replacing others in fulfilling that function). Then I will address the further question of how participatory motifs in the same context should inform our interpretation, raising the question of whether any of Paul's language suggests a recapitulative participationism in which the believer's actions and experiences

share in the soteriological function of Christ's.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the typical substitutionary reading of Romans 3:25 in its context misconstrues the narrative arc of these chapters in a number of ways, resulting in a truncated conception of Christ's redemptive function in the verse—one involving *only* his death, and failing to perceive the equal importance of Christ's resurrection and ongoing eschatological life, both in Romans 3:25 and in the larger argument to which it contributes. Nevertheless, Romans 3:25 does presuppose a substitutionary relation between Christ and believers—one that overlaps with, but is not identical to, the typical model of penal substitution. This substitutionary relation not only coheres with related participatory themes in the same context, but positively depends upon them for its logical cogency.

2.2 Christ's Soteriological Functions in the Implied Narrative Context of Romans 3:25

In this section, I will consider the soteriological functions that Christ fulfils in Romans 3:25, especially in light of the text's relation to the narrative background of chapters 1–5.[1] This will be done mainly in conversation with the prevalent substitutionary reading of Paul's argument in these chapters. I will demonstrate that, contrary to this and most readings, Christ's redemptive role in this verse entails more than his death, but includes also his resurrection and ongoing eschatological life. Paul portrays Christ as one provided by God through his faithful, sacrificial death, as the universally-available locus of God's glory in humanity—a divinely-disclosed, eschatological 'mercy seat' at which God reveals his righteousness to his people. Due to the controversial nature of my proposal concerning the identification of the mercy seat, this discussion will occupy a proportionally larger space than our assessment of Christ's soteriological roles in subsequent chapters. We will begin with a brief overview of Romans 3:25 in its context, before proceeding to an evaluation of the typical substitutionary reading of this verse and my proposed alternative.

2.2.1 Overview: Romans 3:25 in Context

In Romans 3:25, Paul describes Christ as a divinely-provided ἱλαστήριον—normally translated as 'propitiation', 'sacrifice of atonement' or 'mercy seat'[2]—who, in fulfilling this function, demonstrates God's righteousness in respect to his dealing with sins and accounting

1. On narrative approaches to Paul more broadly, see esp. the essays in Longenecker 2002.
2. On the translation of this word, see below.

people righteous (vv. 25-26). As such, this description of Christ provides the ground of the paragraph's basic claim: the righteousness of God has now been manifested through the faith of Christ and apart from the law for all who believe (vv. 21-22).[3] This verse's importance to Paul's central claim in the paragraph links it, in turn, to the letter's 'thesis' in 1:16-17, which this claim retrieves and to which it gives support: the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, in fulfilment of Habakkuk 2:4: 'the one who is righteous by faith shall live'.[4]

Two further details in the surrounding context link Paul's description of Christ to the larger argument. First, verse 23 ('for there is no difference: all sinned and lack [or fall short of] the glory of God') offers a shorthand summary of one of the main assertions of the preceding argument in 1:18–3:20 concerning the present state of humanity, both Jew and Gentile (cf. 3:9).[5] As the content of the gospel of the righteousness of God, then, Christ is the solution to the 'problem' that Paul has just outlined. Second, verses 24 and 26 describe how Christ's role as ἱλαστήριον addresses this problem: the one whom God justifies, who is 'of the faith of Jesus' (τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ), stands among those who are 'justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'. This too points to the larger argument concerning the coming eschatological judgment, in which Paul describes a favourable verdict (i.e. justification) promised to those who do the law (2:23), while also denying that any among humanity, in its present condition, can attain such obedience through 'works of the law' (ἔργα νόμου, 3:20). This verdict is rendered in advance of the last day for the children of Abraham who are defined by faith in God's promise that is fulfilled in Christ (4:2-6, 9-11, 22-25), and results in peace with God as well as the assurance of final eschatological salvation for those who share in and walk according to the Spirit (5:1, 5 9; 8:4-13). Christ's soteriological function in Romans 3:25, then, is to mediate the 'redemption' that enables the justification of sinners who are uniquely related to him by faith (v. 24).

While these considerations already tell us much about Christ's soteriological function in this verse, this still leaves the root of the matter unaddressed: what about Christ's identity as ἱλαστήριον fits him for this role? In what does this 'redemption' actually consist, and how

3. On the translation of Paul's 'πίστις Χριστοῦ' language, see below.
4. On the significance of Hab. 2:4 in Paul's argument, see below.
5. The reading offered in this chapter does not depend on any judgment regarding the re-reading of these chapters in Campbell 2009, though I (like most) find it unpersuasive and implausible. In any case, Paul accepts the premise that humanity has been deprived of the glory of God (v. 23), and this forms the basis for his claim regarding Christ as 'mercy seat' in v. 25 (on which, see below). For a critical evaluation of Campbell's re-reading, see Wright 2015, 187-218.

does it deal with the problem that the preceding argument has articulated? These questions will be taken up what follows.

2.2.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Typical Substitutionary Reading of Romans 3:25

In what follows, I will critically evaluate the leading substitutionary interpretation of this verse in its context, and offer my own proposal regarding the redemptive function that Paul's description assumes. As we saw in the introductory survey, those who read Romans 3:25 along the lines of the typical model of penal substitution attribute a propitiatory function to Christ's soteriological role in this verse, which they (with nearly all interpreters) understand as a reference to his death. Cranfield offers a theologically nuanced articulation of this view:

> Paul's statement that God purposed Christ as a propitiatory victim means…that God, because in His mercy He willed to forgive sinful men and, being truly merciful, willed to forgive them righteously, that is, without in any way condoning their sin, purposed to direct against His own very Self in the person of His Son the full weight of that righteous wrath which they deserved.[6]

This is based, as we also saw, on the claim that the basic 'problem' with which Paul is dealing in this verse is divine wrath. So Carson writes that 'the nature of the problem that Romans 3:21-26 sets out to resolve' is 'the wrath of God directed against every human being, Jew and Gentile alike—a wrath elicited by universal human wickedness'. Accordingly, 'the flow of argument that takes us from Romans 1:18-32 to Romans 3:9-20 leaves us no escape: individually and collectively, Jew and Gentile alike, we stand under the just wrath of God, because of our sin'.[7] This forces us to understand Christ's redemptive role in terms of propitiation. So Moo comments, in view of the thematic importance of God's wrath in Romans 1–3, 'the conclusion that *hilastērion* includes reference to the turning away of God's wrath is inescapable'.[8] Similarly, Morris comments that 'Paul has mounted heavy artillery in the section 1:18–3:20 to show that all are sinners and subject to the wrath of God. But unless the present term means the removal of wrath he has left them there, still under God's wrath. Nothing else he says means the averting of God's wrath'.[9] Christ's death thus *functions redemptively in the place of believers' deaths to propitiate God, precisely by undergoing his wrath in their stead*. Although various putative Pauline backgrounds have been taken to support this understanding, this internal consideration regarding Paul's argument in the letter

6. Cranfield 1975, 217.
7. Carson 2004, 120.
8. Moo 1996, 235.
9. Morris 1988, 180-81.

is generally understood as the primary basis for a substitutionary reading.[10]

This understanding of Christ's redemptive function in the verse naturally assumes a penal understanding of Christ's role in this context: if suffering the wrath of God constitutes the judgment that falls upon sin (cf. 2:5), then Christ's wrath-bearing death effects 'a justification that is dependant upon penal substitution, the solution that deals with the problem of wrath'.[11] Many detect precisely such a penal logic in the latter half of verse 25: as '[j]ustice demands that the guilty be punished just as it demands that the innocent go free', Morris writes, 'The cross shows us God's inflexible righteousness is the very means whereby sin is forgiven'.[12] The propitiatory death of Christ demonstrates the righteousness of God because, in him, the 'formerly-committed sins' that God overlooked in his 'clemency' (ἀνοχή, v. 26) meet their due punishment.[13] This reading produces some complexity as regards the meaning of the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) in verses 21-26. Whereas the proponents of this view understand the phrase to refer to God's own attribute of justice or righteousness (in specifically retributive terms), it is recognised that this constitutes an unlikely reading of the phrase in verses 21-22, where the phrase is apparently intended in a more positive sense relating to the theme of justification by faith. Substitutionary readings differ as to whether these earlier verses (as also in 1:17) should be understood to refer to a human status bestowed by God, or to God's own activity or power of setting humans right.[14] All of these interpreters agree, however, that Paul's use of righteousness language in connection with God shifts within the course of this paragraph.[15]

This interpretation of Romans 3:25 in its context, while not without merit, suffers from a number of shortcomings that directly affect how its proponents perceive the redemptive function that Christ fulfils in this verse. In the argument that follows, I will propose a reading that addresses these shortcomings, before proceeding to the question of substitution and participation in this text.

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10. A sacrificial background is the most common, with many hearing a reference specifically to the levitical mercy seat; some also draw connections with martyrological texts such as 4 Macc. 17:22. For the mercy seat reading, see e.g. Carson 2004; Moo 1996, 236; Schreiner 1998, 192-94; Stuhlmacher 1994, 59. This reading is not followed in e.g. Cranfield 1975, 214-18; Morris 1988, 179-82. For the martyrological reading, see esp. Williams 2015, 116-35.
11. Mody 2008, 129.
12. Morris 1988, 183.
13. Cranfield 1975, 211-12 speaks somewhat more generally and vaguely about God's 'dealing' with sins.
14. The first reading (i.e. human status) appears in Carson 2004; Cranfield 1975; Irons 2015; Morris 1988. The second (i.e. divine activity) appears in Schreiner 1998; Kruse 2012; Moo 1996 (though each of the latter argues that the first sense may be included as well).
15. Noted in e.g. Carson 2004, 138; Cranfield 1975, 211; Moo 1996, 240.

2.2.3 Assessing Christ's Implied Narrative Role in Romans 3:25

The following evaluation of the typical substitutionary reading and proposal of an alternative mainly addresses two interrelated topics: (1) the 'problem' that Paul identifies in the argument of Romans 1:18–3:20, (2) the 'solution' that he offers from 3:21 onward, particularly in verse 25. In the course of this discussion, I will also consider the implications of our findings for our understanding of the righteousness of God, which the solution to this problem in Christ discloses and demonstrates. To summarise our findings in advance: the immediate problem that God addresses by providing Christ in Romans 3:25 is not the problem of *wrath*, but the problem of *sin and corruption* (the latter described in terms of lacking the glory of God), which makes such wrath one's eschatological inheritance. In response to this problem, God presents the crucified and raised Christ as a 'mercy seat' (ἱλαστήριον). As the bearer of pneumatic eschatological life who has been cleansed from fleshly corruption through the purgative, sin-atoning effect of his faithful death, Christ is like the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant in that he is the purified abode of God's glorious presence in the midst of his people.

2.2.3.1 Divine Wrath and the 'Problem' of Romans 1:18–3:20

As we saw above, the typical substitutionary interpretation of Romans 3:25 identifies *divine wrath* as the central problem that Paul foregrounds in the letter's preceding argument, and understands Christ's role as ἱλαστήριον in light of this interpretation. Upon closer inspection, however, this reading arguably reflects a misunderstanding, both of the role of divine wrath in Paul's argument, and of its bearing on the specific problem Paul addresses in chapter 3. The main problem that Paul identifies, I will argue, is not divine wrath but the *condition of sinful humanity* that evokes this wrath; accordingly, the divinely-presented solution to the problem in 3:25 deals with the position of humanity in relation to divine wrath by dealing, first, with their corrupt condition.

Two interrelated observations demonstrate that God's wrath is not the immediate problem determining Christ's redemptive role in these verses. First, whereas the typical substitutionary reading understands wrath in the more general terms of God's disposition toward sin and sinners, and accordingly treats Christ's death as effecting a *present* change in this disposition (i.e. propitiation), Paul's portrayal of the wrath of God in these chapters and the problem that it poses for sinful humanity is focussed on the *future*. To be sure, Paul says that God's wrath is being revealed in the present (1:18, 24-32), but this present revelation is

the anticipation of what evildoers are 'storing up' for themselves on the final 'day of wrath' (cf. 2:5, 8). While this future orientation may *cohere* with an assumption that believers enjoy assurance regarding the day of judgment because God is already 'propitious' toward them in the present on account of Christ's saving action, it must be recognised that, even if this is what Paul thinks, *it is not what he chooses to say* for the purposes of the argument that he is making.[16]

What he does choose to say about the 'solution' in Christ specifically fits this future orientation. The upshot of the solution that God has presented in Christ is that believers are assured they *will be* saved from God's wrath, not that they *have been* saved from it already: 'how much more, then, having now been justified by his blood, shall we be saved through him from the wrath?' (5:9). Here it must be observed, moreover, that the primary instrument by which believers will be saved from this coming wrath is not Christ's death, but the 'life' (ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ) that he now possesses as the risen Lord and shares with believers by the Spirit (v. 10; cf. 5:5; 8:2, 9-11). As Wright observes, the cogency of Paul's *a fortiori* argument in these verses depends upon a basic distinction between the means of justification and the means of salvation from wrath, otherwise it 'would not be an a fortiori argument, as Paul seems to think it is, but a tautology: having been saved from the wrath, we shall be saved from the wrath'.[17] Paul's foregrounding of Christ's life as the means of deliverance from wrath thus echoes his earlier statement in 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, where the fact that believers (whether biologically dead or alive) always 'live with' the one who died for them substantiates the claim that 'God has not appointed us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

In both of these texts, moreover, it may further be observed that the language of 'salvation' that Paul chooses does not highlight what happens to the wrath itself or to the one who harbours it (as the concept of propitiation does), but what will happen to *believers* when

16. Thus we would go too far in saying, with Hofius 1989, 36, that 'der Ausdruck ὀργὴ θεοῦ (»Zorn Gottes«) meint bei Paulus *nicht eine Emotion Gottes*, sondern einen objektiven Sachverhalt', namely God's eschatological judgment (emph. added). This is of a piece with Hofius's larger objection against 'die Lehre von einem *satisfaktorischen* und *propitiatorischen* Sühnopfer', which he deems 'ganz und gar unpaulinische' (35, emph. orig.). While it is true that God's wrath is predominantly associated with the enactment of judgment (so Rom. 2:5, 8; 3:5; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4-5), there is no more reason to evacuate the term of its affective connotations than there is with Paul's language of divine love, which is also enacted (cf. Rom. 5:5, 8; note also the pairing of ὀργή with θυμός, 'rage' in Rom. 2:8). Moreover, the fact that God is always the subject, and sinful humanity the object, of reconciliation in Paul's writings (37; similarly Breytenbach 1993, 64; cf. Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18) should not be so emphasised as to leave no place for Christ's effective action, *qua* human being, 'Godward' (e.g. his obedience in Rom. 5:12-21; Hofius's logic would also seem to render unnecessary the intercession of Christ and the Spirit on behalf of believers before God in 8:26-27, 34).

17. Wright 2016a, 141.

the wrath arrives. One could argue, of course, that the alteration of wrath's *destination* implied in Paul's description fits the idea of propitiation (i.e. believers are to be saved because the wrath has been 'averted', and so no longer threatens to befall them) and that it would make sense to view Christ's death as instrumental in changing this destiny. But, once again, *this is not what Paul himself chooses to emphasise in the actual argument he makes*, which instead stresses the futurity of divine wrath, as well as of deliverance from it, and the instrumentality of Christ's *life* in this deliverance.

This brings us to our second main point, regarding the specific problem in view in Romans 3:25. While the theme of God's wrath on account of sin does frame chapters 1–5 as a whole (cf. 1:18; 5:9) and features repeatedly within its argument (2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15), the explicit summary of the problem *that Paul himself provides* two verses before the soteriological statement in 3:25 has a different focus: 'all sinned, *and lack* [ὑστεροῦνται] *the glory of God*' (v. 23). The problem that mainly concerns Paul in 3:23, then, is not sin's effect on God, but its effect on humanity. As we shall see, the remedy articulated in verses 24-25 reflect this focus as well.[18]

Many translations obscure the nature of the problem that Paul highlights at this point, rendering ὑστεροῦνται as 'fall short' and thereby treating 'the glory of God' as a moral standard to which humanity fails to measure up on account of sin.[19] On this reading, both sides of Paul's statement are roughly synonymous, and we are then left to infer the negative consequences of sin from which Christ's redemptive role delivers others (in the above reading, wrath). While the verb ὑστερέω can carry this meaning, the thematic significance of its object in the argument of Romans 1–8 shows that this is unlikely. In these chapters, Paul's glory-language is most commonly *ontological* and *eschatological* in character. In Ben Blackwell's words, 'δόξα represents God's state of being and stands as the culmination of human soteriology, as believers are conformed to the image of Christ in their resurrection by the agency of the Spirit'.[20] It characterises the existence of the coming age, in which humanity will share in the glory of Christ and confer freedom on the whole creation (8:17-18, 21, 30). God's glory—specifically, Paul says, 'the glory of the Father'—is the agent both of Christ's resurrection from the dead, and of the 'life' in which those who are baptised into Christ now walk (6:4). In both these connections, it becomes obvious that Paul can employ

18. See Gorman 2011 for a similar analysis of the problem Paul's argument mainly addresses.
19. So e.g. NRSV, NASB, NIV, ESV.
20. Blackwell 2010, 296.

the language of 'glory' as a metonymy for the Spirit of God, who[21] bestows incorruptible life.[22]

Meanwhile, though glory can appear in close connection with honourable status (as in 2:7—and even here it is connected with ἀφθαρσία, 'incorruptibility' or 'immortality'), there is no occurrence in Romans that clearly denotes a moral standard that accords with God's character, in relation to which one can 'fall short'. Finally, it is important also to note that the earlier reference to God's glory in Romans that Paul is retrieving in 3:23—humanity 'exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image' (1:23)—alludes to the narrative of the golden calf as related in Psalm 106 (LXX 105:20). As Wolter observes, 'δόξα αὐτῶν ist hier metonymische Bezeichnung für Gott (*abstractum pro persona*): Er ist ›Israels Herrlichkeit‹; dasselbe gilt auch für Jer 2,11' (with which Paul's assertion is also sometimes connected).[23] In view of this, and of the other above considerations, it makes good sense to understand the main problem that Paul is addressing in Romans 3:25 to be *humanity's loss of incorruptible life* on account of sin—a quality of life that depends upon the indwelling presence of God himself, in his glory, by the Spirit. This anthropological state describes humanity awaiting divine judgment and, as Paul's extended argument in 1:18–3:20 demonstrates, Israel's possession of the law has provided no effective remedy.[24] The anthropological ruin of idolatrous and sinful humanity is therefore the immediate problem to which justification through redemption in Christ, the ἱλαστήριον, is the most immediate

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21. This dissertation employs personal language in the description of the Spirit's activity, but it will not be necessary for our purposes to substantiate this interpretation of Paul's understanding of the Spirit. On this issue, see Hill 2015, 135-66; Rabens 2013, 145n77.

22. Cf. the Spirit's connection with 'life', and agency in raising Christ in particular, in Rom. 7:6; 8:2, 4-11, 13; cf. also 5:10, 17-18, 21; 6:22-23.

23. Wolter 2014, 144n34; so also Grindheim 2017, 457-62. Paul's addition of τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ also makes this evident.

24. Recent scholarship has proposed that Paul's interlocutor in Romans 2–3 is not a Jew, but a Gentile proselyte. See esp. Rodríguez 2014; Rodríguez and Thiessen 2016; Thiessen 2016, 43-71. Despite the enthusiasm with which this proposal has been received in some quarters, it suffers from several exegetical shortcomings. On this reading, Paul's assertion in 3:9 that 'we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin' in 3:9 seems groundless, since the hypothetical conditional of 3:3 ('what if some did not believe?') would then be Paul's *only* indictment of fellow Jews in these chapters, and hardly a substantiation of the claim that all Jews are 'under sin'. Furthermore, Paul's assertion that 'circumcision is of benefit *if* you do the law' in 2:25 does not seem to fit naturally with this perspective's claim that Paul regards proselytism as impossible. Nor is the reply that Paul viewed circumcision at any time other than the eight day after one's birth as a transgression of the law *even* as applied to would-be proselytes persuasive. Had this been Paul's point, there are far more natural ways he could have expressed it. Furthermore, his assertion that Jewish identity and circumcision are hidden realities do not cohere logically with the assumption that a supposedly Gentile interlocutor cannot keep the law simply because he was not circumcised on the eigth day as an infant. Finally, understanding Paul's interlocutor as a Jew fits more naturally with the assertion of 1:16 that the gospel 'is the power of God for salvation to those who believe—to the Jew first, and also to the Greek', where Paul refers undeniably to Jews as well as Gentiles.

solution, and the *result* of this solution (summarised in 5:9-10) brings assurance of salvation from wrath. In what follows, I will establish precisely how Christ's soteriological role solves this problem.

2.2.3.2 Christ, the Blood-Cleansed Mercy Seat, and the 'Solution'

Mistaking the problem that Paul describes in Romans 3:23 leads us to miss the primary thrust of Paul's assertion regarding Christ in verse 25. While it is universally recognised that Paul's description of Christ in verse 25 addresses the problem of sin, the way in which he equally addresses its immediate consequence—humanity's lack of the glory of God, consigning them to corruption and death—has generally been missed. This is due, in part, to the fact that interpreters have almost universally assumed that Paul intends to refer *only* to the event of Christ's crucifixion in these verses. I will argue, however, that Christ's role as ἱλαστήριον in Romans 3:25 is not confined to a single moment (such as his death), but describes his *permanent* role of mediating the glory of God (God's life-giving, pneumatic presence) to others. His faithful, sacrificial death, also alluded to in verse 25 ('through faith, by means of his blood'), enables his fulfilment of this role by purging him, like the mercy seat, from the corruption that he assumes from those to whom he mediates the divine presence. As the blood-cleansed bearer of divine glory, the risen Christ is the proleptic embodiment of God's solution to the human problem represented in verse 23, in whom God's people find redemption and justification.

A growing body of scholarship recognises that the word ἱλαστήριον in verse 25 likely alludes to the levitical mercy seat, which lay over the ark of the covenant and was purified annually on Yom Kippur with the blood of the sin offering.[25] This understanding, already well represented in the history of interpretation and in the church's tradition, has received further support in the lexical work of Daniel Bailey, who has demonstrated the illegitimacy of older translations that render the word with abstractions such as 'propitiation' or 'expiation', or understand the word as a reference to a sacrificial victim.[26] Curiously, however,

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25. For the mercy seat reading, see e.g. Brondos 2006, 126-32; Byrne 1996, 127-28; Carson 2004; Do 2009; Fitzmyer 1993, 350; Jewett 2007, 284; Kraus 1991; Matera 2010, 98-99; Moo 1996, 236; Schreiner 1998, 192-94; Stökl ben Ezra 2003, 198-201; Stuhlmacher 1994, 59; Tiwald 2012; Wright 2016a. This reading is not followed in e.g. Cranfield 1975, 214-18; Dunn 1988, 170-71; Finlan 2004, 133-35; Longenecker 2016, 429; Morris 1988, 179-82.

26. See Bailey 1999, and the summary in Bailey 2000 (to whom I am grateful for sending me a hard copy of the thesis). ἱλαστήριον is rendered as 'propitiation' in the KJV, ESV, NASB, HCSB, the latter three reflecting the influence esp. of Morris 1955a. The word is rendered 'sacrifice of atonement' in the NRSV and in the NASB margin; the NIV margin states, in a highly puzzling footnote, that 'The Greek for *sacrifice of atonement* refers to the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant (see Lev. 16:15, 16)', as though the two were

scholarship has generally ignored what is perhaps the single strongest piece of evidence in this reading's favour: Paul's reference to *the glory of God* two verses beforehand.[27] In the Hebrew Bible in general and the Pentateuch in particular, 'glory' (כָּבוֹד; LXX δόξα) often denotes YHWH's revelatory presence among his people, and *the mercy seat is the specific resting-place of this divine presence*, at which YHWH meets with Moses and which the high priest approaches on Yom Kippur (Exod. 25:22; 30:6; Lev. 16:2; Num. 7:89).[28] Although the specific references to YHWH's presence above the mercy seat in the latter texts do not use the noun כָּבוֹד/δόξα to describe this presence, Leviticus 16:2 refers to YHWH's presence directly over the mercy seat in the form of a 'cloud' (עָנָן/νεφέλη), in which his כָּבוֹד/δόξα repeatedly manifests itself in the Pentateuch and in the OT more broadly.[29] Moreover, YHWH's repeated promise to Moses in Exodus 25:22 and 30:6 that 'I will meet with you there' (i.e. above the mercy seat) appears also in Exodus 29:42-43, where he says of the tabernacle that 'I will meet with the Israelites there, and it shall be sanctified *by my glory* [בִּכְבֹדִי/ἐν δόξῃ μου]'. These meetings are described later in the Pentateuch with the explicit language of the divine glory appearing (sometimes also with reference to the cloud).[30] It is therefore clear that the Pentateuch (at least in its final form) presupposes that YHWH's glory normally resides over the mercy seat.

As we shall see below, several later Jewish texts also make this assumption explicit: the

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interchangeable. The CEB reads 'place of sacrifice'; the RSV and REB (the latter reflecting the influence of C.H. Dodd) read 'expiation' and 'the means of expiating sin' respectively. The only mainstream translations that render the word as 'mercy seat' are the NET and LEB, which is surprising in view of how well-represented this reading is among interpreters. Another possibility is that ἱλαστήριον refers to a pagan votive offering, but this is less likely in view of the fact that (1) these do not prominently involve blood (they are statues donated and set up in temples), and (2) ἀνάθεμα is the more common term to denote such offerings. See Tiwald 2012, 193-94. Still another possibility is that ἱλαστήριον denotes a more generic 'place of atonement', such as in LXX Ezek. 43 where the noun describes the 'ledge' of an altar in the eschatological temple (so Finlan 2004, 133-35). While the reference to the glory of God in Rom. 3:23 suggests that an Israelite cultic context is probably in view, a reference to Ezekiel would be far more obscure than to the Pentateuch, in whose cultic texts the mercy seat features so prominently; so Stökl ben Ezra 2003, 200.

27. The theme of divine presence appears in connection with the mercy seat in several discussions, but the link with the glory in v. 23 is not noted. See e.g. Byrne 1996, 127; Tiwald 2012; Janowski 2012; Jewett 2007, 284 (cf. 280); Sanday and Headlam 1902, 87-88. Conversely, some interpreters do describe the glory of God in Rom. in terms of divine presence, but do not identify any link with the mercy seat in 3:25. See esp. Fitzmyer 1993, 283, 347; so also Matera 2010. Wright 2016a does connect the divine glory and the mercy seat, but does not go so far as to draw the conclusion commended in this chapter because his interpretation is concerned mainly with the element of human vocation he deems implicit in Paul's glory-theme, rather than the element of incorruptible life highlighted in the present discussion.

28. Cf. e.g. Exod. 16:7, 10; 24:16-17; 29:43; 33:18-19, 22; 40:34-35; Lev. 9:6, 23; 14:10; 16:19; 17:7; 20:6; 1 Sam. 4:21-22; 1 Kgs. 8:11; cf. also LXX Num. 12:8. On the theme of glory in the OT and second-temple Judaism, see Newman 1992, 17-153.

29. See Exod. 16:7, 10; 19:9, 16; 24:15-18; 33:18, 22; 34:5; 40:34-38; Num. 17:7; Deut. 5:22, 24; cf. 1 Kgs. 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; Ps. 97:2, 6; Isa. 4:5; Ezek. 1:4, 28; 10:3-4.

30. Cf. Lev. 9:23; Num. 14:10; 16:19; 17:7; 20:6; cf. also Deut. 31:15.

chief significance of the ark and mercy seat is that they are the abode of God's glory (δόξα), whose return to his people will coincide with the eschatological disclosure of these cultic implements. But for now it may simply be observed that it is reasonable for us to suppose that Paul would assume such a connection as well. As we have already seen, Paul's summary of the human plight in Romans 3:23, which retrieves his allusion to Psalm 106 from chapter 1, most likely has precisely this theophanic presence in view: the 'glory' he is describing and relating to the human condition is a metonymy for God himself, whose dwelling with humanity bestows incorruptible life. This association is clear as well in 2 Corinthians 3–4 (written around the same time as Romans, which was composed in Corinth), where Paul uses the language of glory (δόξα) to describe the effect of Moses' meetings with God on his appearance, and to assure the Corinthians that they too, who behold 'the glory of the Lord' directly with unveiled faces (like Moses in the tabernacle), are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus, who is the 'image' and 'glory' of God.[31] We are on solid ground, then, in supposing that Paul uses the language of glory in connection with the divine presence, while also using the Pentateuchal depiction of Moses' physical transformation as a way of relating this theophanic presence to the anthropological condition of humanity, who were made to share in God's glory.

Paul's references to divine glory, the mercy seat, and sacrificial blood in such close proximity to each other thus suggest that he is well aware of the fact that the levitical sacrificial system as depicted in Torah presupposes the presence of the divine glory: this is, after all, the whole reason that atonement is needed at the mercy seat.[32] Sacrifice does not accomplish 'forgiveness of sins' in an abstract or immaterial sphere, but effects the purification of *cultic objects* that exist in proximity to divine presence—supremely (on Yom Kippur) the mercy seat. In light of these considerations, several conclusions may be drawn. First, unless Paul has forgotten or ignored the Pentateuchal portrayal of these cultic relationships, our assumption should be that the blood Christ offers to God in sacrifice through his faithful death achieves its 'effect' primarily *in Christ himself*, since he is the mercy seat (the object of purification) as well as the sacrifice.[33] Thus, whether we understand

31. Cf. 2 Cor. 3:7-8, 12-13, 18; 4:4, 6.

32. On levitical sacrifice, see Gane 2005; Gane 2010; Milgrom 1991, 440-89; Sklar 2005. On Yom Kippur and its reception in early Christianity, see Hieke and Nicklas 2012; Stökl ben Ezra 2003. For the significance of sacrificial blood in the levitical cult, see 2.2.4.1 below.

33. *pace* Yamaguchi 2015, 122-23, who (though arguing persuasively for the presence of a Yom Kippur motif in Rom. 3:25) follows most of scholarship in emphasising the significance of ἱλαστήριον as *place* of sacrifice, and therefore confining his focus on the instrumentality of blood to *presentation* (which, he insists, must take place ultimately in Christ's resurrection, rather than his death; cf. 116-20). But this surely leaves out

the phrase ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι syntactically as describing the means of his function as mercy seat (the adjectival reading) or as the means by which God 'set him forth' in this role (the adverbial reading), the underlying assumption is that Christ, because of the sacrificial manner of his death, obtains purification from the corruptible human condition described in verse 23.[34] This, as we shall see in the next chapter, finds clear support in Romans 8:3, where Paul refers to Christ, the one sent by God 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας), as 'a sin offering' (περὶ ἁμαρτίας).[35] Here, Christ's obedient fulfilment of his mission results in the availability, 'in him', of the eschatological 'Spirit of life' to believers that assures them of freedom from condemnation and their future glorification with him (cf. vv. 9-11)—the same soteriological blessings that Paul identifies at the beginning of chapter 5, which stem from Christ's role as mercy seat and sacrifice in chapter 3.[36] Second, if Paul does presuppose a connection between Christ's role as mercy seat and the divine glory that humanity forfeited through sin, this implies that the soteriological role he attributes to Christ is not limited to a single moment in time (such as his death), but refers to the incarnate Christ's *permanent* mediation of the glory of God, which is relevant to his audience in the letter because it continues into the present. His role as sacrifice, then, is *ancillary* to his role as mercy seat, effecting the removal of that which stands in contradiction with the divine glory—in verse 23 and the preceding argument, the noetic and somatic corruption of sinful humanity, who have exchanged the glory for idols and been consigned to 'impurity' (ἀκαθαρσία; cf. 1:23-24).

This, of course, would mean that Paul's identification of Christ as mercy seat refers, not ultimately to the event of his crucifixion, but to his ongoing role as the risen and glorified Lord.[37] While this is not the normal way of reading Romans 3:25, a number of further

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the most important part of the ritual: it is not the presentation of the blood in the holy of holies, *per se*, that atones, but the *application* of this blood to its intended object—the mercy seat—in order to effect its purification. Consequently, it makes the most sense of Paul's image to identify Christ's death as the means by which he offered sacrifice to God, because this act (as an act of πίστις; see below) *results* in his 'purification' through God's act of raising him from the dead, in which his faith is vindicated and justifying redemption is accomplished.

34. Both readings are syntactically possible, though the adverbial reading is preferable since (1) it produces more syntactical uniformity with the rest of the verse and with v. 26 (a series of propositional phrases which, for the most part, depend on προέθετο); (2) the lexicographical data provides little, if any, precedent for the association of the substantive ἱλαστήριον with an instrumental prepositional phrase; (3) Paul's parallel use of ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ in 5:9 uses it in an adverbial sense. It must also be noted that, despite sometimes being translated 'displayed', the verb προτίθημι can refer to disclosure in a broader sense than physical visibility (cf. Eph. 1:9), as well as to making something *available* (BDAG; cf. LSJ).

35. On the sin offering in Rom. 8:3, see esp. Wright 1992c.

36. Cf. Rom. 5:1-11.

37. It should be noted that this may hold true even if a related Yom Kippur motif is present that

considerations strongly favour this interpretation.[38] First, to add to my point above concerning glory-language in Romans, Paul himself draws a direct connection between divine glory and Christ's resurrection in Romans 6:4: 'Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father'. Not only that, but he then describes the negative state from which this frees believers (who, because of this, can 'walk in newness of life') with a collocation of nouns that parallels the language of the Yom Kippur liturgy in LXX Leviticus 16: they have been freed from 'unrighteousness' (ἀδικία), 'sin' (ἁμαρτία), 'uncleanness' (ἀκαθαρσία) and 'lawlessness' (ἀνομία; Rom. 6:12-20; cf. Lev. 16:16, 21).[39] It is natural, then, to suppose that a similar association between Christ's redemptive role and the glory of God appears in Romans 3, where Paul identifies him with the piece of cultic furniture on which the same glory resided.

Second, Paul's preceding reference to 'the redemption [ἀπολύτρωσις] that is in Christ Jesus [ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ]' in Romans 3:24, to which the description of Christ as mercy seat constitutes an epexegetical elaboration, likely refers to more than simply Christ's death. To begin with, all of the other occurrences of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in Romans (6:11, 23; 8:1-2, 39) share in common a primary emphasis on *new life in Christ*, even when his death also comes explicitly into view (as esp. in 6:11).[40] Paul appears to employ this phrase in the argument of Romans precisely to articulate the *completed state of affairs* that has come into being as a result of Christ's death and resurrection.[41] In light of this emphasis, it is reasonable to suppose here that the 'redemption that is in Christ Jesus' refers, not simply to the means

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associates the death of Jesus with the shedding of sacrificial blood. So e.g. Theobald 1992, 100 argues, 'Feiert Israel jedes Jahr den »Versöhnungstag« als den Tag, an dem Gott sein Heiligtum, den Tempel, von aller Unreinheit ent sühnt und seinem Volk Versöhnung gewährt (Lev 16), so ist jetzt der Tag der Kreuzigung Jesu der große Versöhnungstag Gottes, den es für alle Zeiten im Gedächtnis zu behalten gilt'. It must be recognised, however, that Paul does not identify the ἱλαστήριον with an *event*, but with a *person*: 'Christ Jesus'. The fact that Christ's role as mercy seat involves the instrumentality of his blood in no way requires that his fulfilment of this role is *confined* to the moment of its shedding. This would be true, perhaps, if sacrificial purgation exhaustively accounted for the function of the mercy seat; but, as I argue in this section, the mercy seat's reception of sacrificial blood is significant only with reference to its role in localising the glory of God—a role that is not limited to the moment of sacrifice.

38. The only other interpreter I have found who understands Rom. 3:25 as a reference to the risen Christ is Brondos 2006, 126-32. Brondos makes no mention of the glory of God in v. 23, however, nor does he adduce most of the evidence brought forward in the present discussion for this reading. Brondos fails to perceive, moreover, how a reference to Yom Kippur undermines his broader argument that Paul does not attribute an atoning instrumentality to Christ's death.

39. I am grateful to Justin Duff for pointing out these parallels to me.

40. Even Rom. 6:11 fits the pattern, however, in that the reference to Christ's death has more to do with the ongoing result (i.e. being 'dead to sin') for those who are 'in Christ Jesus', rather than the past event itself (v. 22).

41. As Lohse 2003, 133 observes, 'In-Christus-Sein bedeutet…für Paulus das neue Leben schlechthin' and that its various uses proceed 'von der Grundbedeutung, daß ἐν Χριστῷ das Bestimmtsein durch das Christusgeschehen, das Leben im Herrschaftsbereich Christi bezeichnet'. This does not, however, in any way affect Lohse's interpretation of the ἀπολύτρωσις that Paul uses this phrase to describe, which he takes to refer to Christ's death to effect release from sin.

(i.e. the payment) by which release from the negative state described in verse 23 is secured, but to the actual release itself—deliverance from death.[42] Paul's only other use of ἀπολύτρωσις in Romans, moreover, supports this understanding: in 8:23, Paul describes the resurrection of believers as 'our adoption [υἱοθεσία], the redemption [ἀπολύτρωσις] of our body'. The context in chapter 8 parallels the situation Paul is describing in Romans 3: believers are to be glorified with Christ because God has dealt with sin in a way that fulfils the intention of the law by a means other than the law itself (8:1-4, 17). In Christ, believers find God to be 'the one who justifies' and does not condemn, since Christ, who died—'…more than that, *who was raised*'—now lives to intercede for them in God's presence (vv. 33-34).[43] Accordingly, we ought to understand 'the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' to refer to the deliverance from sin *and death* that has come about through the resurrection of the crucified Christ, 'in' whose redemption from death believers are justified.[44]

This brings us to a third consideration in favour of this reading, concerning Paul's gospel. The fact that the redemption of believers' bodies in Romans 8:23 corresponds to their 'adoption as sons' (υἱοθεσία) is also significant in view of the fact that Paul's gospel, which reveals God's righteousness *for the reasons that Paul is expressly enumerating in 3:21-26*, specifically concerns the disclosure of Christ's sonship *through his resurrection*. In the letter's prologue, the 'gospel of God', for which Paul is set apart and which the scriptures foretold, is the gospel 'concerning [God's] Son, born from the seed of David according to the flesh, declared Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness from the resurrection of the dead' (1:2-4).[45] This is the gospel in which Paul says the righteousness of God is revealed (1:16-17), and Romans 3:21-26 articulates why this is so. We therefore accord Paul's argument the greatest consistency by seeing the primary referent in this passage as the *risen* Christ, and the 'redemption' that exists in him as the deliverance from sin and death that manifests his Sonship and confers it on those whom it justifies. This would fit well with the exodus connotations that Paul's language of 'redemption' in this context probably carries, and which many commentators recognise: redemption from slavery into sonship as people led by the Spirit (the glory of God) is precisely the story that Paul tells of those who are in

42. So Stanley 1961, 168.
43. It is possible that Paul accords Christ a high priestly role in this verse (cf. Heb. 7:25).
44. So Seifrid 2000, 65.
45. As Jewett 2007, 104 observes, the verb ὁρίζω here refers to 'installation' in royal office; as such, it is does not indicate that Christ became the Son of God only in his resurrection (a supposition that makes virtual nonsense of Rom. 5:6-8 and 8:3).

Christ (cf. 8:14-15, 21-23; 9:4; Gal. 4:4-5).[46] What is more: in the Pentateuchal narrative, Israel's redemption from slavery leads precisely to the establishment of the sanctuary in which God's glory dwells over the mercy seat.[47] Numerous contextual factors thus indicate that 'the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' is best understood to include the beneficial *effect* of Christ's faithful and sacrificial death that he himself embodies (i.e. deliverance from death in a glorified body, in which divine sonship is perfectly manifested), rather than to Christ's death in and of itself.

Fourth, the role of faith, both in justification (which in 3:24 comes 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus') and in the disclosure of God's righteousness (vv. 21-22; cf. 1:17), offers additional support for understanding Christ's resurrection and ongoing life as the primary concern of Paul's gospel in the letter's argument.[48] Romans 3:21-26 initiates

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46. On exodus themes in Paul, see Keesmaat 1999; Morales 2010; specifically with ref. to adoption, Scott 1992.

47. On the connection between redemption and sacrifice in the OT, second-temple Judaism and Paul, see esp. Yamaguchi 2015, who observes that sacrifice is concerned with the maintenance of an already-established covenant, whereas redemption is necessary where such a covenant either does not exist or has been seriously compromised through sin. It is not unlikely that Paul views Christ's death and resurrection as fulfilling both of these functions here; so e.g. Wright 2016a, 151: 'Paul quite deliberately declares that the new Exodus has occurred because God put forward the Messiah to be the *hilastērion*, the place and the means of dealing with Israel's sins' (cf. 149-53). It is less clear, however, that Yamaguchi in fact argues the latter point (though Wright adduces his work in support of his view, 135n1), since Yamaguchi seems to distinguish the Paul's use of Yom Kippur imagery in Rom. 3:25 from his use of passover imagery in 1 Cor. 5:7-8 (see Yamaguchi 2015, 114-26). Moreover, whereas Yamaguchi appears to understand Christ's cultic role mainly with respect to the maintenance of the *new* covenant, this does not do justice to Paul's own focus on the revelation of God's righteousness with respect to 'formerly-committed sins' as the immediate outcome of the mercy-seat's disclosure (v. 25b), nor to the fact that justification by means of Christ's blood is explicitly identified as an already-accomplished fact (δικαιωθέντες νῦν), distinct from future salvation by means of his 'life' (ζωή; 5:9-10). This interpretation also does not fit with the imagery of Yom Kippur itself, which deals precisely with sins committed beforehand, even though it is part of a larger sacrificial system that accomplishes ongoing covenant maintenance. Since the mercy seat functions to disclose the righteousness of God, and this righteousness (as I argue below) specifically concerns God's former, covenant-making promise to Abraham, it is best to understand Paul's Yom Kippur motif primarily in these retrospective terms, even if Paul's later argument (esp. in chs. 6 and 8) expands on this to encompass the believer's ongoing participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, as well as Christ's and the Spirit's parallel intercession, as a basis for freedom from impurity and ongoing covenant maintenance.

48. The literature on δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Paul is voluminous; see e.g. Bird 2007; Burk 2012; Campbell 2009, 677-714; Irons 2015; Käsemann 1969; Longenecker 2016, 168-76; Moo 1996, 79-90; Piper 1980; Schreiner 1998, 163-71; Seifrid 2000; Williams 1980; Wright 2013a, 795-804; Ziesler 1972. The definition accepted in the present discussion is closest to that of Williams 1980, who emphasises the theme's connections with divine truthfulness. This is preferable to the normal alternatives of divine *activity* or to a *status* from God: (1) in the latter reading, the interpretation requires a highly inconsistent use of the phrase, despite the fact that Paul announces it as the letter's major theme, on which basis one would expect a consistent usage. This is especially problematic in the single paragraph 3:21-26: as Theobald 1992, 97 observes, '[d]ie beiden Außenteilen [vv. 21-22 and 25-26] interpretieren sich gegenseitig', whereas the status reading destroyes the thematic unity of the paragraph. (2) In the former (divine activity) reading, a tautology is introduced in Rom. 1:16-17 (as Williams observes). Moreover, as Wolter 2014, 121 argues, it is important 'dass δικαιοσύνη wie alle Wörter mit dieser Endung ein sog. ›Eigenschaftsabstraktum‹ ist, dem ein Adjektiv zugrundeliegt'. Thus the word 'kein nomen actionis ist, denn er bezeichnet eine Eigenschaft und nicht das Handeln Gottes. Das entsprechende nomen actionis wäre δικαίωσις (Röm 4,25; 5,18)' (122; see 119-25). Burk 2012 also notes the

Paul's argument spanning through to the end of chapter 4 that justification is through faith, from which conclusions are then drawn in 5:1-11. Paul's most detailed exposition of justifying faith in this argument comes near the end of this discussion (4:16-25), in his description of Abraham's faith in the promise. Two details are of particular note for our discussion. First, Paul portrays the faith of Abraham, and by extension that of his descendants, as faith *in a promise that concerns life out of death*. Abraham believed that God 'is able to do what he has promised'—God, 'who makes the dead alive' and before whom Abraham 'disregarded his already-dead body…and the deadness of Sarah's womb' (vv. 17, 19, 21). Second, *Christ's resurrection from the dead* is the fulfilment of this justifying faith for all of Abraham's descendants: 'it was not written for [Abraham's] sake alone that "[righteousness] was counted to him", but for ours as well, to whom it will be counted—we *who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead*, who was handed over for our offences and raised for our justification' (vv. 24-25). If the justifying faith through which the righteousness of God is revealed (3:21) is *specifically* faith in God who gives life to the dead and who fulfils the promise on which faith is based in the resurrection of Christ, it stands to reason that the soteriological statement in this paragraph, like that at the end of chapter 4, holds in view the *risen* Christ as one who fulfils and evokes this faith. In Christ, believers find living proof that the gospel (concerning the risen Christ; 1:3-4) fulfils the prophetic word of Habakkuk 2:4 that 'the one who is righteous by faith *shall live*', just as Paul has asserted (1:17).[49]

This is all the more clearly the case if, as a growing number of scholars argue, the faith through which the righteousness of God is manifested in Romans 3:21-26 is first and foremost the faith of *Christ*, displayed in his faithful death.[50] In this case, God's righteousness

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phrase's metonymic quality in many instances, whereby it evokes God's justifying activity; but this is not the same as saying it *denotes* this activity (357-58). Rather, in Wolter's terms, in the many instances where God's righteousness is identified with his saving actions toward Israel, '[e]s bleibt dabei aber immer auch erkennbar, dass jeweils die *Manifestation* einer Eigenschaft Gottes im Blick ist' (122, emph. orig.); cf. Ps. 22:32; 31:2; 36:11; 51:16; 98:2; Isa. 46:13; 51:5-6; 62:2; Dan. 9:16; 1QS 11.5 and 12-14; 1 En. 53:7.

49. For this understanding of God's righteousness, see esp. Williams 1980. This hold true whether we take Paul to be interpreting Hab. 2:4 christologically or not. On this possibility, see Hays 2005, 119-42; Longenecker 2016, 182-86; Mulroney 2015; Young 2012. It is more widely recognised, in any case, that Paul understands ζήσεται in the sense of *eschatological* life, and not simply as a description of one's 'lifestyle'—so e.g. Cranfield 1975, 100-02; Dunn 1988, 46; Jewett 2007, 145047; Käsemann 1980, 32; Moo 1996; Schreiner 1998, 73-76. Cf. Rom. 2:7; 4:17; 5:17-18, 21; 6:4, 10-13, 22-23; 7:10; 8:2, 6, 10, 13; 10:5; 12:1.

50. For this debate, see esp. essays in Bird and Sprinkle 2009; see also Hays 1997; 2002 and surveys of discussions in Easter 2010; Kugler 2016. In the immediate context, the strongst arguments for the subjective genitive reading in Romans is the contrast, on the one hand, between the faith of Christ in 3:21-26 and the ἀπιστία of Israel in 3:3-5 and the parallel, on the other, between the faith of Christ and that of Abraham. Both the faithlessness of Israel and the faith of Christ occasion the revelation of God's righteousness—in the one case through condemnation, and in the other through justification. Furthermore, God's justification of 'the one who

would be 'manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ [διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] to all who believe' in that his act of raising Christ vindicates Christ's faith and, by extension, the faith of all who believe that God raised him from the dead (cf. 4:24-25). This, in turn, would shed light on Paul's statement that God 'set forth Christ…through [his] faith,[51] by means of his blood' in order to demonstrate his righteousness in dealing with sin (v. 25b) and justifying all who are 'of the faith of Jesus' (v. 26; cf. 4:16). Because this faith concerns God's promise of *life* (as *per* Hab. 2:4 in Rom. 1:17, and in 4:16-25), the resurrection of Christ would thus serve as a vindication, not only of Christ's faith, but of God's righteousness, understood here (as in 3:3-7) in terms of his truthfulness and fidelity to his word.[52]

By contrast, it would be strange for Paul to speak of faith in this way after establishing the death of Christ as *the* soteriological datum that has bearing on justifying faith in 3:21-26. Moreover, the only other text in which faith is brought into explicit relation to the theme of the righteousness of God (apart from Paul's highly compact statement in 1:17) also identifies this faith with Christ's resurrection. In Romans 10, Paul defines submission to 'the righteousness of God' in terms of believing the 'word of faith' that he and the apostles proclaim, namely 'that Jesus Christ is Lord and…that God raised him from the dead', whereas seeking justification by works is like trying to bring Christ down out of heaven or drag him up from the dead (vv. 3-9). Submitting to the righteousness of God in this way results in *justification* and *salvation*, the two main outcomes of God's provision in Christ that Paul celebrates in Romans 1–5.[53] Throughout the larger argument of Romans, then, Paul understands justifying faith and the revelation of God's righteousness through faith in terms

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is of the faith of Jesus' (τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, 3:26) is paralleled in his reckoning of righteousness 'to the one who is of the faith of Abraham' (τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, 4:16), a faith that Paul portrays in christological terms as the reception of life from the dead (vv. 17-22). This link between the faith of Christ and that of Abraham is also the best reason for interpreting πίστις, throughout Paul's discussion, as a reference to faith *rather than faithfulness*, since believing in God's promise of life from the dead is what Paul primarily has in view as occasioning the manifestation of God's righteousness (because he vindicates/justifies faith, bestowing eschatological life in accordance with his promises through Christ, 'who was raised for our justification', 4:25). This reading also makes excellent sense of the parallel with Israel at the beginning of chapter 3, which (as many commentators are aware) previews Paul's discussion of Israel's ἀπιστία (i.e. their rejection of the fulfilment of God's electing promise in Christ) in Rom. 9–11, which similarly defines Israel in terms of God's promise (9:6-9), seeks to vindicate God's righteousness (9:14; 10:3-4), and presents Israel's fundamental problem as one of unbelief (9:32; 10:14-21; 11:20, 23).

51. Lit. 'through the faith' (διὰ τῆς πίστεως); the article has strong MSS support (𝔓^{40vid} B C^{3} D^{2} K L P Ψ 33. 81. 630. 1175. 1241. 2464 𝔪) and may constitute an anaphoric reference to the faith of Christ. So Longenecker 2016, 430-32.

52. The theme of divine truthfulness in connection with his word appears also in Rom. 9:6-24; 15:7-13 (the latter is particularly important, as it bookends with the prologue and summarises the main theme of the letter's argument, employing ἀλήθεια, in this case, almost as a synonym for δικαιοσύνη.

53. Cf. Rom. 1:16; 3:24, 26, 28; 4; 5:9-10.

of faith's reference to the *resurrection* of the crucified Christ. It makes the most sense, then, to suppose that Paul's definitive statement in the letter of the manifestation of the righteousness of God through faith has the same referent.[54]

Fifth, and finally, the available historical evidence of second temple Jewish beliefs surrounding the glory of God, the ark and mercy seat, and the Yom Kippur ritual, provide an historical backdrop against which it would make good sense for Paul to describe Christ as a divinely-provided, eschatological mercy seat in whom sin has been purged and the glory of God revealed. As Daniel Stökl ben Ezra has argued, during the second-temple period '[t]he annual Yom Kippur was perceived, at least by some, as a ritual anticipation of the eschatological purification of God's creation from sin'.[55] Moreover, while the Yom Kippur ritual was performed during the second-temple period in the absence of the ark and mercy seat in the holy of holies as well as the cloud of glory that appeared over it, a significant number of Jews expected that YHWH's glory, having departed from the temple at the time of the exile, would one day return visibly in a manner reminiscent of Exodus 40 or 1 Kings 8.[56] In one tradition attested from the second century BCE to the second century CE, the return of this glory coincides with the eschatological disclosure of the ark of the covenant. In 2 Maccabees 2, Jeremiah hides the ark in a cave on Mount Sinai and declares to those who attempt to find it, 'The place shall remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy' (ἵλεως γένηται—possibly an allusion to the mercy seat on the ark).[57] 'Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord [ἡ δόξα τοῦ κυρίου] and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated' (2:7-8). In *Lives of the Prophets* (1st-2nd

54. On the theme of resurrection in Romans more broadly, see esp. Kirk 2008. Though Kirk assumes that Rom. 3:25 is referring exlcusively to Christ's death, the interpretation presented here would strongly support his overall thesis.

55. Stökl ben Ezra 2003, 89, emph. added; cf. 85-90. This is evident in 1 Enoch and 11QMelchizedek, and perhaps implicit in the seventy weeks of years in Daniel 9, which presuppose a jubilee of jubilees and, therefore, a supreme Day of Atonement (according to Lev. 25:9, a trumpet blast on Yom Kippur serves to inaugurate every jubilee). The question of when Daniel was written need not detain us here, as this text's prominence in the second-temple period is not in dispute.

56. Jos., *Ant*. 3.242-43 describes the priest's sprinkling the ceiling and pavement with the blood of the sin offering. According to *m.Yoma* 5:2, the ark and mercy seat had been replaced by a stone on which the high priest would place the fire-pan. Some sort of divine presence in the temple is assumed or stated in Sir. 24; Jos. *War* 6.299; Mt. 23:21 (but note variant aor. reading), though it is not clear whether the authors would distinguish this from that of Exod. 40 and 1 Kgs. 8. For the promise of the Lord's return to Zion, see Isa. 4:2-6; 24:23; 25:9-10; 35:3-6, 10; 40:1-11; 52:7-12; 59:15-17, 19-21; 60:1-3; 66:12-19; Ezek. 43:1-9; 48:35 (cf. its abandonment in 10:1-22; 11:22-23); Hag. 2:7 (despite his presence, in a sense, in v. 5); Zech. 2:3-5, 10-12; 14:1-5, 9, 16; Mal. 3:1-4; *Jub.* 1.26-28; 11QT 29.7-10; 11Q19 29.3-9.

57. We also have a second-cent. BCE fragment of Eupolemus (quoted in Alexander Polyhistor's *On the Jews*) that refers to this tradition (see Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 9.39.2–5).

cent. CE) we find this tradition developed further. Promising the Lord's return to Zion (2.12), Jeremiah hides the ark in a rock and prophesies that 'in the resurrection the ark will be the first to be resurrected and will come out of the rock and be placed on Mount Sinai, and all the saints will be gathered to it there as they await the Lord and flee from the enemy who wishes to destroy them' (2.15). In the meantime, the rock in which the ark has been hidden resides between the two mountains on which Moses and Aaron died, over which there nightly appears 'a cloud like fire, just like the ancient one, for the glory of God [ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ] will never cease from his law'.[58]

All of this constitutes, I would suggest, a plausible background for understanding Paul's description of Christ as mercy seat in Romans 3:25 in a way that embraces not only the first half of humanity's plight in verse 23 ('all sinned…'), but the second as well ('…and lack the glory of God'). Like the ark in *Lives of the Prophets*, Christ is the first to be raised, and the beginning of the eschatological deliverance of God's people.[59] That this deliverance would involve the return of the glory of God to humanity and, moreover, that this return would be accompanied by the eschatological disclosure of Christ as a 'mercy seat', while not identical with the above traditions, nevertheless finds numerous points of contact with them. In both the priestly materials and their appropriation in second-temple eschatological expectations, the foremost characteristic of the ark and mercy seat is their association with *the glorious presence of Israel's God*. This association is the reason that atonement is necessary and why the disappearance and reappearance of these cultic implements is emblematic of YHWH's own departure and return to Zion.

2.2.3.3 Conclusion

In view of the above considerations, I conclude that Romans 3:25 describes God's act of revealing the crucified and raised Christ as an eschatological mercy seat, whose sacrificial death has effected the purification of the human condition that is corrupted on account of sin and with which God's glorious presence is incompatible. He himself is the blood-cleansed bearer of divine glory, in whose redemption from death Jews and Gentiles find their justification before God, and so constitutes the divine response to the specific problem that

58. In addition to the texts discussed here, 2 Baruch (2nd cent. CE) describes Jeremiah's entry into the holy of holies and emergence with the mercy seat in particular (the ark is not mentioned), along with the altar of incense and priestly garments and vessels. He commits these to the earth 'until the last times' when Jerusalem will finally be restored (6:7-9). This restoration will coincide with the revelation of the true temple in which the mercy seat properly belongs, and which is presently with God (4:3).

59. Cf. Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5.

Paul identifies in 3:23. In what follows, we will consider precisely how the distinct redemptive functions of Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life address this problem.

2.2.4 Assessing Christ's Soteriological Functions in Romans 3:25

The preceding discussion has already shed light on some of the specific soteriological functions that Christ fulfils in Romans 3:25, particularly as regards the sacrificial character of his death. Because our ultimate objective in this discussion is to assess the role of substitutionary and participatory motifs in connection with these functions, however, it is important that we delineate these soteriological functions further, noting especially how they directly benefit believers and contribute to Paul's argument in the subsequent chapters. On the basis of these observations, we will be able to evaluate whether any of these soteriological functions involve Christ's replacement of others. As I will show, Romans 3:25 identifies or assumes *two* distinct soteriological roles, the fulfilment of which serve the needs of Paul's argument in chapters 1–5: (1) his faithful death effects the removal of sin and the bestowal of righteousness through its outcome in his resurrection, which undoes the corruption that has befallen the human condition; (2) his ongoing eschatological life in the glory and Spirit of God sustains forgiven and justified believers in the present and rescues them from the coming wrath.

2.2.4.1 Justification through the Blood of Christ

I have argued above that the imagery of blood sacrifice on Yom Kippur finds a primarily *anthropological* application in Romans 3:25: as the priest purged Israel's impurity from the mercy seat with sacrificial blood in order to enable God's residence among the people, so the shedding of Christ's blood in faith, through his death, results in his own purification (since he is also the mercy seat) from the corruption resulting from human sin and in his justification/ vindication through resurrection from the dead, in order that he may continue as the consecrated dwelling-place for God's glory. As the purified bearer of the glory of God, in whom redemption from sin and death has been realised, Christ is therefore the proleptic embodiment of the divine solution to the problem of Romans 3:23, and his faithful, sacrificial death is instrumental in bringing this about. The sacrificial character of Christ's death is therefore constituted as such primarily by its *outcome*, without which the shedding of his

blood could not be said to achieve its purgative effect.[60]

The question we must now consider is how, according to Paul, Christ's functions as mercy seat and sacrifice benefit others. As the continuation of Paul's argument at the beginning of chapter 5 makes clear, the anthropological renewal accomplished in Christ has yet to reach believers fully: their 'access' (προσαγωγή) to grace (language with cultic overtones that naturally suit the idea of their proximity to the glorified Christ/mercy seat[61]) leaves them, not yet fully in possession of the glory of God, but 'rejoicing in the *hope* of the glory of God' (5:2). Rather, in Romans 3:25, the most immediate bearing Christ's sacrificial death has on believers is that the purification it achieves in Christ enables their *justification*, and this serves to demonstrate the righteousness of God (the point of the paragraph as a whole).[62] This has two dimensions. On the one hand, they do not have their sins reckoned to them (v. 25b); on the other, they receive a positive verdict from God in which they are accounted righteous (v. 26).[63] This justification, Paul says, happens 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (v. 24). If I am right in arguing that 'the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' includes the outcome of Christ's sacrifice (resurrection), this would suggest that believers' righteousness before God is contingent, not simply on Christ's death, but on the resulting deliverance from corruption and death into eschatological life.

This, in fact, is precisely what Paul says at the end of his discussion of justifying faith in Romans 4:25, the first half of which we took note above: Jesus 'was handed over for our

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60. On the purgative significance of the Yom Kippur ritual, cf. Lev. 16:16 (note LXX rendering), 19, 20-22, 30. This, indeed, is arguably why the cover of the ark is called the כַּפֹּרֶת or ἱλαστήριον to begin with: because it is the primary *object* of the action that the verbs כפר and ἱλάσκομαι/perform on the Day of Atonement, not the *means* of them (Lev. 16:14-16).

61. We see parallel evidence of this cultic usage in Ephesians: Gentiles have 'access' to God 'in one Spirit' because they have been 'brought near in the blood of Christ' (Eph. 2:13, 18; cf. 3:11-12).

62. As Wolter 2014, 123 argues, with the dual refs. to the 'demonstration' or 'proof' (*Erweis*) of God's righteousness in vv. 25-26, 'Paulus bezieht sich hier auf V.21-22a zurück'. Thus the paragraph holds together as a cohesive whole: the assertion of vv. 21-22 that the divine righteousness has been disclosed is substantiated in vv. 23-26, where Paul explains the means by which this has happened and why it should be regarded as such. Readings that understand δικαιοσύνη in vv. 25-26 in a different sense than in vv. 21-22 thus fail to recognise the basic argumentative structure and logical flow of the paragraph.

63. Based on his subsequent argument in Rom. 4, these two dimensions are inseparable in Paul's mind: 'the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works' is the selfsame person of whom David says (in the quote from LXX Ps. 32:1-2 immediately following), 'blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not count sin' (Rom. 4:6-8). Still, as I argue in what follows, this does not negate the further, positive dimension of justification as a declaration of righteousness, a judicial 'vindication'. For this reason one can agree with Wolter 2014, 244 that 'Der bestimmte Artikel bei πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ…hat anaphorische Bedeutung und weist auf εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ…zurück. Paulus nimmt den Ausdruck ἔνδειξις τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ in V.26b also noch einmal auf, um ihn mit einer Näherbestimmung zu versehen, die über das bei der Erstverwendung in V.25b–26a Gesagte hinausgeht'.

offences *and raised for our justification* [καὶ ἠγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν]'.[64] The prepositional phrases balancing the two halves of the statement identify the death and resurrection of Christ with the two respective causes of 'offences' and 'justification'.[65] As most commentators now recognise, the first governs the action retrospectively (he was given over to death 'because of our offences') whereas the second is prospective (he was raised 'for the sake of our justification').[66] While some have asserted that this distinction is 'purely rhetorical',[67] it is more plausible to view justification as distinctively related to Christ's resurrection: 'In the resurrection, God's declaration of vindication and the enactment of it are manifested in the resurrection of Christ'.[68] As Hooker observes, this fits well with Paul's later description in 5:12-21 of the respective consequences of Adam's 'offence' (παράπτωμα), resulting in condemnation, and Christ's 'vindication' (δικαίωμα), resulting in 'justification of life' (δικαίωσιν ζωῆς) for all humanity (v. 18).[69] Equally, however, it fits well with Paul's reference to the faith and blood of Christ in 3:25: as Christ's blood justifies and his obedience makes many righteous in chapter 5 (vv. 9, 19), so here Christ's deliverance from death through his faith in the promise results in righteousness for everyone who is justified by the redemption that is 'in him'. In Paul's understanding, the risen and glorified body of Christ is the 'place' where sinful humanity has been constituted as righteous before God.

One question that we must pose here is whether the justifying instrumentality of Christ's blood in verse 25 involves the idea of retributive punishment, which the substitutionary

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64. On this verse, see esp. Bird 2004; Hooker 2002; Marshall 2007, 68-97; Powers 2001, 125-34; Stanley 1961, 171-73.

65. Technically both the retrospective and prospective senses are 'causal', though commentary on this verse normally uses this word to denote the retrospective sense. See BDAG s.v. διά B.2.a.

66. So e.g. Cranfield 1975, 251-52; Dunn 1988, 224-25; Kruse 2012, 221-22; Moo 1996, 288-89; Wilckens 1978, 278-79. Bird 2004, 83 observes that a pairing of retrospective and prospective uses of the preposition διά also occurs immediately beforehand, in vv. 23-24. *pace* e.g. Hofius 2004, 181, who assumes that the preposition's functional equivalence with ὑπέρ in Paul's *Sterbensformeln* lends the phrase the sense of 'to atone for [sins]'. As Gathercole 2004, 70-77 has shown, however, this language is best understood in a causal sense, in keeping with the OT motif of dying 'for' (i.e. on account of) one's own sins.

67. e.g. Dunn 1988, 241. Along similar lines, Lohse 2003, 162 attempts to blunt the distinction between the two halves of Paul's statement: 'Weder darf die Sünden vergebung nur mit dem Tod Christi verknüpft, noch die Rechtfertigung nur mit seiner Auferstehung verbunden werden. Sondern beide Wendungen gehören als eine Aussage zusammen. Durch Kreuz und Auferweckung Christi ist die Sündenvergebung als der Freispruch der Rechtfertigung bewirkt; das bedeutet, daß in diesem Ereignis Gottes Gerechtigkeit offenbar geworden ist'. While it is true that Christ's death and resurrection are logically *related* in Paul's argument, and Christ's death (*qua* πίστις) can be regarded as instrumental in justification (3:25; 5:9), this is arguably inattentive to the eschatological character of Pauline justification, which constitutes a bringing forward of God's eschatological verdict concerning his people (i.e. resurrection) into the present.

68. Bird 2004, 84. This contrasts also with the view that Christ's resurrection merely 'demonstrates' or 'confirms' the efficacy of Christ's justifying death (as e.g. in Schreiner 1998, 243-44; Stott 2006, 238).

69. On this reading of δικαίωμα in 5:18, see Hooker 2002, 327, who observes that the normal rendering of 'righteous deed' in v. 18 is unlikely in view of the word's meaning two verses beforehand, as well as the absence of this meaning elsewhere in Paul.

readings noted above suppose. As we saw in our discussion of these readings, Paul's assertion that God set Christ forth 'in order to demonstrate his righteousness because of the passing over [i.e. "leaving unpunished"] of formerly-committed sins' is often taken to indicate that Christ's death bore the penalty that God refrained from imposing on sinners, since doing this necessarily called his 'justice' into question.[70] To be sure, it is possible that Paul's logic here presupposes God's assumption of a judicial responsibility by virtue of leaving sins unpunished. This is arguably part of the point of Yom Kippur itself, which Roy Gane refers to as 'Israel's judgment day': whereas 'pollution of the sanctuary by forgiven sins (חטאות) represents YHWH's responsibility for having forgiven guilty persons, removal of this defilement presumably signifies vindication of his justice with regard to the favourable decisions that he has granted them'.[71] What is not obvious, however, is that *punishment* constitutes the specific means of this cultic purgation. To begin with, despite the tendency of interpreters to detect behind Paul's use of πάρεσις a hidden assumption that 'leaving unpunished' must entail an accumulation of the punishment deserved (which is eventually unleashed on Christ), such a reading finds no lexicographical warrant. As Wolter observes, texts that use the noun in this sense do not imply 'lediglich einen *Strafaufschub*; nirgends wird gesagt, dass die Bestrafung später nachgeholt wird. Im Gegenteil: der Mensch, dessen Verfehlungen πάρεσις zuteil wird, kann zuverlässig damit rechnen, dass er ihretwegen nicht mehr belangt wird'. Consequently, 'Die Frage, ob πάρεσις in Röm 3,25b ›Nichtbeachtung‹ oder ›Erlass‹ bedeutet, ist darum unerheblich'.[72]

In addition to this lexicographical consideration, the cultic background to Paul's assertion offers no evidence to suggest that blood signified a sacrificial animal's punishment, or was understood to do so in Paul's day. It is, of course, common to interpret Israelite sacrifice in this sense; thus Gordon Wenham writes that Leviticus 'shows an animal suffering vicariously in a man's place'.[73] On this reading, the blood of the sacrifice represents the death of the sacrificial victim, a kind of sacramental sign indicating the exaction of sin's penalty, which itself accomplishes the atoning action more than the application of blood to cultic objects *per se*. In the words of Morris: 'Bloodshed stands…for the bringing to an end of life in the flesh. It is a witness to physical death'.[74] Although it is certainly true that the release of blood bears

70. So e.g. Schreiner 1998, 195-99.
71. Gane 2005, 322; see 305-23.
72. Wolter 2014, 261, emph. added.
73. Wenham 1995, 80.
74. Morris 1955a, 133, emph. added, drawing on Stibbs 1947, 12. Nicole 2004, 40 relates this to the idea of substitution: 'the poured-out life...of the sacrificial victim is substituted *for* the life of the worshiper' (emph.

a natural association with death, there exists no evidence in OT or second-temple texts that this association is the basis of blood's *atoning effect*. Instead, the efficacy of atonement is most clearly associated in Leviticus 17:11 with the instrumentality of the victim's 'life' (נֶפֶשׁ).[75] Moreover, a number of features of levitical sacrificial rituals problematise this reading further: first, the release and manipulation of blood features in the 'procedural core' of all the animal sacrifices (to borrow Wenham's language), despite the fact that only some of them are intended to deal with 'sin' (which, on this view, is supposedly the reason for the animal's death). Second, and relatedly, the types of 'sin' in question do not always carry the moral connotations that subsequent Judeo-Christian tradition has assigned that word: for example, a woman who has given birth offers a 'sin-offering' (חַטָּאת) at the end of her time of uncleanness (Lev. 12:6-8), as does the leper whose skin disease has gone (Lev. 14:19). Moreover, even where a moral element is more clearly present, none of the offenses in question are considered a capital offense, and in the great majority of cases the key criterion of a sin's expiability is its inadvertency.[76] For more serious offences, acts carried out 'with a

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orig). Here it is clear that, by the substitution of 'life', Nicole means more precisely the substitution of an *ended* life.

75. On the interpretation of Lev. 17:11, see esp. Sklar 2005, 174-81. Given that the instances of the verb כִּפֶּר followed by the preposition בְּ nearly always refer to the instrumentality of the action in the OT, it is preferable to understand בַּנֶּפֶשׁ in Lev. 17:11 as a *beth instrumenti*. Cf. Gen. 32:21; Exod. 29:33; Lev. 5:16; 7:7; 19:22; Num. 5:8; 35:33; 1 Sam. 3:14; Isa. 27:9; Prov. 16:6. Moreover, the three exceptions to this (Lev. 6:20[23]; 16:17, 27) are locative, and therefore not pertinent to the interpretation of Lev. 17:11. The only viable alternatives would be either (1) to regard it as a *beth essentiae* (so the NRSV: 'for, *as* life, it is the blood that makes atonement'), which would yield a difference only in emphasis (in either case the animal's נֶפֶשׁ is the reason for its atoning function); or (2) to regard it as a *beth pretii* ('the blood makes atonement [in exchange] for life'—that is, the life of the offerer). While the latter would yield a significant difference in meaning, the chiastic structure of the verse ('life…blood…blood…life') tells against it, as it suggests the referent of נֶפֶשׁ should be the same as its counterpart in the structure (i.e. the life that is in the blood). Sklar 2005, 170 also notes the weaknesses in appealing to the talionic principle in support of a *beth pretii* reading, since the talionic formula (1) always uses תחת rather than ב in Leviticus, and (2) the nouns are normally the same (i.e. 'life for life'). It is also worth nothing that the likelihood of a *beth instrumenti* in Lev. 17:11 pushes against the argument of some (esp. Jacob Milgrom) that the verse has *only* the peace offering in view, and the 'atonement' necessary only because the life of the animal has been taken. (Here it is assumed that the life of the animal is making atonement 'in exchange for' the lives of the Israelites who slaughter them.) See Milgrom 1971; Milgrom 1983, 96-103; Milgrom 1991, 704-13; cf. also Berichto 1976 On the contrary, as Gane argues, 'the role of blood as the agent of כפר in v. 11 suggests that blood in the context of other sacrifices also makes a special contribution to כפר'. Gane 2005, 65; cf. 62-65. Moreover, 'the rationale in this verse—that blood carries life and therefore the Lord has assigned it to ransom human lives on the altar—stands not only behind the prohibition against eating the blood of well-being offerings but also behind the prohibition against eating blood in general' (171). For a discussion of the possible function of ransoming alongside purging in levitical atonement, see Sklar 2005, 154-57.

76. See Lev. 4:1-5:19; Num. 15:27-31. Nicole 2004, 44 argues that the 'symbolic' rather than literal connection between the deaths of sacrificial animals and the forgiveness of sins negates the objection that the offences for which they are slain are not capital in nature, and that 'it was precisely unwilling or minor sin that was dealt with by a kind of sacrificial taxation, a reminder that all sin is deadly' (cf. 42-44). But this misses the point that 'sin' in the moral sense that Nicole clearly intends, regardless of its gravity or intentionality, is not identical with 'sin' in the levitical system. It is not at all clear, for instance, how the חַטָּאת offering of a mother

high hand' (בְּיָד רָמָה) that generate moral impurity,[77] defile the land, and threaten the people of Israel with curse and exile as they become increasingly widespread, there is no sacrificial remedy.

A third and final consideration pertains to the reception of Israelite sacrificial practice, both in the remainder of the OT and in the second-temple period. These bodies of literature associate animal sacrifice with many other themes and actions in ways that convey to us their sense of the meaning these rituals held to their practitioners: prayer,[78] thanksgiving,[79] praise,[80] repentance,[81] faith,[82] obedience,[83] justice,[84] Sabbath-keeping,[85] virtue,[86] purity of mind,[87] almsgiving,[88] self-giving.[89] Vicarious punishment, however, simply is not one of them.[90] The

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who has just given birth should function as 'a reminder that all sin is deadly'.

77. For the distinction between 'ritual' and 'moral' impurity, see Klawans 2000.

78. Cf. Pss. 5:3[?]; 20:2-4; 141:2; Prov. 15:8; Jos. *Ant.* 1.98.

79. Cf. Pss. 27:6; 50:14, 23; 54:6; 56:12; 66:13-15; 107:22; 116:12, 17.

80. Cf. Pss. 65:1; 76:11; 96:8-9; 119:108; Pss. Sol. 15:3; 1QS 9:26; 10:6, 8, 14.

81. Ps. 51:17; LXX Dan. 3:38-40 (*Pr.Azar.*); Pss. Sol. 9:6; *Jub.* 34:18-19; this was true with ref. to Yom Kippur in particular, cf. Falk 2010, 641-42.

82. Ps. 4:5.

83. 1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 40:6, 8; 1QS 3:4-12; 5:6-7; 8:3-10; 9:3-6; cf. 4Q541 frag. 9.

84. Amos 5:21-25; Mic. 6:7-8. As Klawans argues, the prophets' concern with justice over sacrifice arises directly from the recognition that sacrifice chiefly involves the giving of gifts and concepts of ownership: 'Fundamental to the proper workings of such a system, then, is due ownership of what is offered. For how can a gift be a true expression of anything if what is given was stolen in the first place?' Klawans 2005, 84; see 75-100.

85. *Jub.* 2:22.

86. Philo, *Flight* 18; *Moses* 2.108.

87. Philo, *Planting* 164; *Spec. Laws* 1.270-71; cf. *Drunkenness* 152; T.Levi 3:7.

88. Tob. 4:10-11; 12:8-10.

89. 1 Chron. 29:10-17; Wisd. 3:1-6; Pss. Sol. 2:4; *Arist.* 170; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.270-71.

90. The only potential counter-examples to this are the so-called 'fourth servant song' of Isaiah 53 and Eleazar's prayer concerning the martyrs in 4 Macc. 6. In the case of the former, the strongest possible cultic link in the text is the author's desription of the servant's life as an אָשָׁם (v. 10), which in priestly texts refers to the reparation offering. Neverthless, several considerations problematise the use of Isa. 53 as evidence that sacrificial slaughter amounted to punishment in the eyes of the author or of second-temple Jews who received the text: (1) it is not certain that the noun in fact refers to the reparation offering, though it is possible; (2) it is not clear that the servant's life, even if it constitutes a sacrificial offering, does so because of its character *as punishment*. Nothing in Isa. 53 requires this understanding, and in view of the other evidence considered above it would be more plausible, on this reading, to identify the servant's sacrificial character with his innocence in contrast with those for whom he suffers, which would cohere with the unblemished quality of the sacrificial victim. Finally, (3) although the LXX attests that this term was probably read in a sacrificial sense in the second-temple period (since it is translated περὶ ἁμαρτίας, a phrase used in connection with the sin-offering in the Pentateuch), it here no longer refers to the servant's own life, but to the sacrifice that the *hearers* must give (ἐὰν δῶτε, 2nd pers. pl.) in order that 'your [pl.] life will see a long-lived seed' (ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὄψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον). Meanwhile, with regard to 4 Macc., it is certainly true that] the deaths of Eleazar and the other martyrs are identified as a punishment on behalf of others (τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δίκῃ), in the context of his prayer that God would 'make my blood their cleansing [καθάρσιον] and take my life [τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχήν] as their ransom [ἀντίψυχος]' (author's trans.). Laying aside the question of whether this in fact has historical value as regards our reading of Paul (since 4 Macc. is significantly later), I will argue in the next chapter on the basis of *Pr.Azar.* in LXX Dan. 3 that the themes of sacrifice and punishment could be combined without confusion in second-temple Judaism, which raises the question of whether the same might be true in 4 Macc., where the 'atoning' value of the martyrs' deaths owes, not mainly to their quality *as punishment* (though they do sustain the punishment to which others are liable), but to their virtuous demonstration of 'devout reason's sovereignty

proponents of the 'penal substitutionary view' of Israelite sacrifice (if we may term it thus) do not deal with this basic historical problem, which is all the more significant in view of the sizeable body of evidence we have at hand: if in fact it was widely understood that sacrifice 'shows an animal suffering vicariously in a man's place', as Wenham says, or (as Jarvis Williams puts it) that 'the priest sacrificed the animals for the sins of Israel instead of sacrificing the people for their own sins',[91] it is curious that *this has left no clearly discernible mark on the piety of the non-priestly OT writings or on those of the second-temple period*, while these other elements *have* done so abundantly. Put differently, among the numerous expressions given to the 'meaning' of sacrifice in the OT and second-temple texts, one never encounters (for instance) a thankful Israelite or Jew praising God for accepting the death of a sacrificial victim in his place, on account of his guilt. In the absence of further evidence to the contrary, it therefore seems most appropriate to conclude that this meaning was not apparent to most Jews of Paul's day, and should not be regarded as the probable meaning of Romans 3:25 (or 5:9).

The most likely candidate to fulfil a penal function in the Yom Kippur ritual, meanwhile, would be the scapegoat, which suffers the fate that threatens corporate Israel in the covenant curses: expulsion from God's presence and from the land.[92] But in Romans 3:25, Paul's reference to blood indicates that the sin offering is in view, rather than the scapegoat.[93] Accordingly, the rationale for the justifying instrumentality that Paul attributes to Christ's blood should be located elsewhere. When one considers Paul's various statements regarding the means and nature of justification in the opening chapters of Romans (some of them noted above[94]), a natural possibility suggests itself, one that coheres well with the preceding observations about the reception and interpretation of levitical sacrificial practice in the OT and in second-temple texts. In Romans 5, Paul twice identifies Christ's agency in the justification of believers, first with reference to his *blood* ('having now been justified by his blood', v. 9) and his *obedience* ('through the obedience of the one man, the many will be made righteous', v. 19). Given the similarity of these verses, and given that Paul's Adam/ Christ contrast in Romans 5:12-21 is presented as developing from the argument that precedes it (hence διὰ τοῦτο, v. 12), it is reasonable to suppose that Paul understands the

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over the passions'—the main point of the author's discourse (cf. 1:1).

91. Williams 2015, 59.
92. Cf. Lev. 16:20-22; 26:33, 38; Deut. 28:36-37, 41, 63-68.
93. Despite the attempt of Siker 2011 to find the scapegoat in this text.
94. See 2.2.3.2 above.

sacrificial quality of Christ's death in terms of its character as obedience to God on behalf of 'the many', rather than to its character as punishment (though this is arguably present as well, since the context for this obedience is the aftermath of Adam's transgression). This obedience is instrumental in bringing about the 'vindication' (δικαίωμα; see above), consisting in 'justification of life' (δικαίωσιν ζωῆς) that stands over against the 'condemnation' (κατάκριμα) of Adam and his progeny (v. 18).

The advantages of this reading are several: first, it coheres well with our available evidence regarding second-temple Jewish views of sacrifice, as noted above. Second, it may provide a firmer basis for understanding the relationship between Christ's 'blood' and 'faith' in Romans 3:25. If, as I argued above, the πίστις with which Paul is concerned in verses 21-26 is primarily that of Christ himself (the subjective genitive reading of Paul's πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases), then πίστις here plays a parallel role in justification to Christ's obedience in chapter 5, also in connection with his shed blood. In view of our earlier considerations regarding the nature of justifying faith in Romans 3 and 4, this is easily explicable: because the divine promise that evokes faith specifically concerns *life out of death*, which finds its fulfilment in Christ's resurrection/justification (4:18-25), the faith by which Christ himself receives this promise is integral to his sacrificial obedience in death. Because he obediently undergoes death as one who *trusts* in God's promise of life and is vindicated accordingly, his blood is a pleasing offering to God that effects the justification/resurrection of Jesus and of everyone 'who is of the faith of Jesus' (τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, v. 26). As such, the purgative, sacrificial force of Christ's death most likely owes, not to its character *as death*, penal or otherwise—though involved in the process of sacrifice, death in fact represents the antithesis of purity in the sacrificial system—but to its character as an enactment of his *obedience* to God in the wake of Adam's disobedience, and his *faith* in the promise to Abraham that his own resurrection vindicates.

Third and finally, reading also has the virtue of bringing clarity to Paul's repeated assertion in verses 25 and 26 that Christ's role as mercy seat and sacrifice demonstrates God's righteousness.[95] Paul does not describe God as 'just and justifier' (δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα) in verse 26 because the accumulated entail of his πάρεσις was eventually heaped on Christ (as in the retributive reading), but because he, precisely in refraining from punishing his people and vindicating their faith by raising their faithful Christ from the dead,

95. As noted above, vv. 25 and 26 are best read in parallel rather than sequentially, the latter statement drawing out the significance of the former. So Wolter 2014, 244.

has thus fulfilled his promise to Abraham: a worldwide progeny brought from death into life. In the gospel concerning Christ's resurrection from the dead, God is shown to be true to his word, and therefore righteous: he is righteous, precisely in declaring believers righteous through the resurrection of his Son. Consequently, Paul's claims regarding Christ in verses 25 and 26 support his assertion in 3:21-22 that God's righteousness has been manifested through the faith of Christ to all who believe, and in 1:16-17 that in his gospel (centrally concerning Christ's resurrection; 1:3-4) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

On the other hand, a more likely indication of the penal character of Christ's death appears in Romans 4:25a, where Paul (possibly alluding to LXX Isa. 53:12, which would complement the new exodus theme introduced in 3:21-26), says that Christ 'was handed over for our offences' (παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν).[96] Here the language of 'offences' parallels what we have already noted concerning Adam, whose 'offence' led to the divine sentence of condemnation (κατάκριμα) consisting in the reign of death over all humanity (5:15-18), which stands in contrast with the 'gift' following many 'offences' (v. 16). The διά-clause establishes a causal link between these offences and Christ's death: on account of the offences of others, Christ was handed over to death. Romans 4:25 can thus be seen to complement and add to the portrayal of Christ's death (as well as that of his resurrection, we shall see) in 3:25, with which it bookends the intervening discussion of justification by faith (3:27–4:24). As we shall see in the next chapter, Romans 8:3 represents a bringing together of these two emphases in a single statement; but even so, in neither of these instances should we erase the distinct contribution each element makes to Paul's portrayal of the death of Jesus. Whereas Romans 4:25 identifies the event of Christ's death as a handing-over that discharges a penalty, Romans 3:25 identifies it as a self-offering, made in faith, that justifies.

2.2.4.2 Salvation through the Life of Christ

If the reading advanced in this study is correct, then Romans 3:25 describes how Christ was 'set forth' in his *permanent and ongoing* role as mercy seat, in which he mediates the eschatological life and glory of God to believers. As I have observed, Paul identifies the glory of God as still mainly in the future for believers (5:2). Nevertheless, the anticipatory presence

96. On Paul's likely allusion to Isaiah here, cf. Hofius 2004, 180-81; Longenecker 2016, 535-37. It is important to observe, however, that Paul does not identify the *reason* for Christ's resurrection in this verse. This, I would argue, is supplied by the surrounding context, which identifies Christ's faith and obedience in the *context* of sin's punishment as the cause of this positive outcome (which extends beyond the mere exaction of sin's penalty in death). As I will argue in the next chapter, this arguably recurs in Rom. 8:3, and finds an important analogue in the second-temple martyrological text, Prayer of Azariah.

of the Spirit, by which 'the love of God has been poured out in our hearts', confirms their hope of sharing fully in this glory (v. 5). As we observed in our discussion of Paul's glory-language, the Spirit and glory of God are roughly synonymous, both referring to the divinely-bestowed life that has raised Christ from the dead and enables those who belong to him to 'walk in newness of life' (6:4). Consequently, though they still await full bodily glorification with Christ (cf. 8:11, 17, 23-24), believers are already recipients of the glory of God in an anticipatory sense, sharers in the eschatological life of Christ, the mercy seat.

This sharing in Christ's glorified life, according to Paul, fulfils a specific soteriological function—one that, in contrast with the other two we have identified, spans from the present into the future. We took note of this briefly in our evaluation of the typical substitutionary reading of Romans 3:25 above: according to the parallel *a fortiori* statements in 5:9-10, believers will be saved from the wrath of God by Christ's 'life' (ζωή). This soteriological function is *distinct* from those that Christ's death fulfils in the first half of each statement (justification and reconciliation), even though Christ's sacrificial death is itself the means by which he attains to this eschatological life in 3:25. It is here, I contend, that the overarching problem of 'wrath' enumerated in Romans 1:18–3:20 finds its solution in Paul's argument. Interpreters such as those we noted earlier in the chapter are right to observe that God's wrath is an overarching concern throughout these chapters, but they arguably overlook how the underlying causes of this problem necessitate a more complex sequencing to the divine solution. Humanity not only sinned, but *through* their sin forfeited the glory of the incorruptible God (1:21-23; 3:23), plunging themselves into a state of corruption in which they are enslaved to sin and storing up wrath on the final day of judgment (1:24-32; 2:5-11; 3:9). Meanwhile, because those who possess the law find themselves in the same state (2:1-4[?], 12-24; 3:1-8), and because the law itself abundantly attests the universality of sin (2:24; 3:9-18), there is no hope of extricating oneself from this state of slavery through law-observance (through which comes the knowledge of sin), and thereby escaping the coming wrath of God (3:9, 19-20).

In this context, God provides the solution in Christ (3:21-26), which brings his people into a new state in which they can now *expect* deliverance from the coming wrath of God (5:1-11). Through God's justifying redemption 'in Christ' (3:24), they are given access to divine grace and love, experienced in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through which their hope of divine glory rather than wrath is established (5:5). Paul does not describe a 'two-step' process of deliverance (existence under divine wrath → pacification of divine wrath), but a

'three-step' process (existence under threat of wrath → deliverance into a new existence in expectation of glory → final salvation from the imminent wrath. Christ's soteriological role in Romans 3:25 thus *sets the stage* for believers' deliverance from wrath by positing Christ as the blood-cleansed bearer and mediator of the eschatological life that *will* effect this deliverance.[97] Paul does not say exactly how this salvation 'by his life' occurs at this point in the argument of Romans, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, this 'added step' reappears in fuller detail in chapter 8. Here, believers are sustained in obedience and suffering by Christ's and the Spirit's parallel intercession on their behalf, with the assurance that condemnation is not their eschatological destiny, and that God will give life to their mortal bodies at Christ's return (8:2, 4-17, 26-27, 34). In both cases, Paul's assurances as regards divine eschatological judgment pertain to the *future*.

Granted, this conclusion can be nuanced somewhat by the recognition that Paul's argument concerning divine wrath in these chapters is focussed on the 'not yet' of an inaugurated eschatology that also possesses a discernible element of 'already' as well (to use the now common parlance).[98] In this sense, it may be reasonable to say that Paul's larger argument *implies* that Christ's death possesses a propitiatory character, or at the very least that it represents his undergoing the coming wrath ahead of the final day of judgment. The very fact of his resurrection in the midst of history as the justifying event that determines believers' status before God indicates the bringing forward of the final eschatological verdict into the present in Christ (i.e. 'inaugurated' eschatology). But this equally suggests that Christ's *death* which, as we have noted, possesses a penal character suggestive of his solidarity with adamic humanity (ruled by death because of Adam's and their παραπτώματα), possesses the character of final eschatological judgment. Not only the justifying verdict of resurrection, then, but the condemning verdict of death is actualised in the death and resurrection of Christ.[99] Precisely because the wrath of God is primarily *future*, as we have observed, and is expressed in the coming eschatological judgment, it then seems implicit in Paul's argument that Christ's death, which underwent this impending judgment ahead of the rest of humanity, can be characterised as his direct experience of the coming wrath.

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97. This qualifies somewhat the reading of Kirk 2008, 87-93, who understands ζωή to refer to Christ's *resurrection*: it is more accurate, rather, to say that ζωή is the ongoing *result* of Christ's resurrection.

98. Current scholarship exhibits more of a consensus regarding the inaugurated character of Pauline eschatology (and that of the NT in general). For older debates regarding 'realistic' and 'futuristic' eschatology, see Ladd 1952, 25-35.

99. The next chapter will discuss how Paul's eschatology determines his use of death-language in Romans and elsewhere.

Moreover, since life in the glory of God is the opposite of the eschatological destiny of wrath and death (2:7-8; 6:21-23; 8:1-2), this would likewise indicate that Christ, as the glorified bearer of pneumatic life, is the very embodiment of the deliverance from the coming wrath that believers now expect.

It is demonstrably the case, then, that Paul's argument *implies* a propitiatory aspect to Christ's death, as a valid descriptor of the 'already' in Paul's 'already/not yet' eschatology: as the one judged and justified in the midst of history, Christ has obtained eschatological mercy from God and delivered to believers the blessings that lie beyond the coming wrath. Nevertheless, even in light of this recognition, it must be appreciated that Paul's argumentative strategy as regards the wrath of God in Romans 1–5 focusses on the 'not yet'—on the coming judgment from which Christ's 'life' (implicitly the content of the freedom he already possesses from eschatological wrath) *will* save them. For this reason, our discussion in the following section, insofar as it addresses the role of divine wrath, will concern itself specifically with this soteriological function.

2.2.4.3 Conclusion

Paul's description of Christ as a divinely-provided, blood-cleansed mercy seat in Romans 3:25 provides the basis for the two related soteriological functions that Paul's larger argument in chapters 3–5 attributes to him. As a purgative blood sacrifice, Christ's faithful death deals with the corruption of the sin that God does not reckon to those whom he justifies by obtaining the resurrection that enacts the verdict of justification itself for those who share in 'the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (3:24). The eschatological life in the Spirit and glory of God that Christ as mercy seat possesses and mediates to others (supremely, in his risen state) assures believers that they too will be glorified, and will save them from the wrath of God on the day of judgment.

2.2.5 Conclusion: Christ's Soteriological Function in the Implied Narrative Context of Romans 1–5

In the preceding discussion, I have shown that the typical model of substitutionary atonement mischaracterises the nature of the problem that Paul is addressing in Romans 1–3, leading to a further mischaracterisation of Christ's soteriological role articulated in 3:21-26. In contrast with the typical model's narrative of how human sin evokes divine wrath, which in turn is pacified with a commensurate punishment, Paul's concern in these verses is chiefly

with the *anthropological* effect of Christ's death and resurrection. The implied narrative background to his description of Christ's soteriological role runs as follows: humanity has abandoned God's glory through idolatry and sin, consigning themselves to corruption and storing up wrath on the coming day of judgment. Israel's possession of the law, meanwhile, has done nothing to reverse this situation, but has served only to show that Jews, no less than Gentiles, are 'under sin' (3:9). But in the midst of universal sin and corruption, God has provided Christ as the locus of the divine glory that sinful humanity forfeited. Through Christ's death and resurrection, God has accomplished a new exodus that is equally an eschatological Day of Atonement, purging Christ from the corruptible human condition through his faithful death and justifying resurrection and presenting him as the one in whom Jews and Gentiles find justification and the hope of final eschatological glory. In all of this, Paul says, God demonstrates his righteousness—that is, in Christ he has acted truthfully in accordance with his covenant-making, promissory word to Abraham, dealing with human sin and bestowing righteousness, life and glory on the heirs of his promises, the children of Abraham from among all the nations.

2.3 Substitution & Participation in Romans 3:25

The preceding discussion has established the soteriological function that Christ fulfils in Romans 3:25. In what follows, I will address the question of whether Christ's fulfilment of this role is of a substitutionary character—that is, whether he fulfils it *in place of* believers. Based on the internal evidence of Romans 3:23-25 and its connections in chapters 4 and 5, I will show that Christ functionally replaces believers in each of the three capacities outlined above: his *death*, *resurrection* and *ongoing eschatological life* function, respectively, in place of their own actions and experiences to enable the pardoning of their sins, establish them as righteous before God and save them from the coming eschatological wrath. I will also show that, despite some claims to the contrary, the participatory motifs that these texts also contain in no way contradict or compete with the substitutionary motifs; rather, participation in Christ is itself the *means* by which his death, resurrection, and life function redemptively for believers in place of their own actions and experiences (including their own eventual death and resurrection into eschatological life). Finally, I will substantiate this point by considering Paul's most detailed description of participation in Christ in Romans 6 which, though it identifies believers with Christ's saving action, nowhere requires that their own experiences of suffering or death share in and recapitulate the redemptive functions he fulfils.

2.3.1 Christ as a Redemptive Replacement in Romans 3:25

Our first objective is to consider evidence that Christ's soteriological role involves his replacement of believers. In order to establish this, the evidence must indicate that Christ's fulfilment of the soteriological functions that Paul identifies alleviates the need for the beneficiaries of his substitution fulfil the same function. Or, put negatively, it must indicate that, had Christ not fulfilled the soteriological functions that Paul identifies, it would be left to believers themselves to fulfil those functions. As I will show, each of the soteriological functions identified above involves a substitutionary role on Christ's part, though none of those articulated in Romans 3:25 exactly matches the substitutionary value that the typical model accords his soteriological role. Rather, the clearest overlap with the typical model appears in Paul's related analysis of the significance of Jesus' death in Romans 4:25.

2.3.1.1 Christ's Substitutionary Death

The substitutionary character of Christ's death in Romans 3:25 is evident in light of two presuppositions on which Paul's preceding argument depends. The first is that sin places a barrier in the way of regaining the forfeited glory of God. This, of course, goes almost without saying: sin (specifically idolatry) was the means of the glory's forfeiture to begin with (1:23) and the outcome of sin on the eschatological day of judgment is 'wrath and fury' rather than the 'eternal life' that comes to those who 'seek glory and honour and incorruption' (2:7-8). Second, Paul's argument presupposes that believers are unable to deal with their own sin, any more than that they can positively obtain justification.[100] This is due especially to the fact that, for Paul, sin brings not only guilt but also *enslavement* and *corruption*: all are 'under sin', existing in its thrall as its noetically-darkened subjects, and the law's limited value in relation to this situation is that it makes its would-be practitioners aware of this incapacity, without providing a remedy (1:21, 28; 3:9, 20; cf. 7:7-24).[101] Paul's argument thus places an immovable barrier between sinful humanity and the glory of God, while also showing that the Jew's possession of the law has not made him the restored bearer of this glory that he was called to be (2:17-24; 3:2). Apart from these presuppositions, Paul's argument in Romans 3:23-25 makes little sense: precisely because of the incapacity that sin imposes through its corrupting and enslaving effect on humanity, God's gracious intervention

100. Though Rom. 2:7, 12-16 speak of the human attainment of justification through obedience, this must be understood in light of Paul's later argument concerning the role of the Spirit, which alone enables obedience that is pleasing to God (6:17-18; 7:5-6; 8:1-9a, 12-13). Cf. Wright 2013b, 134-51.

101. The next chapter will discuss Paul's sin-language in greater detail.

in Christ is required. Thus Christ's faithful, sacrificial death functions redemptively in the place of humanity's incapacity, on account of sin, to obtain the glory of God, and accomplishes this for them precisely by dealing with the corruption caused by their sin. In this sense, his faithful and sacrificial death in Romans 3:25 is substitutionary: it does something for others (purify the sinful human condition and obtain the glory of God) that they cannot do for themselves.

What is less clear, however, is that the substitutionary character of this death in Romans 3:25 corresponds precisely to that of the typical model of penal substitution. Two observations in particular are in order: first, as I have argued above, the main point of this substitution in 3:25 is to fit Christ permanently to mediate the glory of God to humanity by purging the fleshly corruption caused by sin, rather than to explain how Christ's death effects the removal of divine wrath. Second, it is not clear that the *deaths* of believers are to be regarded as the specific object of replacement that this verse has in view. In the typical model, this is assumed to be the case because Christ's sacrificial role in the verse is supposed to be essentially penal. As Williams puts it, in ancient Israel 'the priest sacrificed the animals for the sins of Israel instead of sacrificing the people for their own sins'.[102] The verb 'sacrifice' thus becomes essentially synonymous with 'punish by death' and, for this reason, the deaths of believers must be regarded as the object of the replacement, since death is integral to fulfilling the function in question. This is a mistaken assumption regarding sacrifice, however, and I have argued above that the primary instrumentality in view in verse 25 is not punishment, or even death in and of itself, but the *faith* in which Christ's blood was shed, which is constitutive of the sacrificial quality of his death in Paul's description. Although, as I have also argued, this sacrificial function is closely paired with a related, penal function (4:25), they should not be collapsed into each other functionally.

Thus, while a penal logic may provide an explanation for the necessity of Christ's death in dealing with sin, it does not account for the primary soteriological mechanism that Paul identifies in Romans 3:25, namely the faith that Christ offered to God *in the context* of his death in consequence of sin, for which reason his death resulted in eschatological redemption. One corollary to the latter point, however, is that in the complementary soteriological statement in Romans 4:25 we *do* encounter greater overlap with the typical model of penal substitution. Because, in this case, the soteriological function itself entails death, this suggests

102. Williams 2015, 59.

an underlying sameness (at least in this respect) between what is replacing and being replaced: because *death* is necessarily that which discharges the penalty, then Christ's death naturally alleviates the need for believers' deaths to fulfil that function. In other words, his death replaces theirs in the capacity of undergoing the penalty of 'offences'.[103]

Here, however, we encounter an objection from the participationist scholarship that rejects a substitutionary reading of Paul, based on the observation that the apostle assumes that believers can and do still die. This, as we have seen, is taken to prove that substitution cannot accurately describe Paul's understanding of Jesus' death. So Dunn writes that 'fallen men do not escape death—any more than they escape wrath; *they die!* Either they die their own death without identifying themselves with Christ; or else they identify themselves with Christ so that they die his death—his death works out in their flesh'.[104] Christ's own death is thus treated purely as an act of *identification* with humanity, so that they in turn might identify reciprocally with him. In his discussion of Romans 4:25, Powers makes a similar argument:

> Paul says that Jesus was handed over for the trespasses of the believers. The idea which Paul presents here is certainly not the notion of substitution, as if Jesus died *instead of* the believers because of the believers' sins. Rather, the idea that Paul communicates is that Jesus identified himself with the believers in their trespasses; because he identified himself with the sins of the believers, Jesus died. Instead of the notion of substitution, the idea of representation seems more appropriate to describe Paul's understanding here. But Jesus not only participates in the believers' fate; the believers also participate in Jesus' fate. Namely, Jesus was raised in order to secure the believers' justification. Paul sees the believers as participating in the vindication of Jesus in his resurrection.[105]

Similarly, with respect to 3:25, Powers highlights the identification that faith forges between believers and Christ, and concludes on this basis that Christ's death cannot be substitutionary, since the soteriology thereby articulated is participatory and holds in view more than Christ's death.[106]

This rejection of a substitutionary reading, however, is based on the fallacious assumption that Paul assumes there to be essentially no difference between Christ's death and that of believers. This mistaken notion is funded by the imprecision of the participationist claim regarding Christ's identificatory death: while Christ's penal death completes his

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103. The same may be true in Rom. 5:6-8, depending on how integral motifs of substitution may be to the Greco-Roman 'noble death' traditions that appear to underlie Paul's statement. See Gathercole 2015, 85-107.

104. Dunn 1991, 51-52. It is important to note that Dunn does not understand the 'wrath of God' mainly to describe God's disposition toward the believer, but as 'a process willed by God' in which sin is consigned irrevocably to death, a process that is 'not so much retributive as preventative' (50). (One notes a certain irony in the similarity of this view with C.H. Dodd's interpretation, given that the original version of Dunn's essay appeared in a *Festschrift* for Leon Morris. See Dunn 1974.)

105. Powers 2001, 132-33, emph. orig.

106. Powers 2001, 89n8.

identification with *adamic humanity* under death's dominion (cf. 5:12-21), this observation on its own neglects the fact that *the specific people* whom Paul addresses are alive and not yet dead. In this respect, Christ's experience of death manifestly exceeds their own. Furthermore, even though believers remain mortal and potentially subject to an eventual bodily death (if Christ does not return first), Paul's larger argument clearly forbids our assignment of a penal character to whatever they may yet experience, up to and including death. Paul makes it clear that the non-reckoning of sins is integral to believers' justification before God: the one to whom God counts righteousness is the one 'whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered…to whom the Lord will not reckon sin' (4:7-8). Moreover, the whole point of 'the passing over of the formerly-committed sins' in 3:25 is that those who committed them *are not punished*. Paul flatly contradicts Dunn's claim that believers do not escape wrath in his soteriological framework: that they *do* escape wrath is precisely the point of Romans 5:9-10! It makes nonsense of Paul's argument, in other words, to suppose that Paul thinks the suffering and death of believers constitute a penalty for sin. Thus, while the participationist objection makes the correct observation that Paul assumes the continuing mortality of believers, *functionally* Christ's death fulfils a role for them that their own death does not—and, in Romans 4:25, this role overlaps with what the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement supposes.

Particularly in the following chapter, I will consider the ways in which Paul speaks of the destiny of death in the argument of Romans, supporting the above claim further. For the time being, however, it remains for us to consider whether the other soteriological functions we have observed are of a substitutionary character.

2.3.1.2 Christ's Substitutionary Resurrection

As I have argued, Paul's statement that believers are 'justified…through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 3:24) has in view not only Christ's death, but also its redemptive result, resurrection from the dead into the glory of God. Romans 4:25 would appear to provide us with the clearest explanation of what this means for Paul: Christ 'was raised for our justification'—the assumption being that resurrection itself constitutes the definitive justifying verdict of God concerning his people. According to Paul, however, this verdict has *already* been rendered, in some sense, for people whose bodies still await this final eschatological vindication. This leads us to an interesting and, perhaps, initially counterintuitive conclusion, namely that Christ is a substitute in his *resurrection* as much as

in his death. The substitutionary character of this soteriological role is especially evident in the logic of Paul's preceding argument, which presupposes that the (unfulfillable) responsibility of attaining justification would otherwise fall to believers. God's gracious provision in Christ stands against the backdrop of the inability of 'all flesh' to be justified by the works of the law, because of sin (3:9, 20). This is why justification comes 'freely, as a gift' through the death and resurrection of Christ (v. 24). Consequently, we may say that, in the capacity of securing their present status of righteousness before God, Christ's resurrection replaces the actions and experiences of believers (e.g. their performance of the works of the law, their own bodily resurrection). Paul treats the bodily resurrection of *another*—of Christ—as the efficient cause of believers' justification.

As with Christ's death, this may seem initially counterintuitive, in view of the fact that believers too will eventually experience bodily resurrection (just as they may well experience bodily death). This confusion, however, stems from the tendency to focus on 'experience' in describing substitution and participation, which obscures the essentially functional character of substitutionary replacement. This confusion is reflected in the comments of Marshall who, while arguing in favour of a substitutionary reading of Christ's death in Paul, distinguishes Christ's representative role in the second half of Romans 4:25 from his substitutionary role in the first half:

> [I]n the event of crucifixion and resurrection, it is inadequate to think of Christ purely as substitute. Substitution means that Christ acts instead of us, and does something that, as a result of his doing it, we do not need to do. We do *not* have to bear the eternal consequences of our sin because Christ has done so. But the same cannot be said of resurrection. Christ is not raised instead of us, but so that we might share his resurrection. He is raised for us, for our benefit, on our behalf, in order that what has happened to him may be recapitulated in us, by what has happened in him being extended to us as we are joined to him by faith.[107]

Marshall's argument seems, on the one hand, to presuppose the kind of functional distinction between Christ's death and that of believers that we have identified—his death, in contrast with ours, 'bear[s] the eternal consequences of our sin'—and yet, on the other hand, to ignore precisely such a distinction in how Paul represents Christ's resurrection in the same verse. Marshall fixes his attention on the eventuality of believers' resurrection with Christ, ignoring the fact that Paul's point in the verse is not mainly about this future destiny, but about the *present* status that believers enjoy because of *Christ's* resurrection. Consequently, to use Marshall's language, Christ's resurrection indeed 'does something that, as a result of his

107. Marshall 2007, 91-92, emph. orig.

doing it, we do not need to do'—namely, to secure the justifying verdict that believers receive. Put differently, the body of Christ has replaced the bodies of believers in the capacity of obtaining their justification in the present through resurrection from the dead. This is the fundamental reason that God's righteousness is revealed to faith through the faith of *Christ*: in Christ's own 'justification by faith' (i.e. his resurrection from the dead, following his faithful death), believers perceive God's declaration concerning *them*, in fulfilment of his promise that 'the one who is righteous by faith shall live' (Rom. 1:17; cf. Hab. 2:4).

2.3.1.3 Christ's Substitutionary Life

Due to the fact that most of the evidence in Romans concerning Christ's indwelling of believers by the Spirit falls within the purview of the following chapter, our discussion here will be brief and primarily suggestive rather than conclusive. As I showed above, Christ's ongoing role as the bearer of pneumatic life has the most direct bearing on the 'problem' of wrath that Paul's argument seeks to resolve. Because the life that Christ now lives in the glory of God is itself the eschatological alternative to wrath, the presence of this life in believers by the Spirit guarantees that their destiny will be glorification with Christ rather than consignment to that wrath. This places believers in a unique situation, in which their immunity to the coming wrath does not originate in themselves, but in *another*, whose life lives in them, and whose risen embodied state constitutes (as I will argue in the next chapter) an *alternative anthropological basis* for their immunity to the coming wrath. Accordingly, they will be 'saved by his life' (ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ). This at least suggests a functional replacement: whereas the natural condition of believers renders them incapable of escaping the coming wrath (because it is irrevocably bound to the corruption that attests this final destiny; cf. 8:10), the Spirit provides them with the incipient realisation of eternal life as a pledge of the glory of God. Consequently, in the role of providing immunity to the coming wrath, *Christ's risen 'life' replaces the natural capacities of the corruptible human condition*. As we shall see in the next chapter, Paul connects this ongoing substitutionary function with the dual intercession of Christ and the Spirit, in heaven and in the believer respectively. In other words, the functional replacement of the believer with Christ is not an impersonal process (i.e. the believer 'has' Christ's 'life' in the stead of his or her own flesh a basis for eschatological hope); rather, the risen and ascended Christ *acts* on the believer's behalf to ensure that those who presently live by means of his eschatological 'life' will be sustained and never separated from the love of God.

2.3.1.4 Conclusion

The soteriological functions that Paul attributes to Christ in Romans 3:25, and whose fulfilment his larger argument explains, each involve clear elements of substitution, understood in the normal English sense of 'replacement in a functional capacity'. Christ's faithful death replaces the agency of believers in undoing the corruption resulting from sin, as well as (in 4:25) undergoing sin's penal consequence in their stead. This faithful death, in turn, attains its sacrificial *telos* in Christ's resurrection, which replaces the resurrection of believers in obtaining the present verdict of justification that they receive through faith. Finally, the eschatological life that the risen Christ shares with believers through the Spirit replaces the natural and corruptible capacities of their own flesh in securing immunity to the coming wrath. In the next section, we will consider how participatory motifs found in the same argument relate to and inform our understanding of this substitutionary relationship.

2.3.2 Participation in Christ as a Means of Replacement

As I have argued above, the main focus of Paul's soteriological statement in Romans 3:24-25 is to articulate how God provides a remedy to humanity's idolatrous forfeiture of the glory of God. In and of itself, this soteriological aim implies participation: the goal of God's redemptive action in Christ is to enable sinful humanity to *share* or *take part in* his incorruptible life.[108] But, as we have seen, this divine provision is made through Christ's *substitutionary* action of attaining to the glory of God through death and resurrection. As I will show in this section, this substitutionary role is in no way at odds with believers' participation in Christ; indeed, it is *through* their participation in him that Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life function redemptively for them in place of their own actions, experiences and capacities. One way of putting this is to say that, through his pneumatological union with them, Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing life functionally replace their own by becoming functionally *theirs*. In support of this claim, I will draw not only on Romans 3:21-26, but on related participatory motifs that appear in chapter 6. In particular, I will show that the participation Paul describes in no way involves a *recapitulative* participationism (as encountered especially in Dunn) whereby believers repeat the Christ-event in a soteriologically effective manner.

In addition to Paul's reference to the glory of God, two features of Romans 3:21-26

108. Along these lines, cf. Gorman 2011.

indicate the presence of a related, participatory motif. First, Paul's assertion that the redemption about which he is speaking now resides 'in Christ Jesus' (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) suggests that it is accessed through participation.[109] While it cannot be taken for granted that Paul means this phrase in a locative sense ('in') as opposed to instrumental one ('by means of'), nearly all of his other uses of this expression in Romans occur in contexts in which Paul is describing the new life that believers enjoy because of their participatory solidarity with Christ.[110] In light of Paul's larger argument, it makes good sense to understand this phrase to denote a similar solidarity here: believers find justification 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' because they are somehow identified with Christ, the blood-cleansed bearer of God's glory, in whom humanity's corruption has been purged away and their eschatological destiny realised. Second, and if our reading of Paul's 'πίστις Χριστοῦ' language is correct, then Paul's language of faith in this context further suggests such an identification, since the person whom God justifies is one who is 'of the faith of Jesus' (3:26, τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ) as well as 'of the faith of Abraham' (4:16, τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ). Faith, Paul argues, makes one a descendant of Abraham and a sharer in the promise that is fulfilled in Christ's justifying resurrection (4:24-25).[111]

As is generally recognised, this participatory relationship is constituted especially through the Spirit, by which Christ dwells in believers. As we have seen, Paul points in this direction in Romans 5, when he explains that the presence of Christ's indwelling 'life', the Spirit, assures justified believers that the glory of God, rather than wrath, will be their eschatological inheritance (5:1-2, 5, 9-10). But the fact that Christ's death and resurrection were instrumental in the mediation of this life to believers, as the imagery of Christ's blood sacrifice and his role as mercy seat in 3:25 arguably indicates, adds a new dimension of significance to this participation. In sharing in Christ's life, believers become the beneficiaries of all that he has done *in such a way as to alleviate their own actions and experiences of the need to fulfil the same function*. It is as though they themselves had already died and risen: they already share in the life that belongs to the age to come, despite continuing to live in corruptible bodies awaiting transformation—all because Christ, whose

109. Cf. also Gal. 2:17-20; Phil. 3:9-11. For discussion of this formula in Paul and related themes of participation, see Campbell 2012; Thate et al. 2014; Macaskill 2013.

110. Cf. Rom. 6:11, 23; 8:1-2, 39. Paul's ref. to the 'love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' in 8:39 is metonymically related to the chapter's theme of indwelling pneumatic life through Christ, which Paul closely identifies with the love of God in 5:5.

111. Although Powers 2001 rejects the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, he also sees faith as a means of believers' identification with and participation in Christ in Rom. 3:25. See 89n8.

body is fitted to bear the glory of God and who dwells in them by his Spirit, possesses this life for them.

If this reasoning is correct, then it suggests a much closer relationship between substitution and participation in Paul's argument than one of mere compatibility. Rather, these motifs are integrally related: it is *because* believers are united and identified with Christ by faith that his death and resurrection function in place of their own in these redemptive capacities. To put it in terms of our schema for analysing substitutionary language, participatory union with Christ through faith and the Spirit is the *means* of Christ's redemptive replacement. Because they are united with him, his death and resurrection function redemptively for them in place of their own to accomplish their forgiveness and justification. Put differently, Christ's death and resurrection *become theirs* in such a way as functionally *replaces their own* in these soteriological capacities. It is not, in other words, simply that substitution and participation are not 'at odds'—they *depend* upon each other in order mutually to construct the soteriological rationale on which Paul's argument depends.

While this logic makes good sense of the evidence of Romans 3–5, it becomes more explicit in Romans 6. As we noted above, Paul's argument in this chapter is thematically linked with his assertion regarding Christ the mercy seat in chapter 3: as the one 'raised…from the dead through the glory of the Father', Christ mediates 'life' to others who are thereby freed from 'unrighteousness', 'sin', 'uncleanness' and 'lawlessness' (6:4, 12-20; cf. LXX Lev. 16:16, 21). As Paul also makes clear in this chapter, this mediation involves believers' participation in Christ's death and resurrection through union with him, so that his death and resurrection are functionally theirs. Their baptism into Christ was a baptism 'into his death', such that they have already 'died to sin' and now can 'walk in newness of life' because of his resurrection (vv. 2-4). Believers are to count what is true of Christ to be true of themselves: '[the death] that he died, he died to sin once and for all; [the life] that he lives, he lives to God. So also consider yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' (vv. 11-12). This is why, despite the continuing influence of sin in their own mortal bodies, believers can present themselves to God 'as alive from the dead' (vv. 12-13). Believers enjoy a new relation, both to sin and to God, *not* because of the death and resurrection of their own bodies, but because of the death and resurrection of Christ's body. Following his discussion in chapter 6, Paul in fact makes this explicit (though with reference to the law): 'you were put to death to the law *through the body of Christ*, so that you might belong to another—to the

one raised from the dead—so that you might bear fruit to God' (7:4).[112] The point, then, is not that believers themselves die the *kind* of death that Christ died, and as a result share in the *kind* of life that Christ now lives, but that they 'have been united to *Christ*, who died and who was raised'.[113]

This reading stands in contrast with that of Dunn who, as we saw in the introductory survey, espouses a recapitulative view of Pauline participation—that is to say, a view in which the believer's own experiences share in the soteriological function of Christ's death and resurrection. In his comments on these verses, Dunn repeatedly stresses that the believer's death with Christ is a *process* that is begun and not yet complete. From the perfect tense of Paul's statement that 'we have been conjoined [σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν] with the likeness of his death', Dunn infers that the believer has yet to face 'the actual outworking of the death which [Christ] died in its effect on the present age' and compares this to Paul's statement that 'I have been crucified with Christ' in Galatians 2:19-20.[114] Along these lines, Dunn argues that Paul's statement in verse 6 that 'our old man was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin would be destroyed' expresses precisely this incompleteness: 'To nail someone to the cross was not to kill him there and then but to subject him to a suffering which inevitably resulted in death after some hours or even days'—or, in Paul's description, until the end of the believer's earthly life.[115] But this, Dunn acknowledges, seems directly to contradict Paul's point that believers are *presently* freed from sin. He attempts to resolve this by situating Paul's statement within 'the tension of the believers' eschatological existence':

> Something of epochal significance has happened in the once-for-allness of Christ's death. And the point which Paul wishes to get over, even at the risk of overstatement, is that *believers can share in the epochal once-for-all results of Christ's death*. By the decisive act of conversion-initiation believers can *begin* already, even in this life, to benefit from the decisive act of Christ's death and resurrection. Their transition from death to life is incomplete, they are *suspended* as it were between death and life, they are lying buried with Christ in death (to sin), awaiting the fullness of resurrection, they are still to that extent under the dominion of death till they too have been raised from the dead and death ceases to exercise any rule over them. But the crucial transition has *begun*; because they already share in the once-for-allness of Christ's death to sin they can be sure their final dying will escape the sting of death (sin—1 Cor 15:56); because they have already opened themselves in a decisive act of faith to the life-giving power of the risen Christ they can believe with confidence that they will one day share fully in his life.[116]

Thus, 'sharing' in the 'epochal results' of this event means its recapitulation in oneself,

112. On this verse, see ch. 3.
113. Kirk 2008, 116, emph. added.
114. Dunn 1988, 331.
115. Dunn 1988, 332.
116. Dunn 1988, 332-33, emph. orig. in 'believers…death', but added in subsequent italics.

through which the event becomes soteriologically effective for oneself. For Dunn, this recapitulation is carried forward through a process of conscious identification with Christ: of the 'reckoning' to which Paul enjoins believers in verse 11, Dunn writes that the death of which Paul speaks 'is not complete, since there is a process of reckoning still involved' and that 'the reckoning is itself part of the process of sharing Christ's death'.[117] This identification 'must be reaffirmed ever and again until death plays its last card and the believer can know identification with Christ in the resurrection',[118] and only by such continual identification 'can they be said to be knit together with the *ongoing* reality of Christ's death'.[119]

The greatest weakness with this recapitulative reading is precisely what Dunn attempts to ward off: despite his repeated efforts to insert elements of process, Paul's statements are centrally concerned with what believers have *already* received through their identification with the crucified and raised Christ. Here it would seem that the fundamental confusion lies in Dunn's conception of what exactly 'the ongoing reality of Christ's death' entails which, in Paul's argument, is not a *process of dying*, but a final state of *being dead*. This is Paul's point in verses 10-11: believers are to reckon to themselves that which is true of Christ, who died to sin and now lives to God. They, like him, are forever '*dead* to sin', and now forever '*alive* to God in Christ Jesus'. To describe their 'reckoning' of this fact as a 'process' arguably confuses the matter, as it places the emphasis on the act of reckoning, whereas Paul's emphasis is on *what is reckoned*. Meanwhile, to infer from this that what is reckoned must therefore *itself* be a process—dying, rather than being already dead—is simply a *non sequitur*. Rather, the element of process (if present) would logically consist in the deepening of believers' realisation and awareness of what *is* in fact the case. Paul's point is that believers must perceive themselves in terms of *Christ's* present state of being dead to sin and alive to God by virtue of his death and resurrection, because they have been united and identified with him. This surely constitutes a more natural reading of Paul's perfect-tense language than Dunn's, which is no more convincing here than in Galatians 2:19-20 (which should have been preceded, in this case, by the statement that 'I *am* dying to the law, in order that I may live to God' rather than 'I *died* to the law'). Finally, as we shall see especially in subsequent chapters, Paul's writings do not indicate the load-bearing role that this recapitulative scheme accords the deaths of believers. In Romans 6 itself, Paul explicitly

117. Dunn 1988, 324. Hooker 1990b, 45 similarly infers that 'dying with Christ is a continuing process in relation to sin' because of the ongoing need to reckon oneself dead.

118. Dunn 1988, 357.

119. Dunn 1988, 324, emph. added.

refers to death as a destiny that believers can and must avoid (vv. 21, 23), which suggests that he understands the possibility of their physical deaths in a different sense than '[t]he condemnation of all in the present age…that they must follow through and reproduce Adam's sin and consequent death'.[120] At this point, I think it likely that we are prone to anachronism, retrojecting our sense of the normalcy of death as part of the Christian life into the writings of someone who, as far as we can tell, probably believed that Christ would return before he or the majority of his converts had died.[121]

In the next chapter, we will consider further evidence in the argument of Romans that challenges this view. On the basis of the evidence considered here, however, I preliminarily conclude that the most plausible interpretation of Paul's participationist language in Romans is one that coheres and co-inheres with Christ's substitutionary role in these texts. Believing participation in Christ constitutes the *means* by which his substitutionary role is effective for others: because of their identificatory union with him, Christ's death and resurrection function soteriologically *as theirs, in place of their own.* In this sense, Pauline participationism can well be described, in Constantine Campbell's terms, as 'gracious inclusion in the achievements of another'.[122] The death and resurrection remain distinctly Christ's, but become functionally effective for others through their union with him. In Romans 3–5, these functions primarily concern the bestowal of justification and eschatological life through the removal and condemnation of sin, whereas in chapter 6 Paul's focus falls on the ongoing freedom from the power of sin that Christ's death and resurrection confer on believers.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have evaluated the soteriological functions that Paul attributes to Christ in Romans 3:25 in light of their location with the implied narrative of Romans 1–5 and their contribution to the argument of these chapters. Our objective has been to ascertain (1) whether and in what respects these soteriological functions involve a relationship of substitution and (2) how the substitutionary motifs identifiable in the verse and its argument

120. Dunn 1988, 329. Dunn's discussion of Rom. 6:21, 23 does not address the apparent problem that Paul's exhortation creates for his scheme.

121. No other explanation can account for the difficulty with which Paul must deal in 1 Thess. 4:13-18, which apparently arises out of the sense of expectation generated by his preaching. It is possible, of course, that Paul's view regarding the imminence of Christ's return had changed by the time he wrote Romans; but neither can this be taken for granted.

122. Campbell 2012, 351.

relate to participation in Christ. I have sought to employ the language of substitution in a way that self-consciously maximises its exegetical utility by relying on its ordinary range of usage in contemporary English, rather than its technical meaning as a descriptor of traditional atonement theory.

As I argued above, the narrative framework within which Paul locates Christ the mercy seat in Romans 3:25 differs in certain respects from that which the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement assumes, and this directly determines the shape of Christ's substitutionary role in his argument. Whereas the typical substitutionary reading foregrounds the 'problem' of God's wrath and posits the propitiatory death of Christ as the means of its resolution, the soteriological function that Christ fulfils, according to Paul, concerns the renewal of the human condition through Christ's faithful death and his resurrection from the dead—a renewal that is effective for believers despite their continued mortality, and *because* of which they can anticipate final salvation from the wrath of God on the day of judgment. Paul represents Christ as a divinely-provided mercy seat, whose blood has consecrated him to be the bearer of the divine glory that humanity has forfeited through their idolatry and sin, plunging itself into a state from which even Jews in possession of God's law could not extricate themselves. In Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection, however, God has fulfilled his promise to Abraham to bring forth life out of death and to create a worldwide progeny of justified sinners whose Abrahamic kinship is traced through their faith in the God who raised Christ from the dead. God's righteousness is thus manifested in the gospel through the bodily glorification of his faithful, crucified Son.

Within this narrative, Christ fulfils three distinct soteriological roles for believers, corresponding to his death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life. Each, moreover, involves his substitution for believers. Christ's faithful death both deals with sin and undergoes its penalty, replacing the faithful actions and deaths of believers while making it possible for their sins to be passed over and for them be forgiven. Christ's resurrection from the dead replaces the resurrection of believers in securing the status of righteousness that they enjoy, despite their continued mortality. Christ's eschatological life, rather than the corruptible condition of believers, ensures their deliverance from the coming wrath and final sharing in the glory of God.

Finally, we have seen that participation in Christ through his indwelling Spirit—the 'life' by which he will save believers from wrath—is itself the means of Christ's substitution for believers. Through their pneumatological union with him, all of the soteriological functions

that Christ fulfils become effective for the believer, in such a way as to make his action and experience functionally *their own*. Substitution and participation are therefore not only not in conflict with each other, but mutually interdependent aspects of Christ's soteriological role.

In the next chapter, we will see that a similar conception of Christ's soteriological role appears in Romans 8:3, one of the main texts that has featured in scholarly debates over substitution and participation in Paul.

Chapter 3
Substitution & Participation in Romans: Part II

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we turn our attention to the second of our texts in Romans, which initiates Paul's description in chapter 8 of how God, through Christ and the Spirit, has freed believers from condemnation and enabled them to live in a manner that pleases him and anticipates the coming dawn of the new creation. As in the preceding discussion of Romans 3:25, I will begin by evaluating the predominant substitutionary reading of Paul's statement in its argumentative and implied narrative context, noting the weaknesses of this reading and seeking to offer an alternative assessment of Christ's soteriological function in this text. I will then evaluate this modified construal in terms of its substitutionary and participatory motifs, demonstrating their interrelation and importance in Paul's argument. Finally, I will address the question of whether the view of participation in Christ reflected in this text and those surrounding it assumes that the actions and experiences of believers share in the redemptive function of Christ's (recapitulative participationism), and so problematises a substitutionary understanding of these functions.

As I will show in what follows, Paul's understanding of Christ's soteriological role in Romans 8:1-4, granted its distinctive qualities and specificity to its context, depends on a construal of Christ's redemptive replacement of believers similar to what we have observed

in the preceding chapter. As with Romans 3, the typical substitutionary reading of these verses tends to neglect the primarily *anthropological* nature of the 'problem' that Paul addresses—namely, the captivity of fleshly humanity to sin and corruption, which places them in danger of final eschatological condemnation. In Christ's assumption of sinful flesh and his obedience to God culminating in his death, God effects the removal of this anthropological barrier to eschatological life, making that life available to those 'in Christ' now, in advance of the last judgment, as a basis for their immunity to condemnation and their obedience to God despite sin's continued influence and activity within their flesh. As the alternate anthropological basis for freedom from sin and condemnation, Christ fulfils a substitutionary role for believers, one that depends upon their participation in him through the Spirit. While this participation does result in believers' conformity to Christ both in his death and resurrection, their experience of eschatological salvation does not depend upon their own recapitulation of the events on which this salvation depends.

3.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Implied Narrative Context of Romans 8:3

In the first section of this chapter's argument, I will provide a brief overview and summary of Paul's argument in Romans 8:1-4, noting the role of verse 3 within this passage and making some initial observations about the contribution of the whole to his larger argument. This will lead to a critical evaluation of how interpreters typically understand this text to support a substitutionary reading of Pauline soteriology. As I will show, the standard substitutionary reading of Romans 8:3 is problematic in several of its assumptions, regarding the logical flow of verses 1-4 and the logical connection in Paul's argument between guilt and enslavement to sin. In contrast with the traditional tendency to regard believers' freedom from condemnation as a logically prior ground of their possession of the Spirit, I will argue that Paul understands the relationship to be precisely the reverse: believers are free from condemnation because they share in the Spirit of Christ. The reason that this is possible, meanwhile, is because Christ, through his sin-condemning death and bodily glorification, has himself become the alternate anthropological basis on which believers may receive eschatological life and its attendant freedom from sin and condemnation. The central 'problem' directing Paul's soteriological narrative, then, is not condemnation itself, but the inexorable enmity of fleshly humanity toward God that binds them to this condemnation.

3.2.1 Overview: Romans 8:3 in Context

In Romans 8:3, Paul says that 'God, having sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, condemned sin in the flesh' (ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί). This divine action is necessary in view of the law's impotence on account of flesh, though Paul does not explicitly state what the law was unable to do. The fact that God condemned sin through the mission of his Son in order to fulfil the law's 'decree' (δικαίωμα) in those who are led by the Spirit (v. 4), however, suggests that the law's incapacity is in some way related to this decree, whose fulfilment remedies the problem. The outcome of this remedy is that those who are 'in' Christ no longer face 'condemnation' (κατάκριμα, v. 1).

Paul's claims regarding God's intervention in Christ in Romans 8:3 and the soteriological significance of this event in verses 1-4 occupy an axial position in the argument of Romans 7–8. The vocabulary of these verses reflects this: Paul's discussion of the law (νόμος) and of sin (ἁμαρτία) reach back into the preceding chapters, but particularly into chapter 7. Here Paul, employing the rhetorical device of 'speech in character',[1] describes the experience of someone who wishes to obey the law of God, but finds that sin continually uses the law's commandment as an instrument of deceit, making him do the opposite of what he intends (vv. 7-24). The resolution to this problem arrives only 'through Jesus Christ our Lord' (v. 25). Meanwhile, Paul's references to the Spirit (πνεῦμα) in 8:1-4 mark a point of transition away from these themes—the law and sin, omnipresent themes throughout the first seven chapters of the letter, virtually disappear after these verses.[2] Instead, Paul's attention in chapter 8 revolves around the new life that believers enjoy through the Spirit, and the implications this has both for their present conduct and for the eschatological future of creation itself.

These observations go some way toward helping us discern the general shape of the implied narrative within which Paul situates God's saving action in Christ. Paul's argument centrally concerns the eschatological transition from the conditions of the present age to those of the age to come—a transition that has already been enacted in Christ, and which believers' present possession of the Spirit anticipates. This 'inaugurated eschatology' produces the

1. I follow the great majority of recent interpreters in regarding Rom. 7:7-24 as a description of life under the law prior to Christ and the Spirit. See surveys of discussions in Jewett 2007, 441-45; Longenecker 2016, 651-60. Notable detractors from the modern consensus include Barrett 1957, 151-53; Cranfield 1975, 342-47; Dunn 1988, 411-12 (cf. Dunn 1975); Morris 1988, 284-88.

2. Cf. Rom. 8:7, 10. Paul's discussion of unbelieving Israel returns to the theme of the law (9:31; 10:4-5; cf. also 13:8, 10), while sin is nearly absent altogether (11:27; 14:23).

ongoing tension that Paul describes in the experience of believers in the latter half of chapter 8.[3] Still, important questions remain unanswered: most importantly, *how* does the condemnation of sin that God enacts in Christ relate, both to believers' present freedom from condemnation and to the hope of eschatological glory? Similarly, what is the law incapable of doing, in which the fulfilment of its 'decree' appears to consist, and how does the mission and sin-condemning death of Christ make this fulfilment possible? Our goal in the subsequent sections will be to address these questions by way of a critical engagement with the predominant substitutionary reading of these verses.

3.2.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Typical Substitutionary Reading of Romans 8:3

In this and the next section, I will summarise and critically evaluate the common substitutionary reading of Romans 8:3, noting some of its weaknesses and laying the groundwork for a more precise assessment of Christ's soteriological role in this verse. According to the traditional understanding of Romans 8:1-4, Christ's death provides believers with forensic immunity in the coming judgment, and their reception of the Spirit may be understood as *proof* that they are free from condemnation, rather than as the actual basis of that freedom. I will argue that this interpretation misconstrues the logic of these verses in a manner similar to the reading of Romans 3:25 evaluated in the previous chapter, missing the primarily anthropological nature of the 'plight' that Paul describes, and as a result distorting the implied narrative framework within which the 'solution' of 8:3 is set.

3.2.2.1 Summary

By many accounts, Romans 8:3 clearly assumes a substitutionary understanding of Christ's saving action. According to Moo, the best interpretation of this verse

> sees the condemnation of sin to consist in God's executing his judgment on sin in the atoning death of his Son. As our substitute, Christ "was made sin for us"…and suffered the wrath of God, the judgment of God upon that sin…. The condemnation that our sins deserve has been poured out on Christ, our sin-bearer; that is why "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"[.][4]

Similarly, Cranfield argues that Paul describes 'the event in which the full weight of God's wrath against sin…was, in the flesh of Christ, that is, in His human nature, so effectively brought to bear upon the sin of all mankind, as to rule out its ever having to be brought to

3. Cf. vv. 18-30.

4. Moo 1996, 481; cf. also Schreiner 1998, 402-04; Williams 2010b, 591; Williams 2015, 159. McLean 1996, 140-43 and Finlan 2004, 114-16 also read the passage in a substitutionary sense, but with added emphasis on the possibility of a scapegoat/expulsion victim background in Paul's description.

bear upon it in any other flesh'.[5] According to Schreiner (who, like Cranfield and in contrast with Moo, emphasises that the sin condemned in v. 3 is not to be understood in purely forensic terms), '[v]erse 3, then, correlates with verse 1 in that it explains how no condemnation exists for those who are united with Christ: they have had the power of sin broken in their lives because Christ bore on the cross God's condemnation against sin'.[6] Wright emphasises Paul's wordplay along these lines: 'the fact that "sin" is "condemned" in the flesh of God's son means that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in the Messiah". The condemnation has clearly been transferred: no *katakrima* for those in the Messiah, because the one God *katekrinen* sin in the Messiah's flesh'.[7] Explanations along these lines, albeit with varying emphases, could be multiplied further.[8]

Here one of the putative historical backgrounds to Paul, of which we took note in the introductory survey, has some bearing on the question of substitution. McLean has argued that Paul's statement relies on the notion of an expulsion victim who would be loaded with a deadly miasma afflicting a community and then driven from their midst.[9] On this reading, Christ assumes the accursed condition of humanity, coming 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' and thus 'function[ing] in a substitutionary role by taking the place of the threatened community and assuming this burden'. Accordingly, 'Christ was not sent in sinful flesh to stand *in solidarity* with sinful humanity, but *in substitution for* it'; he 'becomes identified with human sin in order that humans might be made sinless, where God is the active agent in this double imputation'.[10] In this model, the substitutionary quality of Christ's death for others involves a clearly-defined understanding of the *means* by which he replaces others: sin must be 'transferred' to Christ, whose death then nullifies it.[11]

Such explanations of Christ's soteriological function require a certain understanding of the logical flow of verses 1-4, since Paul's immediate explanation of believers' freedom from condemnation in verse 1 is not that sin was condemned in Christ, but that 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death' (v. 2). Consequently, verse 2 is often taken to describe something *other* than the direct cause of the condemnation's absence. For Cranfield, whereas verse 1 expresses the fact that 'those who are in Christ Jesus

5. Cranfield 1975, 383.
6. Schreiner 1998, 404.
7. Wright 2013a, 898; see similar remarks in Wright 2002, 578.
8. Cf. e.g. Finlan 2004, 115; Morris 1988, 300.
9. See McLean 1996, esp. 140-43.
10. McLean 1996, 143, emph. orig. Cf. also Finlan 2004, 114-16.
11. McLean 1996, 144-45.

are freed from the divine condemnation pronounced by God's law', verse 2 '*confirms* the truth of v. 1 by appealing to the fact that the *further* liberation which deliverance from God's condemnation *makes possible*, namely, the liberation of the believer by the power of God's Spirit from the power of sin and of its inevitable concomitant, death, has actually taken place as a result of the work of Christ'.[12] The absence of condemnation thus owes to its past enactment in Christ's mission, and not directly to believers' possession of the Spirit. Similarly, McFadden writes,

> The Spirit's liberation and the obedience that flows from it are the *necessary result* of Christ's death (ἵνα, 8:4)…. Thus the Spirit's liberating work is not the ground of our actual acquittal but rather the ground of Paul's statement in 8:1—we can *know* that "there is now no condemnation" because the Spirit has set us free from sin and death resulting in our new ability to fulfill the law. The traditional Protestant language of "evidence" is thus an appropriate way to view Christian obedience—it *proves* our justification.[13]

Meanwhile, though Moo does wish to stress that the Spirit himself frees believers from condemnation, such that verse 2 is in some sense the ground of verse 1, he adds that this is possible only because of the prior and essentially *forensic* achievement of the cross, the 'benefits' of which the Spirit 'applies to the believer'.[14] In each of these readings, moreover, the supposition that Paul's claim in verse 2 is concerned mainly with 'evidence' of a prior and distinct freedom from condemnation finds further reinforcement in the fulfilment of the law's 'decree' in verse 4, which is normally taken as a description of how *believers* fulfil the law by their Spirit-led obedience.[15] Thus the logic of verses 3-4 parallels that of 1-2: Spirit-led obedience is the consequence of the condemnation's transfer from believers to Christ, and not the direct cause of their freedom from it.

Read in this light, the primary 'problem' that drives Paul's soteriological narrative and which Christ's soteriological function addresses in Romans 8:3 is analogous to that which substitutionary readings normally identify in Romans 3:25: the sentence of condemnation facing humanity. The implied narrative runs as follows: humanity stands under condemnation for sin, but Christ comes to bear the condemnation in their place, thereby removing it from them and so enabling their reception of the Spirit as a basis for obeying and fulfilling the

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12. Cranfield 1975, 372, emph. added.
13. McFadden 2009, 496, emph. orig. with 'necessary result', added in the remainder.
14. Moo 1996, 472, 480-84. This, according to Moo, is why the law's δικαίωμα can be fulfilled: Christ's forensic achievement remedies any shortcomings in believers' obedience. A similar emphasis appears in Matera 2010, 192-94; Morris 1988, 303-04.
15. So Cranfield 1975, 383-85; Dunn 1988, 423-24; Fitzmyer 1993, 487; Jewett 2007, 485; Keck 2005, 199-200; Moo 1996, 481-84; Morris 1988, 303-04; Schreiner 1998, 404-07. Ziesler 1989, 206-08 limits the 'requirement' in question solely to coveting (cf. Rom. 7:7-8). On the question of its relation to the love command, see Moo 1996, 482.

law.[16] A form of the traditional protestant binary of 'justification' and 'sanctification', which some of the above interpreters explicitly invoke, implicitly structures the narrative: the work of Christ in his sin-condemning death obtains 'justification' for believers (freedom from sin's *guilt* as a basis for the forensic immunity described in v. 1), and the work of the Spirit following this forensic achievement carries out their 'sanctification' (involving the progressive realisation of freedom from sin's *power* over them).

While not without merit, the above readings suffer from various shortcomings. In the next section, I will offer a critical assessment of these weaknesses, setting the stage for my proposal of a modified reading of Christ's soteriological function in this passage.

3.2.2.2 Critical Evaluation

The typical substitutionary reading of Romans 8:3 within the immediate context of verses 1-4 (and the larger context of the surrounding chapters) suffers from three related shortcomings, the first of which is that it relies on a strained reading of the 'through logic' of verses 1-4. Paul does not say, as Wright puts it, 'no katakrima for those in the Messiah, because the one God katekrinen sin in the Messiah's flesh', but because the Spirit of Christ has freed believers from the compelling power of sin which, in the preceding chapter, binds one to the 'body of death' (7:24).[17] As Lohse comments, 'Die Begründung für die vorangestellte These wird in V. 2 gegeben…. Durch die Befreiung, die das πνεῦμα τῆς ζωῆς in Christus gewirkt hat, ist die Macht von Sünde und Tod endgültig besiegt und damit aufgehoben worden'.[18] While it is not impossible that, as Cranfield argues, believers can deduce that Christ bore their condemnation in their stead because they have received the

16. Even Wright's view (noted above), which seeks to locate Paul's claim within a larger narrative concerning the negative role of the law in Israel's history, could be said to follow this pattern in the basic narrative logic he derives from vv. 1 and 3 (though he understands the law's δικαίωμα differently, in the sense argued below). See Wright 2013b, 160-68, 308; on Wright's assessment of Paul's narrative frameworks, see Wright 2013a, 774-1042, esp. 815-911. One distinguishing feature of Wright's view, however, is that he regards it as significant that Paul identifies sin, *not* Jesus, as the specific object of condemnation (Wright 2013b, 307-08).

17. Debate exists as to whether νόμος in v. 2 refers to the Mosaic law or is a way of referring to the controlling influence of sin and death on the one hand (perhaps in continuity with 7:23, 25b) and the Spirit of life on the other. See e.g. Bertone 2005; Cranfield 1975, 376; Keck 1980; Moo 1996, 473-76; Schreiner 1998, 399-400; Wright 1992b, 193-219; Wright 2002, 576-77. For our purposes, it will not be necessary to decide this issue one way or another since, in either case, it is clear that the agencies of sin and of the Spirit are ultimately responsible for the respective outcomes of death and life. Equally, it is clear that Paul's larger discussion of the law refers to the Torah, and most of his uses of the noun in the letter do as well: so throughout ch. 2; 3:19-21, 28, 31; 4:13-16; 5:13, 20; 6:14-15; 7:1; 7:4-9, 12, 14, 16, 21?, 22; 8:3-4, 7; 9:31; 10:4-5; 13:8, 10.

18. Lohse 2003, 229. This does not require a denial of this liberative act's integral relation to Christ's death and resurrection: 'Diese Befreiung aber ist durch das Christus-geschehen erfolgt, das im Geist seine gegenwärtige Kraft zur Wirkung bringt' (Ibid.).

subsequent liberation that the Spirit provides, this surely is not the most obvious reading of verses 1-2—unless one is already committed to a scheme that divides them into the categories of 'justification' and 'sanctification' and therefore rules out a priori that freedom from condemnation could directly result from the Spirit's activity.[19] The 'evidence' reading might have been more plausible, had Paul referred simply to believers' possession of the Spirit. But his description of the Spirit's liberative act suggests that we are dealing, in verse 1, with the direct outcome of this liberation.

A second, related problem is reflected in the conceptual bifurcation that underlies this reading: guilt for sin and enslavement to sin are treated as basically separable and distinguishable things, such that two different solutions—'justification' that removes condemnation for guilt and 'sanctification' that liberates from enslavement (in that order)—are necessary to resolve them. In the context of Paul's argument in Romans, however, this distinction proves unhelpful: guilt and enslavement are inseparably intertwined.[20] The reason that all humanity stands under condemnation owes to the entry of sin into the world *as an enslaving force that brings death to all*, and whose grip on humanity is strengthened through the law. In chapter 5, the sentence of 'condemnation' (κατάκριμα) that follows Adam's offence is not other than the direct consequence of sin itself—namely, death's reign over sinful humanity—and this applies even where no forensic reckoning of guilt is taking place (vv. 14, 16-18). Throughout the argument that follows in chapters 6–7, Paul repeatedly identifies ongoing *captivity* to sin as resulting in death, and presents release from this captivity as the basis of freedom from this destiny. Whereas Christ's death 'to sin' ends death's dominion (the 'penal' consequence of Adam's sin in ch. 5) over him, continued slavery to sin leads to death, which Paul juxtaposes with eternal life as a final eschatological destiny (6:9-10, 16, 21, 23). In their former lives 'in the flesh', Paul's audience found sin's passions active in their bodies through the law to 'bear fruit to death', and the fictive speaker through whom Paul gives voice to this experience repeatedly identifies death as the result of his captivity to sin, which constitutes a 'law' in his members binding him to the 'body of death' (7:5, 10-11, 13, 23-24). This assessment of the 'problem'—enslavement to sin as a

19. Moo 1996, 476-77 argues that this traditional binary is unhelpful here; however, he still regards v. 1 as essentially about justification as an exclusively forensic act.

20. On 'sanctification' in Paul, see esp. Peterson 1995, who stresses that in Paul's writings and in the NT more broadly this idea is normally every bit as definitive and punctiliar as 'justification'. This emphasis is a welcome corrective to the assumptions of Lowe 1999, McFadden 2009 and others that, if Paul is talking about 'sanctification' or the 'work of the Spirit' in Rom. 8:1-4, he must be referring to some process of moral/character transformation rather than believers' definitive involvement in the Christ-event. That said, Peterson's own exegesis of Rom. 6-8 differs considerably from what is offered in this chapter (see 93-114).

dominating influence that results in death—forms the background to Paul's claim that believers are free from condemnation 'because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set you[21] free from the law of sin and death'. Because condemnation attaches precisely to the state of *enslavement*, the liberation from sin's tyranny through the Spirit addresses precisely this problem.

A third issue concerns the ways in which some of the above views portray sin in connection with the *means* of substitution, employing the imagery of 'transfer' to describe Christ's role. McLean describes Christ in Romans 8:3 as a scapegoat figure who assumes and bears away the community's burden of sin, while Wright argues that the law's purpose was 'to draw sin onto one place' in order that it may be condemned (and refers as well to the 'transfer' of condemnation from believers to Christ). Though such imagery would offer a clear explanation of why the condemnation of sin in Christ's substitutionary death terminates the power of sin over believers, it does not fit Paul's portrayal of sin as still present and active in the natural condition of believers (6:12-13, 16; 7:25b?; 8:10). Whatever sin's condemnation means for Paul, it does not entail sin's being *collected* together in one place, so that its condemnation there ends its existence. Nor, if the above observations regarding condemnation are correct, does it make sense to speak of condemnation's 'transfer' from believers to Christ, since their immunity to it is dependent upon release from slavery to sin through the Spirit.

Granted these difficulties, one thing that may be said in favour of the latter readings in contrast with those noted above is that they correctly pinpoint the main problem that Paul is addressing—a problem which, as in 3:23-25, is chiefly *anthropological* in nature. The main 'problem' that Romans 8:3 explicitly addresses is not that of impending eschatological condemnation, but the law's incapacity in view of the weakness of sinful flesh. The condemnation of which Paul speaks in the rest of verse 3 matters primarily because it addresses *this* problem, enabling the fulfilment of the law's 'decree' in those who are led by the Spirit (v. 4; noting the ἵνα). While most of the above interpreters agree that sin's condemnation in verse 3 serves to terminate its power over believers and not *merely* to provide a forensic immunity to the coming judgment, this recognition does not figure significantly into their exegesis of how verse 3 grounds Paul's assurance in verse 1, which supposedly concerns only forensic justification. As a result, Paul's claim about freedom from

21. με is read in A D K L P 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1506^{c}. 1739^{c}. 1881. 2464 𝔪 lat sy^{h} sa; Cl.; the NA28's reading is supported by ℵ B F G 1506*. 1739.* ar b sy^{p}; Tert Ambst.

condemnation becomes rhetorically detached from the argument of chapters 7–8, making the condemnatory character of Christ's substitutionary death a self-contained basis for this forensic immunity without a clear indication of what it contributes to the actual claim that Paul makes, namely that believers can now live in a manner pleasing to God, in freedom from sin and death, because of Christ's indwelling Spirit. Within the context of verses 1-4, it is not entirely clear what would be lost, had Paul chosen to omit reference to the Spirit and focus simply on Christ's sin-condemning death as a basis of freedom from condemnation. Within the larger context of chapters 7–8, on the other hand, it is not clear what would be lost, had Paul omitted reference to condemnation and simply spoken of how the Spirit enables believers to live in freedom from sin's control. Any solution that holds these two themes together must be preferred.

3.2.2.3 Conclusion

The traditional substitutionary reading of Romans 8:3 within the context of verses 1-4 identifies Christ's death the grounds for forensic immunity to eschatological condemnation in verse 1, and regards the work of the Spirit in verses 2 and 4 as evidence (rather than the cause) of this immunity. As I have shown, however, this reading is flawed in several respects: it offers a questionable assessment of the logical flow of verses 1-4, rests on dubious assumptions about the relationship between sin's power and condemnation, as well as the mechanism of Christ's substitution, effectively severs the claim of Romans 8:1 rhetorically from its context and neglects the fundamentally anthropological nature of the problem that Christ's sin-condemning death seems here to solve. In next section, I will offer an account of Christ's soteriological function that addresses these shortcomings, before discussing the substitutionary character of these functions.

3.2.3 Christ's Soteriological Functions in Romans 8:3

In this section, I will offer an account of Christ's soteriological role in Romans 8:3 that takes the preceding observations and critical reflections into account, in order (in the next section) to assess the value of substitutionary and participatory language in the description of the findings. My first concern will be with establishing how the goal of Christ's soteriological function in verse 4 (the fulfilment of the law's decree) addresses the basic problem of the law's incapacity in verse 3. Second, I will establish how God's action through Christ's mission attains this goal. As I will show, Christ's soteriological function in this text is to

obtain the *life* promised in the law by undoing the ruined anthropological condition that makes the law's fulfilment impossible through his assumption of this condition. Believers are freed from condemnation, in turn, not because of condemnation's *transfer* from them to Christ, but because they share in the freedom that his death and resurrection obtain from the anthropologically-embedded source of this condemnation, the compelling power of sin.

3.2.3.1 The Law's Impossible Decree

Our first concern is with the goal of Christ's soteriological function. Paul's references to the law in verses 3 and 4 establish the basic rationale and implied narrative of the role he assigns to Christ: whereas the weakness of flesh prevented the law's goal from being attained, God's action to condemn sin in the flesh through Christ's mission purposes to bring about the fulfilment of the law's 'decree' (δικαίωμα) in his Spirit-led people. Precisely what this fulfilment entails, however, is worthy of question. Most interpreters understand the fulfilment of the law's decree to consist in the obedience of believers to the law, perhaps as summarised in the love command (13:8-10). That is to say, *they* fulfil the law by following the Spirit's leading. Despite the popularity of this interpretation, it is not without problems, and multiple considerations favour our understanding the content of the law's decree as the eternal *life* that it was unable to bestow due to sin's corruption of the flesh. Christ's soteriological function in verse 3 ought to be understood, then, primarily in connection with this purpose.[22]

Several problems with the common reading may be observed. First, while it is possible for the singular δικαίωμα to denote the actual content of the law's commands, this usage is less common, and the other NT uses of the noun in this sense employ the plural (Lk. 1:6; Rom. 2:26; Heb. 9:1, 10). Second, although this might be explainable by the singularity of the love command, which Paul describes as the 'fulfilment' (πλήρωμα) of the law (13:10), the language of fulfilment in this text contrasts with that of Romans 8: whereas in 13:8 Paul employs an active verb to say explicitly that 'the one who loves another has fulfilled [πεπλήρωκεν] the law', the passive language of fulfilment (πληρωθῇ) *in* those who possess the Spirit in 8:4 suggests a divine action, as with nearly every passive occurrence of πληρόω in the NT.[23] Third, in the argument of verses 1-4, the law's δικαίωμα would appear to stand in

22. In favour of this reading, see e.g. Seifrid 2000, 119; Wright 1992b, 211-12; with a slightly diff. but compatible emphasis, Hooker 1990b, 32; *pace* McFadden 2009, 485, who calls the reference supposed by this reading 'obscure'.

23. Cf. esp. passive uses in Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23, etc.; Mk. 1:15; 14:49; Lk. 1:20; 4:21; 21:24; 22:16;

deliberate juxtaposition with the κατάκριμα from which Paul says believers are now free. If this is the case, then the δικαίωμα would most naturally refer to a *positive* judgment or verdict concerning believers, not a requirement that they must fulfil.

The latter intuition finds confirmation in the parallels that appear between these verses and Paul's juxtaposition of Adam's disobedience with the obedient Christ in Romans 5:12-21—parallels that also provide crucial insight into the content of the law's decree.[24] I have already noted above that Paul's condemnation-language, particularly in connection with death, evokes this earlier discourse. Equally, however, the contrasting elements of 'life' (ζωή) in verse 2 and a 'decree' (δικαίωμα) in verse 4 appear in chapter 5 as the paired opposite of condemnation and death that helps contrast the aftermath of Adam's disobedience with the surpassingly greater outcome of Christ's obedience: 'whereas the judgment following the one [offence] led to a sentence of condemnation [εἰς κατάκριμα], the gift following many offences led to a justifying decree [εἰς δικαίωμα]' (5:16). In the subsequent parallel statement in verse 17, Paul juxtaposes the reign of death over all through Adam and the reign of believers 'in life' (ἐν ζωῇ) through Christ (v. 17). This parallel is reinforced further still in the next verse, which contrasts the condemnation (κατάκριμα) that Adam's sin brought on all people with the 'justification of life' (εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς) that comes to all people 'though one δικαίωμα' (v. 18). Though this occurrence of δικαίωμα is frequently interpreted and translated as a 'righteous act', this meaning is less common and, given the same word's contrast with κατάκριμα two verses prior, it is preferable to interpret the word in the same way as the previous occurrence.[25] It refers, as Hooker argues, to 'God's act of vindication in raising Christ from the dead', so that 'Christ's death and resurrection lead to "justification" for many precisely because he himself is "justified" by God and acknowledged as righteous'.[26] The phrase 'justification of life' in verse 18 may be read to support this if we take it as a genitive of apposition—the 'justification that consists in (eschatological) life'—as would Paul's earlier assertions in the letter that Christ was 'raised for our justification' (4:25) and that believers will be 'saved by his life' (ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ, 5:10). In this way the contrast in verse 18 directly parallels that of Paul's lead-in statement to these contrasts, which

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24:44; Jn. 3:29; 7:8; 12:38; 13:18; 15:11, 25; 16:24; 17:12, etc.; Acts 1:16; 13:52; 19:21; Jas. 2:23; 1 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 12; Rev. 3:2; 6:11; a partial exception to this tendency appears in 2 Cor. 10:6. The verb's modification by ἐν ἑνὶ λόγῳ in Paul's reference to the love command in Gal. 5:14 indicates that the sense is 'summed up' rather than 'fulfilled'.

24. Cf. Keck 2005, 195; Wolter 2014, 472, who note parallels between these passages.

25. In the sense of 'righteous act', cf. Rev. 19:8.

26. Hooker 1990b, 31; see 30-32. The reading given here does not share Hooker's emphasis on the specific element of δικαίωμα as *acquittal*, however.

describes the relation between Adam's 'offence' (παράπτωμα) and *God's* 'gift' (χάρισμα), not Christ's obedience (v. 15).

In view of the strength of these parallels, it is plausible to infer that Paul is deliberately retrieving this background in declaring that 'there is now therefore no *condemnation*…because the law of the Spirit of *life*…set you free from the law of sin and *death*'. The articulation of how this liberation occurs in verses 3-4 functions within this retrieval as well: sin's *condemnation* through Christ enables the fulfilment of the law's *decree* in those who walk according to the Spirit. Just as, in chapter 5, those who receive the gift of righteousness will reign in life (5:17), and will enjoy 'justification of life' through the δικαίωμα of the one man, so here the δικαίωμα of the law (eschatological life), which arrives because of the sin-condemning death of that one man (v. 3), is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit, who 'is life because of righteousness' (8:10). Paul's argument thus indicates that the 'decree' in 8:4 refers to the law's intent of bestowing life, the fulfilment of which comes only through the eschatological Spirit, who both liberates believers from sin in the present (v. 2), and will glorify their bodies in the future (vv. 10-11).[27]

This reading makes sense especially in light of Paul's preceding argument in chapter 7, which represents the death that sin imposes as the opposite of the law's intent. Though sin uses it to deceive and kill the law's would-be practitioner, the 'commandment' (ἐντολή) that it co-opts is specifically that 'which leads to life' (ἡ εἰς ζωήν, v. 10).[28] This is why it is not the law itself that 'brought death to me', but sin (v. 13). The problem that Paul's preceding argument identifies, in other words, is not simply that the speaker finds perfect law-observance impossible, but that the law's intent of bestowing life is unfulfillable due to *sin* and the *weakness of flesh*—precisely Paul's point in 8:3. The claim of Romans 8:3-4 thus serves as a clear explanation of how this situation is remedied: the law's intention of bestowing life finds its fulfilment in those who, by the Spirit, are enabled to live in obedience and please God (cf. v. 7). As I will show in the sections that follow, Paul's description of this anthropological *telos* of God's action in Christ provides the framework within which it is possible to understand the soteriological function that he fulfils for believers.

3.2.3.2 Christ's Assumption of Sinful Flesh

Paul's description of Christ's mission in Romans 8:3 makes it clear that God's solution to

27. So Best 1967, 88.
28. A possible allusion to Lev. 18:5; cf. Pss. Sol. 14:2.

the anthropological problem that he describes is nothing less than Christ's *assumption* of that problem as his own. In the context of Paul's argument, this means that Christ took to himself the corrupt condition that constituted a barrier to the decree's fulfilment: sinful flesh. This, as we saw in the introductory survey, constitutes a major point of emphasis among most participationist interpreters of Paul and finds growing support among advocates of a substitutionary reading as well.[29]

Nevertheless, not all are convinced, and even some interpreters who ostensibly affirm Christ's identity with sinful flesh here are somewhat vague regarding what is actually being claimed.[30] At the exegetical level, the ongoing uncertainty owes mainly to the seeming ambiguity of Paul's expression, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας). The noun ὁμοίωμα can be understood here either to denote full identity between Christ and sinful flesh (he shares fully in its 'perceptible reality'), or to describe mere similarity (his flesh is 'like' sinful flesh, but not really sinful). Paul's affirmation of Christ's sinlessness in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (he 'did not know sin'), as well as the witness of the NT generally, leads some to conclude that the former reading is untenable.[31]

This denial, however, is highly problematic when one holds Paul's larger argument in view. To suppose that sin can be condemned in the flesh through Christ's death without actually being *present* in his flesh requires that one understand the word 'sin' (ἁμαρτία) here in a drastically different sense than that of the entire preceding argument understands it—basically as a forensic record of wrongdoing, the guilt of which can be attributed to Christ despite his 'pre-fall' state. There is no contextual warrant for this understanding, however. Romans 8:1-4 appears at the tail end of the most detailed and extended treatment of the topic of sin in Paul (and indeed, the entire NT) and there is no evidence that Paul's use of this language in these verses diverges significantly from the discussion that precedes them.[32]

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29. e.g. Cranfield 1975, 379-82; Dunn 1988, 421-22; Fitzmyer 1993, 485; Jewett 2003, 483-84; Schreiner 1998, 402-03; Wilckens 1980, 125-26. For more detailed discussions, see Bell 2002; Branick 1985; Gillman 1987; McLean 1996, 140-43; Scharlemann 1961.

30. An example of such vagueness appears in Williams 2015, 160, who describes Jesus as 'functionally' rather than 'ontologically' sinful, while also saying that Christ 'took on sinful flesh'. Similarly, Schreiner 1998, 403, despite his seeming clarity initially, finally explains that Christ's flesh 'was subject to the disease, death, and weakness of the old order', but says nothing regarding the Son's conflict with sin as such (particularly as personified in the preceding chapter). For the view that regards the Son's flesh in Rom. 8:3 as sinless, see e.g. Fee 2007, 247; Morris 1988, 302-03; Witherington 2004, 213.

31. Cf. Matt. 3:13-15; 4:1-11; Jn. 8:46; Heb. 4:15 (though 7:27 complicates the meaning); 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5. Branick 1985, 246 notes similar expectations of the Messiah in second-temple Judaism; cf. *Ps. Sol.* 17:41; *T. Jud.* 24.1.

32. The noun ἁμαρτία occurs 64x in the Pauline corpus, and 48 of these are in Romans; Dunn 2003, 111 notes that 41 of these are in Rom. 5:12–8:3.

Moreover, Paul's identification of the 'problem' at the beginning of verse 3 deliberately refers back to this argument—particularly to chapter 7, where sin is described, not simply in terms of wrongdoing or guilt, but *personified* as a tyrannical agent who dominates human existence and whose true nature the law, precisely in its incapacity, serves to reveal, objectify, and make ripe for condemnation.[33]

It will not be necessary, for our purposes, to establish precisely what understanding of sin underlies this imagery—whether it refers, as various interpreters argue, to a 'cosmic' or demonic 'power', to bodily desires, or something else.[34] In any case, Paul repeatedly identifies corruptible flesh as the *context*, and bodily passions (ἐπιθυμίαι, παθήματα) as the *instrument* of sin's dominating influence (cf. 6:12; 7:5, 8). This means that, if Paul refers to the condemnation of *sin* (thus personified) taking place '*in the flesh*', it produces incoherence to say that the flesh that Christ assumes in 8:3 is not 'sinful' in the sense of being marked by sin's presence and influence. This incoherence arises on two levels: first, in this case the verdict is not in fact reaching the main perpetrator of the guilty actions, which the speaker of chapter 7 repeatedly identifies as sin *rather* than the 'self' (7:17, 20). Second, on this reading it is not clear how Christ's assumption of flesh in fact addresses the basic anthropological problem that Paul identifies since, in this case, the solution is being applied to a problem that does not in fact exist.[35] Had Paul described the problem simply in terms of guilt and forgiveness, then the sinlessness of Christ would pose little difficulty in this text (apart from the broader, non-exegetical conundrum of an innocent man's assuming the guilt of another). The fact that he describes personified *sin* as the chiefly guilty party, however, and identifies the main problem as sin's domination of the human condition through the passions, necessitates that we understand Romans 8:3 as describing Christ's assumption of the actual

33. Cf. Rom. 3:20; 5:13, 20; 7:8, 13. So Wright 2002, 565-66.

34. The meaning of Paul's sin-language (as well as his descriptions of death) are heavily debated; see e.g. Croasmun 2017; de Boer 2013; Dunn 2003, 102-27; Harding 2015, 99-132; Röhser 1987; Schnelle 2005, 499-505; Stowers 1994, 179-89, 251-84; Wasserman 2008a; Wasserman 2008b, 81-89, 103-14; Winger 1999, 145-52, 168-75. One may accept the applicability of Dunn's basic description here without necessarily sharing his views regarding the significance of his personifying language: '"Sin" is the term Paul uses for a compulsion or constraint which humans generally experience within themselves or in their social context, a compulsion towards attitudes and actions not always of their own willing or approving'; it is that which 'draws men and women back from the best and keeps causing them to miss the target'. Dunn 2003, 112.

35. As an addendum to this point, it is worth highlighting the observation of Wolter 2014, 477 that 'Der Genitiv ἁμαρτίας ist hier ein *genitivus qualitatis* mit charakterisierender Funktion: *Es gibt kein Fleisch, das nicht »Fleisch der Sünde« wäre*' (emph. orig). Thus the reading critiqued here makes an entirely unwarranted assumption regarding Paul's anthropology, namely that Paul regards it as possible for some flesh to remain hermetically sealed from its environment, and thus to experience no influence from sin. Nevertheless, for Wolter, the differentiating function of ὁμοίωμα here denotes the fact that Christ remained the obedient Son of God *even though* he assumed the same adamic flesh as those with whom he identifies (Ibid.). Whether one agrees on the latter point, Wolter's syntactical point does present a challenge for the traditional reading.

condition of sinful humanity, so that his death and resurrection directly address this problem.[36]

We ought, then, to understand Romans 8:3 as a description of how the anthropological barrier to the law's fulfilment was removed *in Christ's own flesh*. His full participation (with the exception of his actually sinning) in the situation requiring a remedy is the basic presupposition of the role that he then fulfils in the remainder of verse 3, which will be the concern of the next section.

3.2.3.3 Christ's Offering and the Condemnation of Sin

The two subsequent phrases in verse 3 identify how the anthropological problem that Christ assumed as his own is resolved: through his mission 'as a sin offering' (περὶ ἁμαρτίας), in which God 'condemned sin in the flesh' (κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί). As many interpreters have recognised, the phrase περὶ ἁμαρτίας is likely a reference to the Levitical sin offering, which it commonly describes in the Septuagint.[37] This interpretation is also frequently linked with a penal substitutionary reading of the verse, which supposes Paul's concept of vicarious punishment to be traceable to the sin offering itself.[38] The prominence of cultic imagery in Romans 3 and 5, as well as the reappearance of these motifs in chapter 6 within a discussion of how Christ's death and resurrection break the power of sin, make it plausible that Paul is describing Christ's death in similar terms here.[39]

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36. These observations challenge the view of Moo 1996 who, despite favouring identity over mere similarity in Paul's use of ὁμοίωμα, argues on the basis of the forensic nature of Paul's condemnation that he has in mind *only* 'the believer's deliverance from the penalty that sin exacts' (Moo 1996, 472-73). This arbitrarily allows (a dubious understanding of) Paul's condemnation-language to be the sole determiner of meaning, despite the prominence of 'sin' in the preceding argument. Moreover, Moo's objection that that objects of the verb κατακρίνω are almost invariably personal (480n51) ignores the fact that *Paul personifies sin* in the preceding argument, making the either/or of a 'forensic' or 'dynamic' meaning wholly unnecessary. Paul's argument refuses such a neat distinction, presenting sin as forensically guilty *because* of how it dominates humanity and perpetrates wrongdoing through them.

37. See esp. Dunn 1991; Wright 1992b, 220-25; cf. Lev. 5:7; 7:37; 9:2-3; 12:6, 8; 14:22, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:3, 5; 23:19; Num. 6:11; 7:16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 70, 76, 82, 87; 8:8, 12; 15:24; 28:15, 22; 29:5, 11,16, 19, 22, 28, 31, 34, 38. The phrase occurs with a def. article (τὸ περί τῆς ἁμαρτίας) in e.g. LXX Lev. 5:8; 6:25, 30; 7:7; 9:7, 10, 22; 10:17, 19; 14:13, 19; 16:25; Num. 29:11; τὸ περὶ ἁμαρτίας in Num. 6:16; Ezek. 42:13. McLean 1992, 538-42 argues that Paul's reference to Christ's assumption of the sinful human condition (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας) makes a sacrificial meaning impossible, since sacrifices by definition are not 'cursed'. Paul does not describe Christ as 'cursed' in Rom. 8:3, however; moreover, his description of believers' self-presentation to God embraces this paradox, exhorting them to offer their still corruptible bodies, in which sin's reign must be resisted, to God (6:13, 16, 19); the fact that 'the body is dead because of sin' does not preclude its being offered to God 'as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God' (8:10; 12:1).

38. So Schreiner 1998, 403-04; Stuhlmacher 1994, 119-20; Williams 2015, 159-66.

39. Against this reading, see Thornton 1971; cf. non-cultic readings in Barrett 1957, 156; Cranfield 1975, 382; Fitzmyer 1993, 485-86. The main objection to this reading is that the surrounding context does not suggest a cultic meaning. Some have proposed that Paul represents the figure in Rom. 7 as sinning inadvertently, for which the levitical remedy is the sin offering (so e.g. Wright 1992c, 224). Given the

As I argued in the preceding chapter, however, these soteriological functions should not be equated with each other, even though Paul's argument does hold them side by side. Their equation rests on questionable assumptions regarding the nature of levitical sacrifice, which is arguably not concerned with the punishment of an animal offering for the offerer's 'sins', many of which are neither punishable with death under the law, nor even clearly of a negative 'moral' value in the sense that we would use that word. It is not the punishment or slaughter of an animal that accomplishes an atoning sacrifice, but the presentation of the animal's life to God (through the blood) as a gift to effect purification, along with the immolation of the animal's remains on the altar and the application of the blood to various cultic implements.[40] In the OT and in many second-temple texts, sacrifice is commonly 'spiritualised' and its language used to denote actions other than the offering of an animal victim (e.g. obedience, prayer, almsgiving), but even in these instances the basic presupposition remains the same: sacrifice, including atoning sacrifice, constitutes a positive act of gift-giving.[41]

For this reason, we ought to distinguish the soteriological functions described in Romans 8:3 on the basis of their attribution to distinct agents in the verse: the Son, whose obedient fulfilment of his mission constitutes a 'sin offering', and God the Father, who condemns sin in the flesh. Here the parallels between Romans 8:1-4 and Paul's preceding argument in chapter 5, noted above, again prove illuminating: Paul does not represent Christ merely as a passive object in the fulfilment of his soteriological role, but as *obtaining* the vindicating δικαίωμα (resurrection, justification) through his obedience in the *context* of Adam's κατάκριμα (the dominion of death). This would explain why sin's condemnation in 8:3 results in more than simply death: because it is enacted in tandem with Christ's faithful self-offering, in fulfilment of the mission for which he was 'sent', it accomplishes the resolution of the anthropological plight that Paul describes, resulting in *both* the termination of sin in Christ's flesh (the outcome of condemnation) *and* Christ's vindication by his resurrection from the dead into incorruptible eschatological life (the outcome of his sacrifice). Thus the

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differences between what Paul describes and the levitical conception of inadvertence, this is perhaps a strained interpretation; moreover, it would appear to undermine Paul's argument for the law's impotence to present the sin in question as just the kind it can address. It is simpler, rather, to let the argument of chs. 1–8 as a whole inform the context, particularly Paul's allusions to Yom Kippur in 3:25 and 6:12-23.

40. *pace* Dunn 1991; Dunn 1988, 422, 439.

41. Cf. e.g. Ps. 51:17; 141:2; Sir. 35:1-5; Tob. 4:10-11; 12:8-10; *Jub.* 2:22; 34:18-19; Pss. Sol. 9:6; 15:3; Jos. *Ant.* 1.98; 1QS 3:4-12; 5:6-7; 8:3-10; 9:3-6, 26; 10:6, 8, 14; cf. 4Q541 frag. 9; Philo, *Flight* 18, 180; *Spec. Laws* 1.201, 270-71; *Planting* 164; *Moses* 2.108. Another way in which this occurs is in the representation of certain actions as preferable or superior to sacrifice: see e.g. 1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 40:6, 8; 69:31; Prov. 15:8; Mic. 6:7-8.

adamic penalty is met with and embraced by adamic obedience through the joint action of Father and Son, bringing an end to sin's entrenchment in the flesh that Christ assumed.[42] Paul thus brings together the discrete emphases of Romans 3:25 (sacrifice) and 4:25a (penalty) into a single statement, and for the same purpose of explaining why Christ's death is followed by eternal, eschatological life.

This combination of fidelity to God in the context of punishment for sin finds parallels in Israel's scriptural and martyrological traditions. While the specific combination of penal and *sacrificial* themes is not common in the second-temple period prior to Paul, there is at least one clear instance of this in *Prayer of Azariah*, one of the additions to LXX Daniel.[43] In this text, the three brothers whom Nebuchadnezzar casts into the fiery furnace acknowledge that they, together with the rest of Israel, are suffering because of the nation's sins, which have brought them into exile (LXX Dan. 3:28-32, 37). The brothers themselves, however, are presented as morally blameless (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς μῶμος, 1:4), and this description gains a cultic significance in light of the prayer they offer to God from within the furnace.[44] Presenting themselves as a sacrifice, they pray that they may function as substitutes for the defunct Jerusalem temple cult:

> In our day we have no ruler, or prophet, or leader,
> no burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense,
> no place to make an offering before you and to find mercy.
> Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted,
> as though it were with burnt offerings of rams and bulls,
> or with tens of thousands of fat lambs;
> such may our sacrifice be in your sight today,
> and may it propitiate from behind you [καὶ ἐξιλάσαι ὄπισθέν σου][45]
> and may we unreservedly follow you,
> for no shame will come to those who trust in you [τοῖς πεποιθόσιν ἐπὶ σοί].
>
> (vv. 38-40)

42. The verb κατακρίνω can refer either to the pronouncement of a sentence (as in e.g. Matt. 20:18; 27:3; Mk. 10:33; 14:64; Rom. 2:1) or to the actual enactment of that sentence (as in e.g. 1 Cor. 11:32; 2 Pet. 2:6). However, to read its use here in the sense of pronouncement rather than enactment produces incoherence in Paul's argument, as it ignores the logic link between sin's condemnation and its removal as a barrier to eschatological life.

43. On this text, see Hieke 2010; Joosten 2009.

44. Cf. the uses of μῶμος and ἄμωμος in e.g. LXX Exod. 29:1, 38; Lev. 1:3; 3:1; 4:3; 5:15; 21:17-23; 23:12, 18; Num. 6:14; 7:88; 15:24; 19:2; 28:3.

45. This line appears only in the Old Greek, and is omitted from Theodotion. (It should be noted, incidentally, that the version of LXX Daniel attributed to Theodotion does not originate with Theodotion's translation of the OT, but is of a pre-Christian origin. See Hieke 2010, 44; Hartman 1978. The meaning of the phrase is somewhat obscure; Collins 1993, 202 regards both the Θ and G versions simply to be corrupt. One possibility is that the statement 'propitiate from behind you' is meant to acknowledge the unusual nature of the martyrs' sacrifice; so Hieke 2010, 51-53. ὄπισθέν may also be viewed as a corruption of ἔμπροσθεν, which would provide a more natural rendering ('propitiate/atone before you').

The reason the martyrs are identifiable as a sacrifice, it must be noted, is not the penal nature of their death.[46] Rather, it is their loyalty to God coupled with humility and contrition on account of Israel's sins: Azariah pleads that God would accept them 'with a contrite heart [ἐν ψυχῇ συντετριμμένῃ] and a humble spirit [πνεύματι τεταπεινωμένῳ]' (an allusion to LXX Ps. 50:19).[47] Not their deaths *per se*, but what they give to God *by* their deaths will 'find mercy' and lead to their vindication (vv. 38, 42-25).[48] It is not, then, that sacrifice by its very nature involves punitive suffering in this text, but that, in the *context* of Israel's punishment, the martyrs' sacrifice serves to *convert* the otherwise wholly reprobative experience into something holy and salvific, an act of covenantal loyalty to God—one characterised, as in Romans, by *trust* in him and his promises (v. 40)—that results in deliverance from death (v. 88). While it is not certain that Paul is consciously portraying Christ in martyrological terms in Romans 8:3, this evidence shows that Jews of the second-temple period could link the themes of sacrifice and sin's punishment together without confusing their discrete functions, and could do so specifically as a way of describing the obedient deaths of human beings.[49] This offers a plausible interpretation of Paul's statement in Romans 8:3, providing an explanation as to why the condemnation of sin in Christ's death results in eschatological deliverance.

To summarise our cumulative findings thus far, Christ's soteriological role in Romans 8:3 involves his assumption of the condition (sinful flesh) that constitutes a barrier to the law's fulfilment, so that this barrier could be removed through the fulfilment of his mission. As a sin offering, Christ obediently undergoes the condemnation of sin in the flesh in order (as in Rom. 3:25) to bring about the renewal of the condition that binds humanity to death. In the next section, we will consider how this renewal involves believers and serves as the basis of their freedom from condemnation.

3.2.3.4 The Fulfilment of the Law's Decree in Christ

Paul's description of the outcome of Christ's death in verse 4 focusses on believers, rather

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46. *pace* e.g. Williams 2015, 79, who equates their 'sacrifice' with penal substitution.

47. So Collins 1993, 201; Joosten 2009, 12; Werline 1998, 174-75. Collins also notes the thematic links with Ps. 141:2; Joosten, the additional verbal links with Mic. 6:7.

48. In Hengel's judgment, the original text may have envisioned the prayer *itself* as effecting the needed sacrifice; *in situ,* however, the suffering and (anticipated) deaths of the martyrs seems to have become an integral element. See Hengel 1986, 248-49.

49. This raises the question of whether even 4 Macc. (probably 2nd cent. CE), where sacrificial and penal conceptions are normally assumed to be collapsed into each other, might reflect a similar combination without confusion (see 6:27-29; 17:20-22). Along these lines, see Yamaguchi 2015, 120-22.

than on Christ himself: the law's decree is 'fulfilled *in us* [ἐν ἡμῖν], who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit'. It is clear, however, that the achievement of this goal rests upon the assumption that Christ himself is the foremost recipient of the life that fulfils the law's decree, and the source of its bestowal on believers.[50]

Several considerations support this understanding. First, this follows from the logic of verse 3: if the divine solution to the problem of the law's powerlessness due to sin's entrenchment in the human condition consists in *Christ's* assumption of that human condition, leading to sin's condemnation in Christ himself, this suggests that the anthropological goal of this action is attained first of all in Christ himself as well, however this may then come to benefit others. Second, this is also implied in Paul's assertion in verse 2 that Christ himself is the locus, either of the Spirit's presence, or of believers' deliverance through the Spirit (depending the syntactical function of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). In either case, the deliverance that believers experience is dependent upon the Spirit's unique and prior relation to Christ as the one to whom this 'life' properly and antecedently belongs. Third, and finally, the risen Christ's priority as the basis of believers' possession of the Spirit is also apparent in Romans 7:4-6, to whose theme the beginning of chapter 8 constitutes a return after the extended speech-in-character of 7:7-25. Paul describes believers' new belonging to the risen Christ, through whose body they have died to the law, as the cause of their 'bearing fruit to God' through life 'in the newness of the Spirit'. Thus both the incarnational and eschatological logic of Paul's argument presupposes that Christ himself embodies the fulfilment of the law's decree in his bodily resurrection from the dead, and that this serves as the anthropological basis of believers' freedom from sin and death.

Christ's prior attainment of the law's fulfilled decree is vital for understanding how Paul can portray believers, who still carry in themselves the 'problem' that Christ assumed as his own and resolved by his death, as being already free from the condemnation that their condition formerly imposed on them. Through the indwelling Spirit (cf. 8:5-11), Christ furnishes them with an anthropological basis of life and obedience that is not subject to the control of the law of sin and death in their own members. This anthropological basis does not inhere in believers themselves, but in a different ἄνθρωπος, with whom they are joined and in whom the barrier has been directly removed through a divine act of condemnation and a human act of obedience. In this sense, what believers share through the Spirit is the risen

50. Keck 1980, 45 also notes that Christ's resurrection is tacitly in view here.

Christ's *own* freedom from the power of sin and death (cf. 6:9-11), which stems from the bodily deliverance that he attained through sin's condemnation in the flesh. Christ is himself the Spirit-furnished, alternative anthropological basis for life in freedom from sin. Provided that they walk according to the Spirit and putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit (vv. 4, 13), believers continue to enjoy the immunity to eschatological condemnation that Christ's death has won. This is the ground of Paul's claim in verse 1.

This analysis sheds light on the basic underlying problem with the typical model of substitutionary atonement as applied to this text. By representing believers' freedom from condemnation as logically prior to their reception of the Spirit, the interpreters noted above invert the relationship that Paul assumes to exist between condemnation and sin, treating the main soteriological problem that Paul is addressing as condemnation in and of itself, the resolution of which *subsequently* results in freedom from captivity to sin (often through a gradual process of 'sanctification'). In fact, the logical ordering goes in precisely the opposite direction: the main problem that Paul addresses is *captivity to sin*, the resolution of which brings freedom from condemnation. This resolution does not happen through the Spirit's gradual work of character transformation, but in a definitive act of emancipation that coincides with one's coming to be 'in Christ Jesus'.[51] In keeping with my earlier argument, guilt is therefore inseparably bound up with enslavement to sin in Paul's argument, and to treat the former as the basis of condemnation and not the latter is to distort his thinking, and to obscure the solution to the problem that he describes.

3.2.3.5 Conclusion

The preceding argument has shown that Christ's soteriological function specifically addresses the anthropological incapacity that renders the law incapable of bestowing life. The divine solution to this problem, according to Paul, is the Son's assumption of sinful flesh and its termination through his obedient death, in which God condemned sin. Through his sacrificial obedience resulting in resurrection, Christ enters into a new condition in which the anthropological barrier to the law's decree has been removed, and all who share in Christ's Spirit share in the freedom from sin, death and condemnation that is characteristic of this condition. In summary form, then, Christ's soteriological function in Romans 8:3 is *obtaining eschatological life in freedom from sin and death by obediently undergoing the judicial*

51. Cf. Keck 1980, 54: 'The function of the Spirit was not to make people morally "better" but to emancipate them from the tyranny of sin which resided in the self'.

termination of sin in the flesh.

3.2.4 Conclusion: Christ's Soteriological Function in the Implied Narrative Context of Romans 8:1-4

In this section, I have argued that the assumptions that predominantly characterise mainstream substitutionary readings of Romans 8:1-4 are problematic in view of the logical flow of these verses, and in view of their place within Paul's larger argument, whose implied narrative they distort. Rather than viewing believers' eschatological life in the Spirit as a *subsequent and distinct* result of the forensic immunity that Christ's (substitutionary) sin-condemning death grants them, Paul attributes the freedom from condemnation that those in Christ enjoy directly to the Spirit's presence, which liberates them from the compelling power of sin and so from its attendant condemnation. Christ's death and, implicitly, his resurrection are soteriologically effective, meanwhile, because they function to obtain this life that is then made available to believers: through his Son's obedient mission culminating in his death, God abolishes the anthropological barrier to eschatological life in human flesh and, having removed this barrier, imbues his Son's body with this life by his resurrection from the dead, establishing him as the source and mediator of this life to those who continue to possess sinful flesh. As in the previous chapter, the primary 'problem' with which Paul's narrative framework is concerned is therefore *anthropological*: the incapacity of sinful flesh to exist in a state other than one of enmity with God that is destined for death and eschatological condemnation.

In the next section, I will discuss how Christ's mediation of the divine solution to this anthropological problem specifically benefits believers, and whether the language of substitution and participation may accurately describe it.

3.3 Substitution & Participation in Romans 8:3

Having established the specific soteriological function that Paul assigns to Christ in Romans 8:3 in light of his argument, we turn now to the question of substitution and participation. As I will show in what follows, Paul's argument here presupposes the same kind of radical and comprehensive substitution that we have already encountered in the earlier chapters of Romans. Christ's substitutionary role is not limited to his death, but involves his resurrection and continued eschatological life as well, such that his replacement of believers is ongoing. Moreover, the means by which the functional replacement occurs, as

in the earlier chapters of Romans, is participation in Christ by the Spirit, which makes Christ's own attainment of eschatological life through his death and resurrection effective for believers. This participation does not involve a soteriologically effective recapitulation of Christ's obedient, sin-condemning death and vindicating resurrection in believers. Rather, believers share in Christ's soteriological achievement in that his actions function as theirs, in place of their own.

3.3.1 Christ as a Redemptive Replacement for Believers in Romans 8:1-4

In this section, I will show that Christ fulfils a substitutionary role for believers in the opening verses of Romans 8 that involves more than his death, but involves his resurrection and ongoing life as well. As the *alternative anthropological basis* of believers' freedom from condemnation, Christ replaces the bodily agency of believers with his own crucified and raised body, providing believers with the life he attained through sin's condemnation in his death. Consequently, while Christ's substitutionary role overlaps with that of the typical model of substitutionary atonement (particularly in that he functions for them as the locus of sin's condemnation in the flesh), it also exceeds this model's normal scope.

3.3.1.1 Christ's Substitutionary Death

The substitutionary significance of Christ's death in Romans 8:3 is twofold. First, Christ's death replaces the deaths of believers in undergoing the condemnation of sin in the flesh, in order to terminate sin's power and usher in eschatological life. Second, Christ's obedience within sinful flesh, which in the context of his death constitutes him as a 'sin offering', functions in the place of fleshly humanity's incapacity for obedience under the law to obtain the eschatological life in which the law's purpose is attained. Since the latter substitutionary role pertains more directly to Christ's resurrection (the subject of the next section), I will begin with the former.

As some commentators observe, the wordplay of κατάκριμα and κατέκρινεν in verses 1 and 3 of Romans 8 would seem to establish some kind of identification between the condemnation that believers would otherwise face apart from Christ and the condemnation of sin that Christ himself endured in his death.[52] Our analysis of Christ's soteriological role, particularly as it has drawn attention to the parallels between Romans 8:1-4 and Paul's earlier contrast between Adam and Christ in 5:12-21, supports this identification: the κατάκριμα that

52. So e.g. Schreiner 1998, 402; Wright 2013a, 898; Wright 2002, 578.

Christ experiences, which brings death to bear on sin as it is entrenched in his flesh, is the fate of all adamic humanity (5:16-18). The incarnational logic of Paul's assertion in 8:3 also supports this identification: having assumed the same flesh, Christ undergoes the condemnatory verdict that falls upon sin in the flesh. Taken on their own, these observations might appear to support the participationist case *against* substitution in this text, to which Hooker gives voice: 'It is as man's *representative*, rather than as his substitute, that Christ suffers, and it is only as one who is fully human that he is able to do anything effective for mankind, by lifting man, as it were, into an obedient relationship with God'.[53] This, however, ignores what differentiates those in Christ from the rest of adamic humanity: they are themselves no longer under condemnation, *despite* the fact that they continue (like the rest of humanity) to possess sinful and corruptible flesh (6:12; 8:10). Accordingly, although their physical death remains a real possibility (assuming that Christ does not return first), Paul speaks of the death that faces adamic flesh as a destiny that believers must avoid: '*if* you live according to the flesh, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put the body's deeds to death, you will live' (v. 13). If Paul is consistent with the logic of his own argument, it follows that, whatever the bodily deaths of believers might mean, they do not carry out a divine sentence of condemnation for their sin.[54]

If this analysis is correct, it indicates that *Christ's death replaces the deaths of believers in the capacity of undergoing sin's condemnation in the flesh* in Romans 8:3. Whereas believers' anthropological condition would have bound them to condemnation, the enactment of this condemnation in Christ's death has created a new situation in which they are no longer faced with this destiny. In this respect, at least, the substitutionary soteriological role that Paul assigns to Christ overlaps with that of the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement. That said, as I argued above, it is problematic to describe the mechanism of this substitution in terms of *transfer*, because what relieves them of the burden of condemnation is not sin's condemnation in Christ's death on its own, but the *outcome* of this condemnation, namely, the arrival of the Spirit as a remedy to the powerlessness of flesh. Consequently, a *qualitative* rather than a *material* equivalence between Christ's death and that which believers would have faced serves as the basis of his functional replacement: he is not suffering *their* transferred condemnation, but the *kind* of condemnation that would befall

53. Hooker 1990b, 22, emph. orig.

54. *pace* Dunn 1988, 416, who tries to diminish the force of Paul's statement in 8:1 by presenting it as one of 'the grand simplicities of faith' that stand in contrast with the sobering realism of Romans 7 (which Dunn thinks describes the present experience of believers).

them apart from his intervention. Nevertheless, his doing so frees them from the impending eventuality of facing condemnation for sin, and in this sense he suffers the condemnation in their stead.

Second, Christ's death also plays a substitutionary role for believers because it enacts an obedience to God that Paul accords a sacrificial significance. Whereas Paul's description of sin's condemnation in Christ primarily concerns the agency of God the Father, the ultimate actor in Romans 8:3, his description of Christ as a sin offering concerns the agency of the Son, whom God sent 'in the likeness of sinful flesh'. Whereas God's action of condemning sin directly addresses the problem of sin's presence and influence within the flesh, the Son's obedient action attains to the the eschatological life promised in the law, to which the sinful flesh constituted an insurmountable obstacle for adamic humanity. As a result of this offering, believers find themselves already in possession of the life that is the goal of the law's commandment (8:2, 4; cf. 7:10), despite their continued possession of the flesh that formerly made this life unattainable (8:10). The necessity of Christ's intervention to remedy this situation assumes that, were it not for his sin offering, believers would be left back in the situation of Romans 7:7-24, in need of life but powerless to obtain it through the law. Consequently, *in the capacity of obtaining the life and freedom from sin promised in the law, Christ's sacrificial obedience replaces the obedience of believers.*

The new situation that this creates for believers is one in which obedience is still required of them, but it is based on a different principle than that of the speaker in Romans 7: they now 'serve in the newness of the Spirit, not the oldness of the letter' (7:6; cf. 8:4), and escape the destiny of death because they 'by the Spirit put the body's deeds to death' (8:13). Another way of putting this is to say that, whereas Christ's obedience within sinful flesh is the basis of eschatological life, eschatological life is the basis of believers' obedience as people who are 'not in the flesh, but in the Spirit' (v. 9). Consequently, even their ongoing obedience, without which their enjoyment of freedom from condemnation is impossible, does not fulfil the same soteriological function that Christ's obedience as a sin offering does in Romans 8:3. Their obedience arises, ultimately, out of the *alternative anthropological basis for freedom from sin* that God has provided in Christ, in whom sinful flesh has been replaced by the Spirit of God. This brings us to the next aspect of Christ's substitutionary role.

3.3.1.2 Christ's Substitutionary Life

As we saw earlier in the chapter, Christ's resurrection and ongoing eschatological life are

vital to the fulfilment of his soteriological role in Romans 8:1-4, even though Paul describes the outcome of his death mainly with reference to believers in verse 4. As the one whom God raised from the dead, Christ furnishes believers with the anthropological basis of their present eschatological life and freedom. In the words of Leander Keck,

> What Paul assumes is that the Spirit is the power of the risen Christ imparted to those who are baptized. Therefore the Son's liberation from sinful flesh and death is simultaneously the *basis* of the believer's liberation in the present and the *prototype* of the future consummation of liberation.[55]

Our interest lies with the former of these roles. If the above analysis concerning Christ's soteriological role in this text is correct, then Paul's argument presupposes that the risen Christ functions as a substitute for believers in at least two senses, pertaining to his resurrection and ongoing life.

First, Christ's attainment of the law's δικαίωμα through his resurrection is the basis on which believers enjoy eschatological life in the present, and this is so *despite* their ongoing bodily mortality: 'if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness' (8:10). In this respect, *the resurrection of Christ's body functions, in place of their own bodily resurrection, to obtain the eschatological life that they now enjoy.* This is why they are now free from condemnation, even though their own intrinsic anthropological condition remains unaltered: in its resurrection, Christ's body becomes, for believers, an alternative anthropological basis of freedom from sin and its condemnation, because in its glorified state it properly bears the Spirit through whom he dwells in them and shares his freedom with them. This insight is the source of Paul's earlier marriage metaphor in chapter 7, which presents believers, both as severed from an earlier marriage under the law *through the death of another's body* (Christ's), and as now belonging 'to the one raised from the dead' (7:4).[56]

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55. Keck 1980, 50, emph. added.

56. Though several interpreters over the past century have interpreted 'body of Christ' in this verse in a corporate, ecclesial sense, and taken Paul to mean that believers die to the law through their incorporation into the baptised community of faith (so e.g. Dodd 1932, 101-02; Nygren 1952, 273-74; Robinson 1952, 47), such a reading is unwarranted in view of Paul's normal use of σῶμα throughout Romans 1-8 (and, most notably, in vv. 23-24 of the present chapter) to refer unambiguously to the physical bodies of individual humans. Cf. Rom. 1:24; 4:19; 6:12; 7:24; 8:10-11, 13, 23. Additionally, a reference to the crucified body of Jesus corresponds more naturally to the sequel of belonging 'to another, the one raised from the dead', which certainly refers to Christ himself, and which would serve as an odd juxtaposition to an ecclesial reference in the first half of the verse. Accordingly, the great majority of interpreters have rightly understood Paul to be referring to the physical body of Christ that was nailed to the cross. So e.g. Cranfield 1975, 336; Fitzmyer 1993, 458; Longenecker 2016, 635-36. Croasmun 2017 has recently attempted to read many of these refs. in a corporate sense as well, but does so on the dubious assumption that the singular use of σῶμα with a plural possessive pronoun requires this meaning; moreover, he ignores 8:10 and its important links with Abraham in Rom. 4. Nonetheless, the particularity of Paul's reference to Christ's body need not diminish the sense in which this body may be called

Second, the logical inference that Paul draws from his audience's possession of life despite their ongoing mortality suggests that the risen Christ fulfils a further substitutionary role as regards believers' final, eschatological destiny: 'If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you' (v. 11). As in verse 2, the present freedom that believers enjoy through the Spirit guarantees that glorification rather than condemnation will be their destiny and (as v. 10 makes clear) does so *despite* the continuing sinfulness of their own mortal bodies in the present. Consequently, *Christ's ongoing, indwelling eschatological life functions in the place of their own fleshly weakness to enable their obedience and to accomplish their final eschatological transformation into Christ's likeness*. Were it not for this, they would be thrown back on their own, inadequate anthropological resources and be left again in the impossible situation of the speaker in chapter 7. As it is, the indwelling life of *another* (Christ) enables them to please God in a manner of which they are themselves intrinsically incapable. As such, they are already living in freedom from condemnation, and enjoy an eschatological hope that owes to Christ's Spirit rather than their corruptible flesh.

Though our discussion in this chapter has mainly dealt with the soteriological ramifications of roughly the first half of Romans 8, consideration of Paul's argument in the latter half of the chapter would reveal additional, related substitutionary motifs that complement Paul's assessment of the ongoing soteriological significance of the risen Christ for believers in the present. In verse 34, Paul's rhetorical question, 'Who is it that condemns?' (τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν;) hearkens back to the chapter's opening assurance that believers are free from eschatological condemnation (οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα). Here, however, Paul does not lay stress primarily on the soteriological significance of Christ's death, nor even of his resurrection (though the μᾶλλον δὲ gives this an added emphasis), but finally on that of his ongoing session at God's right hand in heaven, where he 'is interceding on our behalf' (ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν).[57] This serves as the immediate logical grounding for Paul's rhetorically sweeping conclusion to the chapter and to the argument of the letter up to this point, in which he assures his hearers that nothing whatsoever can separate them from

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'corporate': in the words of Robert Tannehill, 'the *believers* are put to death by means of the death of *this* body, and so it is understood as a corporate entity'. Tannehill 1967, 24, emph. added. On the meaning of σῶμα in Paul's writings, see Thrall 2002, 283-88.

57. As Moo 1996, 542 notes, 'The enumeration of actions accomplished by, and through, Christ occurs in ascending order, with the emphasis falling on the last in the series'. Thus the μᾶλλον δὲ can be seen rhetorically to embrace *both* of the last two items in the series, climactically Christ's intercession.

God's love revealed in Christ (vv. 35-39).[58]

Here Günter Röhser's observation (made with reference to 'exclusive place-taking', as outlined in the introductory chapter) may equally be applied to our discussion of substitution: he notes that scholarship generally ignores the fact 'dass es eine von allen Seiten völlig unbestrittene und breit belegte Gestalt exklusiver Stellvertretung in der Bibel tatsächlich gibt: die Fürbitte, verstanden als stellvertretendes Gebet für andere'.[59] By its very nature, intercession entails the standing in of one party for another: the intercessor acts effectively in place of another in communicating with God for the third party's benefit. In this context, to put it in the language that our study has adopted, Christ's intercessory pleading on behalf of believers *replaces their own in the functional capacity of sustaining them in the love of God*, over against any condemning voice that may bring charges against them or seek to separate them from that love. This intercessory role is organically linked to Christ's own identity as summarised in the initial two substantive participles, which serve to gather up much of the argumentation in the preceding chapters: the one who pleads on their behalf is 'the one who died' (ὁ ἀποθανών) and 'who was raised' (ἐγερθείς), at the behest of 'God who justifies' (θεὸς ὁ δικαιῶν), and who gave over his Son 'for us all' in the first place (vv. 32-33). Though brief, this climactic christological statement serves not only to reiterate the saving significance of Christ's death and resurrection, in keeping with the argument of the preceding eight chapters, but equally, through its added emphasis on Christ's ongoing intercession *as* the crucified and raised one, to suggest that (1) his substitutionary role involves his active agency, and not merely his impersonal 'utilisation' by those whom he capacitates for obedience; (2) the saving benefits he mediates to 'God's elect' inhere in his very person, where the judgment and justification of God's people have taken place (4:25; 5:9-10; 6:6-7, 10-11; 7:4; 8:3) and which he now actively presents to God in heaven on their behalf. To quote Röhser again, 'vollkommene Gerechtigkeit', as applied to Christ's ongoing intercessory role, is 'nicht nur Voraussetzung, sondern umfassender Inhalt der Stellvertretung'.[60]

This does not, of course, mean that the beneficiaries of such intercession cannot pray as well, but it does presuppose that the intercessor's prayer is uniquely effective for them, quite apart from their own agency. This is precisely why the christological datum of verse 34 can

58. On the structure and rhetorical features of this passage see Longenecker 2016, 744-48.
59. Röhser 2002, 29. On this passage, see Park 2015, 383-87.
60. Röhser 2002, 54 (emph. removed).

provide the assurance that Paul seeks to give his audience: their freedom from anyone who would condemn owes not fundamentally to any plea they are able to make on their own behalf, but in the intercessory plea of the crucified, risen and ascended Christ, the Son whom God 'did not spare, but gave over for us all' (cf. v. 32). Accordingly, Paul's emphasis in the preceding argument falls precisely on the incapacity of believers: 'we do not know how to pray as we ought' (v. 26). Here we encounter an added substitutionary dynamic—one that stands in a complementary relationship to believers' participation in Christ. Despite their incapacity to pray, Paul says that the indwelling *Spirit* of Christ 'intercedes on behalf of the saints' (vv. 26-27), with language paralleling the risen Christ's heavenly intercession in verse 34. Here too one may identify a substitutionary dynamic at play: the capacity of the Spirit for prayer (because the Spirit's 'mind', φρόνημα, is known to God and can plead 'according to God'[61]) replaces the incapacity of believers for adequate communication with God. And yet, it is striking that this functional replacement, whereby the Spirit's agency stands in for the agency of believers, nevertheless takes place in and through 'unspoken groanings' (στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις) that *they* experience. Whereas the exalted Christ's 'distance' from believers accords his substitutionary role a more absolute exclusivity, his immediacy to them through the indwelling Spirit (which fits more closely with the emphasis of the first half of the chapter) introduces a participatory correlate to his substitutionary advocacy on their behalf.[62] With this in mind, we may now turn to the role of participation in Christ in the soteriological rationale of Paul's argument.

3.3.1.3 Conclusion

In the preceding discussion, I have argued that Christ's soteriological role in Romans 8:1-4 (read in light of Rom. 7–8 more broadly) depends upon his substitutionary relationship to believers—a relationship including, but not limited to his death. Christ's redemptive replacement of believers is therefore more expansive and comprehensive than current

61. κατὰ θεόν is best understood here in the sense of 'according to God's will'; so e.g. Cranfield 1975, 424; Longenecker 2016, 735.

62. This qualifies the conclusions of Röhser 2002, 47. While it is true that, in these verses, 'Gott tritt in und durch Christus und den Geist für die Menschen vor sich selber ein', this is not simply because the Spirit 'translates' (*übersetzt*) believers' groanings into 'himmlische, Gott gemäße Sprache'. Though Paul does describe God's 'reading' the Spirit's intercessions, as it were, off of the mind of the Spirit, the instrumentality of the dative phrase στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις in v. 26 suggests that the groanings *themselves* are the Spirit's activity within believers, which the Spirit 'intends' in a sense that transcends any knowledge on the part of believers. In other words, the mind of the Spirit replaces the ignorance of believers in praying to God, by producing 'groanings' within them that accord with God's will and whose meaning is known only to 'the one who knows the mind of the Spirit'.

exegesis of Romans normally supposes, describing the totality of God's provision for the weakness of adamic flesh and the law's incapacity through the condemned and delivered humanity of his Son. In the next section, I will discuss the *means* of this substitutionary replacement which, as we shall see, brings the substitutionary character of Christ's soteriological role in Romans 8:1-4 into close relationship with the theme of participation in Christ.

3.3.2 Participation in Christ as a Means of Replacement

In this final section, I will argue that Paul's description of Christ's substitutionary soteriological role at the beginning of Romans 8 depends logically on related motifs of union with and participation in Christ, which describe the *means* of his redemptive replacement. As in the preceding chapter, then, it is not the case that substitution and participation mutually exclude one another in Paul's argument, nor even that they are logically compatible themes: rather, they are *mutually interdependent* and, apart from their necessary logical relationship, Paul's soteriological claims are rendered incoherent. A crucial assumption underlies this claim: in Paul's view, believing participation in Christ by the Spirit does not entail that believers' own actions and experiences appropriate the soteriological *function* of Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing life, whatever qualitative similarities one might identify between them. Our discussion in the preceding chapter has already touched on this question with regard to Romans 6, but Romans 8 provides a more complete body of evidence on which to base an answer to it.

3.3.2.1 Participation and Christ's Personal Indwelling in Romans 8

Paul's argument at the beginning of Romans 8 makes it abundantly clear that Christ's soteriological role is effective only for those who are united with him through his (and God's) Spirit. In Romans 8:1-2, freedom from condemnation exists 'for those in Christ Jesus', because he himself is the locus of the Spirit's liberative activity for believers.[63] Only through their Spirit-mediated union with Christ can the condemnation of sin and the realisation of eschatological life that transpired in his body be meaningful and effective for them. Additionally, alongside Paul's 'in Christ' language and its relationship to the Spirit in chapter

63. It makes the most sense to read the phrase in v. 2 with a locative nuance, since the very same phrase in v. 1, which it emphatically reiterates, cannot be functioning merely as a dative of means. With regard to the syntactical ambiguity of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, it is preferable to take the phrase in an adverbial rather than adjectival sense, as Paul nowhere else speaks simply of the Spirit's being located 'in Christ'. In either case, however, the difference is only one of emphasis.

8, we find an added emphasis on the Spirit's dwelling 'in' believers: the law's δικαίωμα (eschatological life) is to be fulfilled *in* those who walk according to the Spirit (v. 4). Verses 5-11 describe how this happens: Christ's indwelling by the Spirit grants them a new 'mind' or 'mindset' (φρόνημα) that can obey and please God (vv. 5-8; cf. v. 27), places them in a new existence 'in the Spirit' rather than 'in the flesh' and, eventually, will enact their bodily transformation (vv. 9-11).

Christ's redemptive replacement of believers, then, is possible because of a union that entails their mutual indwelling of each other by the Spirit. This is hardly surprising since, as we have observed, the redemptive benefit that Christ's death obtains, on which freedom from sin and condemnation depend, is none other than the Spirit's presence and availability. The Spirit does not merely *attend* the soteriological benefit that Christ's death and resurrection obtain: according to Paul, the Spirit *is* that benefit. To possess the Spirit, then, is *to share in what Christ's death and resurrection obtained*—and, as we have seen, to do so *without having yet undergone death and resurrection in one's own body*. As in the earlier chapters of Romans, Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing life are, effectively, made one's own through participation: they function soteriologically *in place* of one's own agency, precisely in functioning *as* one's own. This is just what Paul's earlier reference to believers' death to the law in 7:4 says: the putting to death of *Christ's* body was the termination of *their* relation to the law, and its result is their belonging now to another—'to the one raised from the dead'—despite their continuance in bodily mortality.

The fact that this substitutionary relation is possibly only in union with Christ nuances this insight further and problematises any analysis of Christ's soteriological role in Paul that severs the redemptive benefit of his achievement from his personal immediacy to believers. To employ the language of the tradition, Christ's 'work' is inseparable from his 'person' in Paul's argument: only through *Christ's* direct pneumatological contact with believers can what he accomplished fulfil any soteriological function for them.[64] Paul's complementary language of Christ's indwelling by the Spirit, particularly in verses 9-11, makes this clear. The Spirit's indwelling not only makes believers 'his' (αὐτοῦ), but equally means that Christ *himself* indwells them (Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν).[65] The Spirit and Christ coalesce in Paul's description, so that receiving the Spirit, whose availability is the outcome of Christ's 'work',

64. On the tendency in western theology to separate these categories, see esp. Torrance 1986.
65. Fee 1994, 545 says that 'if Christ is in you' is a 'shorthand' for 'if Christ dwells in you by his Spirit' (cf. 548).

is inseparable from receiving Christ's 'person'.[66] Moreover, Paul is equally clear that the Spirit's relation to Christ remains unique, even in indwelling the believer: in verse 16, '*the* Spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα] bears witness together with *our* spirit [τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν] that we are children of God'. This indicates that, even once internalised, the Spirit and the divine life of sonship that it mediates (cf. vv. 14-17) are never *inherent* in believers, but properly belong to Christ.[67] Precisely for this reason, we are confronted with a radical and comprehensive substitution as a basic presupposition in Paul's argument: all that believers have and are owes to the actions and pneumatological immediacy of another, who makes them *participants* in what he has done and now is *in their stead*. As we have seen above, this participation can enlist the active agency of believers to varying degrees: on the one hand, by the Spirit they are able to 'put to death the deeds of the body' (v. 13); on the other, the Spirit provides for their inability to pray by producing incomprehensible groanings within them that are nonetheless comprehensible to God, and made in parallel with Christ's immediate intercession before him in heaven (vv. 26-27, 34). Whatever their degree of active involvement, however, believers remain dependant upon the soteriologically-effective capacities of *another* to remedy their own incapacity by acting in their stead. On their own, these observations take us some way toward addressing the question of recapitulative participationism, to which we now turn.

3.3.2.2 Recapitulative Participationism in Romans 8:1-4?

The above arguments concerning Christ's redemptive replacement of believers maintain their cogency only on the basis of a key assumption regarding the nature of Pauline participationism, namely that the 'Christ-event' is of a *unique* rather than *archetypal*

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66. This close identification between the Spirit and Christ is reflected in other texts as well (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:18). It does not appear necessary, on the basis of these statements, to assume that Paul is simply equating Christ and the Spirit (so Fatehi 2000, 305-07). Rather, to quote Harding, 'the apostle is proposing a functional unity, a unity of agency of Christ and the Holy Spirit—they coalesce dynamically in the process of human renewal—in giving life and liberation to believers'. Harding 2015, 200. Harding goes too far, however, in saying that Paul 'is not making an ontological claim', since this fails to do justice to Christ's 'pneumatic' existence as the risen Lord in possession of a σῶμα πνευματικόν (1 Cor. 15:44). The Spirit and Christ can be ontologically related without being ontologically equated; so Fatehi 2000, 302-08.

67. Macaskill's comments on Gal. 4:4-6 apply here as well: '[T]he sonship of Jesus is the grounds for the adoption of believers, but the language of "adoption" is only applied to the latter; the sonship of Jesus is presented as inherent, *sui generis*, constitutive of (but not identical to) the adoptive status of believers. The sonship of Jesus and the sonship of believers are, then, categorically different…. [T]he Spirit is defined in relation to the Son in his activity of union.' Macaskill 2013, 223; cf. Macaskill 2014, 97. *Contra* Dunn, whose Spirit christology corresponds to his interpretation of Paul's soteriology in that it makes Christ's sonship (as with his death and resurrection) an archetype for the believer's own, in a way that ignores the fundamental difference between the two, to which Macaskill points. See Dunn 1973, and the survey in Macaskill 2013, 28-30.

significance as regards its soteriological function for believers. In other words, for Paul it is not the case that one's salvation requires the nullification of one's own sinful flesh through suffering and death in order to attain eschatological life. Rather, through union with Christ, the believer shares in the eschatological life that *his* death and resurrection obtain, and this constitutes the basis of the believer's bodily transformation at Christ's return, whether he or she is biologically alive at that time or not. Although the believer's manner of life prior to this event does exhibit a pattern of dying and rising—putting the body's deeds to death by the Spirit, denying sin's reign in the body's members, suffering with Christ, and living to God in newness of life—this pattern does not fulfil the same *function* that Christ's death and resurrection fulfil for believers. Thus, while one might say, with Douglas Campbell, that 'the Spirit "maps" or "moulds" people onto Christ's prototypical trajectory' of suffering, death and resurrection, this does not entail a *recapitulative soteriological process* in which 'salvation is realized as the old state of bondage to Sin and Death in the Flesh is terminated, and a new resurrected eschatological state is effected' through the believer's own suffering, death and resurrection.[68]

We have encountered this recapitulative conception of participation in Christ already in Dunn's reading of Romans, which makes the believer's identification with Christ the basis, not of release from the destructive process of sin's condemnation, but merely from the finality of its outcome: 'the process of the dying away of the believer in his dependence on this age' must come about; 'only so can the *destruction* of the sinful flesh, the body of death, be accomplished without destroying the believer at the same time'.[69] Though she does not spell out the implications of participatory identification to the same degree of detail as Dunn, Hooker takes Paul's statement at the end of Romans 8:17—'provided that we suffer with him in order also to be glorified with him'—as indicative of his assumption that Christ's sin-condemning death in verse 3 is effective for others only through their lifelong participation in this event.[70] This is one of several reasons that she argues that 'Paul's understanding of the process is…one of participation, not of substitution; it is a sharing of experience, not an exchange'.[71]

Our discussion of Romans 6 in the previous chapter has already undermined much of the logic implicit in such statements: it is clear in Paul's earlier argument that what it means for

68. Campbell 2005, 59.
69. Dunn 1991, 48, emph. orig.; cf. Dunn 1988, 422.
70. Cf. Hooker 1990b, 33.
71. Hooker 1990b, 26-27.

those in Christ to 'die his death' is not that 'his death works out in their flesh' in a way that extends and completes sin's condemnation.[72] Believers die the death of Christ in that *his very death*, the death of *his* body on the cross, *is made functionally theirs* as the vicarious means of their deliverance from the power of sin, from the jurisdiction of the law, and from the condemnation that has fallen upon adamic humanity—quite apart from, and in spite of, their ongoing experience of flesh and its mortality. Statements such as the above fail to reckon with the radical nature of the identification that the Spirit establishes between Christ and the believer, which does not simply 'add' their flesh to his in order that his achievement may there be repeated, but functionally *replaces* their flesh with his as a means of their deliverance from sin's power and condemnation, *despite* sin's ongoing presence in their mortal condition. As I will now show, Romans 8 equally problematises this recapitulative understanding.

One of the most obvious problems for the reading which extends Christ's saving death into the deaths of believers is how it directly contradicts Paul's assertion in Romans 8:1 that 'there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'.[73] The whole point of Paul's argument at this climactic moment is to explain why believers have already been decisively liberated from the plight of adamic humanity, freed from the entail of Adam's disobedience through the Spirit-mediated presence of the crucified and raised Christ, whose death condemned sin in the flesh. Meanwhile, continuing to live under sin's power while professing to belong to Christ reveals that one is still back in the pre-eschatological situation in which death is supreme, as it reveals that one does not in fact possess the Spirit and its attending freedom from condemnation (6:21, 23; 8:9-10, 13). Only *if* one lives 'according to the flesh' is one 'going to die' (μέλλετε ἀποθνῄσκειν, 8:13) in the sense from which Romans 8:1 declares the believer's freedom. Those led by the Spirit, however, no longer face this destiny.[74] Despite the lingering presence of sin and death, then, believers do not face condemnation and so need not undergo it for themselves in order to deal with the power or presence of sin in their own members.

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72. Dunn 1991, 52.

73. Dunn's commentary devotes barely any attention to Paul's claim in 8:1 (see Dunn 1988, 415-16, 435). He interprets Paul's assurance to mean 'that their continuing captivity to the law of sin as members of this age (7:23) is neither final nor finally determinative' (435). But this misses what is actually being asserted: not that a certain destiny will not prove final, but that believers *presently* live in freedom from what kept them on that trajectory.

74. Gathercole 2015, 80f. notes this 'asymmetry' between the believer's physical death and Christ's. His account of the ostensibly 'metaphorical' death of believers, however, fails to reckon with the identificatory nature of Pauline participation, just as much as the participationist view critiqued here.

Another problem with the recapitulative participationist paradigm is that it does not reckon well with the relativising effect of Christ's eschatological life on that which is fleshly and mortal. In Paul's argument, the presence of eschatological life in Christ relegates anything fleshly to the category of 'death' by comparison: 'if Christ is in you, though the body'—while still biologically alive—'is dead [νεκρόν] because of sin, the Spirit is life [ζωή] because of righteousness' (8:10). Biological vitality is no longer pertinent to the distinction between 'life' and 'death' within Paul's eschatological framework: 'Spirit' and 'flesh' are the new categories. The result of this, particularly in Romans 8, is that Paul does not describe believers' sinful bodies as *alive but needing to die*, such that the believer's death is an integral part of the process. Rather, he describes them as *dead but needing life*: the body may be 'dead because of sin', but God 'will make even your mortal bodies live through his Spirit that dwells in you' (vv. 10-11). The cessation of fleshly vitality in believers' own bodies is immaterial next to the termination of sin's power over them through Christ's death and indwelling Spirit, and the presence of the Spirit in believers *already* marks their freedom (including the freedom of their bodies) from the destiny of death.[75] For those in Christ, God has deprived sin of its power through Christ's sin-condemning death, and the final removal of its presence from their own bodies is based on the Spirit's transformative activity, regardless of whether the believer is biologically alive or dead at the *parousia*.

This brings us to a third and final problem: though Paul does present suffering with Christ as a condition of being glorified with him—believers are 'heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed [εἴπερ] we suffer with him, in order that [ἵνα] we may be glorified with him' (v. 17)—nothing in his statement suggests that this suffering is understood to take part in fulfilling the soteriological *function* of Christ's own suffering and death (i.e. attaining to eschatological life through sin's condemnation in the flesh).[76] Paul has just explicitly spelled out the condition of glorification with Christ—possession of the Spirit—and it makes the best sense of the overall argument to understand suffering with Christ as an attestation of possessing the Spirit of Christ. This is confirmed in what follows: the anguish believers experience in the midst of creation's ongoing corruptibility is the *result* of the Spirit's presence, and itself testifies to the fact that they belong to Christ and share with the groaning

75. Black 1984, 424: 'Therefore, in Romans, death as a motive force for ethical behavior is no longer predominantly a future event of which we are prudentially mindful; rather, death is an antecedent, existential experience from which we have been liberated, in order that we might now yield our members as instruments of righteousness (6:13)' (cf. 432).

76. *pace* Hooker 1990b, 33-34.

creation in the hope of glory (8:18-39). Paul is expanding upon what was previewed already at the beginning of chapter 5, where 'rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God' happens 'amid tribulations' (ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν), which produce a character marked by a hope confirmed in the presence of the Holy Spirit (vv. 2-5). In neither context is it suggested that the suffering of believers functions redemptively in a process of nullifying sin or sinful flesh. Rather, Paul's argument assumes precisely what has just been argued: Christ's death and resurrection have broken the *power* of sin in the flesh, and the Spirit's life-giving activity will eventually culminate in the removal of its *presence* as flesh (biologically alive or not) is brought from death to life, from the present age to the one to come. In the meantime, believers are called to suffer in hope, as well as to embrace a way of obedience that puts the body's deeds to death by the Spirit and yields the bodily members to God as obedient instruments of Christ's risen life (6:13; 8:13). If they do not do so, then they do not possess the Spirit of Christ and so will not be glorified with him.

In conclusion, the evidence of Romans indicates that the recapitulative paradigm for interpreting the participatory themes in Paul's writings rests on too many mistaken assumptions about the significance of bodily death in Paul's thinking and fails to account for the decisive significance he accords Christ's own death and resurrection for believers. Though unearthing and examining the roots of this paradigm completely would take us far beyond the scope of the present project, I believe that the preceding considerations offer us some insight into its origins. It would appear that two mutually reinforcing misperceptions underlie this construal of Paul's participationism. First is the assumption that physical death in Paul's view is a *necessary* part of Christian experience—an assumption generated more by the two thousand-year delay of the *parousia* than by anything found in Paul's writings.[77] Indeed, Paul's own letters nowhere assume that the physical deaths of believers may be taken for granted as an ordinary part of their 'Christian experience'. What matters most is eschatological life in Christ, 'who died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we might live with him' (1 Thess. 5:10).[78] Or as he puts it in the present letter, 'whether we live or die, we are the Lord's' (Rom. 14:8). The physical death of the believer does not occupy a soteriologically load-bearing space in Paul's theology, because the eschatological situation Christ's death and resurrection have produced, as well as the imminence of his return, renders

77. This assumption is not limited to those who espouse the recapitulative view. So e.g. Macaskill 2013, 247: the 'full realization of salvation…is one that requires death and *parousia*'.

78. Cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18. The problem that Paul addresses here suggests that the *normal* expectation his preaching generated among believers that they would not die prior to their glorification with Christ.

it comparatively insignificant.

A second assumption latent in the recapitulative view of Pauline participationism is that the character of Christ's 'representative' role in relation to believers is mainly *instantiative*—that is, it instances a set of broader, universal truths about the human condition and how it is restored that apply in basically the same way to all individuals (including Christ). This misconstrual afflicts Dunn's reading of Paul's soteriology in particular, which is of a piece with his reductive portrayal of Paul's christology precisely as a mere instantiation of the pneumatically-constituted humanity that becomes the possession of all believers.[79] The result of this view is a kind of eschatological exemplarism in which Christ effects the transformation of believers only indirectly—not by his actual death and resurrection, but by the way in which their own experience repeats them.[80] But if any of our above findings are correct, this cannot be Paul's view of Christ's representative role. Paul represents Christ as the unique agent of believers' restoration to God, whose death to sin and life to God make believers dead to sin and alive to God, free from sin's power and condemnation despite the fact that they have not yet died and risen from the dead. This relationship suggests a representative role that is not instantiative but, as we have argued at length, substitutionary *and* participatory in mutual interdependence. Participation in Christ is not the *repetition* or *recapitulation* of Christ's death to sin and coming alive to God, of his being put to death to the law or of his experience of sin's condemnation in the flesh: it is the *reception* of these events and experiences so that they function in place of the believer's own for the purposes that Paul describes.

3.3.2.3 Conclusion

As I have shown in the preceding discussion, substitution and participation are vitally related in the argument in Romans 8:1-4 in that participation in Christ through the Spirit constitutes the means by which he replaces believers in the soteriological capacities in which he functions. Substitution and participation not only cohere in Paul's description of Christ's

79. On Dunn's christology, see Macaskill 2014; cf. Macaskill 2013, 28-30.

80. Dunn 1991, 52-53n3 notes a similar objection from Wright, who calls his christology 'a bare exemplarist view: Jesus is the pattern to show people how to attain to the new sort of humanity', and responds to Wright with puzzlement in view of his discussion's reference to an earlier version of the present essay outlining Paul's atonement theology. But Dunn's explanation of the representative significance of Christ's death and resurrection in Paul *confirms* rather than refutes Wright's intuition of exemplarism: his reading evacuates the actual events of Christ's death and resurrection of intrinsic soteriological significance apart from believers' repetition of them in their own experience.

soteriological role, but positively require each other. Because participation in Christ entails the personal immediacy of Christ to believers, the soteriological benefits that he grants them in Paul's argument are never separable from his person, and always remain properly his own, even in becoming functionally theirs. Meanwhile, their own participation in him does not, in Paul's view, involve a soteriologically-effective *recapitulation* of the process of Christ's death and resurrection, whereby their actions and experiences share in the condemnation of sin in the flesh and the inauguration of eschatological life. With this part of the discussion complete, I will now summarise the findings of the chapter as a whole, before turning to consider the third main text featured in this dissertation.

3.4 Conclusion

The present chapter has offered an analysis of Romans 8:3 in the context of verses 1-4 that accounts for the interrelationship of substitution and participation in Paul's portrayal of God's saving action in Christ. As I have shown, the typical substitutionary reading of these verses rests on problematic assumptions regarding the logical flow of Paul's argument, the relationship between guilt and enslavement in Paul's understanding, and of how Paul's construal of the plight in which humanity finds itself determines his account of the divine solution to it through his Son's mission. The fundamental problem that Paul chooses to highlight at the beginning of Romans 8 is anthropological: humans have become enslaved to sin, and in their fleshly state are unable to escape condemnation. Israel's law is entangled in this problem, incapable of attaining its purpose of bestowing life because even those who seek to obey it exist inescapably within a fleshly condition of disobedience and enmity toward God.

Over against this intractable situation, God intervenes through his Son to furnish humanity with a new anthropological condition, *vicariously realised* through his Son's death and resurrection, in which both freedom from sin and the law's purposed life have arrived. Through their pneumatological participation in Christ, by which they dwell 'in him' and he dwells 'in them', Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life functionally *replace* their own anthropological incapacity in freeing them from sin and condemnation, enabling them to obey and please God with the assurance that the indwelling Spirit will one day glorify their mortal bodies. Christ's substitutionary role is therefore expansive and ongoing, not to be limited solely to his death—though Romans 8:3 arguably presents the culmination of his obedience as a death in which sin is condemned as the axis on which the

whole soteriological process turns. Still, substitution embraces Christ's ongoing role for believers as well, who truly 'live' only insofar as Christ lives in them by his Spirit.

Believing participation in Christ, accordingly, does not involve a soteriologically-effective recapitulation in believers' experience of the soteriological process that transpired in Christ. Their final eschatological deliverance does not depend upon their experiencing the destruction of sinful flesh as a condition of sharing in his resurrection. Rather, the Spirit of Christ (who conforms them, throughout their lives, to his death and resurrection) grants them freedom from sin's domination in the present and assures them of bodily transformation in the future, whether they are biologically dead or alive at that time.

In the next chapter, we will turn to Christ's soteriological role in 2 Corinthians 5 which, as we shall see, evinces a similar understanding to what we have encountered thus far in Romans.

Chapter 4
Substitution & Participation in 2 Corinthians 5

4.1 Introduction

With our study of Romans complete, we turn in this chapter to 2 Corinthians, which Paul wrote shortly beforehand (ca. 56–57 CE) and which contains many of the same themes. Our approach to this letter will be the same as in the preceding chapters: after evaluating the common substitutionary reading of the text under consideration, I will offer an account of the soteriological function that Christ fulfils on behalf of others, before turning to consider the text's substitutionary and participatory motifs. As I will show, despite being put to a different argumentative purpose than in Romans, Paul's portrayal of Christ's soteriological role and his relation to others follows the same basic outline of what we have considered already in the preceding chapters. Christ's role chiefly concerns the renewal of the human condition through Christ's death and resurrection, which becomes functionally effective for others in place of their own natural agency, precisely through their participation in him. This serves Paul's argument in defence of his apostolic ministry, which asserts that neither he nor the Corinthians should regard each other according to natural modes of human perception ('according to the flesh'), but must view each other in light of what Christ has accomplished and now embodies within the human condition on their behalf: they are partakers in a new creation and, as such, are living emblems of God's fidelity to his promises to Israel—all because another, with whom they are united, died and rose for them.

4.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Implied Narrative Context of 2 Corinthians 5:21

Our first concern is with the soteriological function that Christ fulfils in 2 Corinthians 5:21, and the implied narrative that structures his role. As in previous chapters, I will begin with a brief overview of the relationship of this verse to its larger context, paying particular attention to how the overall argumentative intent of these chapters in the letter determine Paul's deployment of soteriological statements in 5:14-21. Then I will offer a critical evaluation of the predominant substitutionary readings of 5:21, assessing the soteriological function that they attribute to Christ in this verse before providing my own account. As I will show, Christ's soteriological role in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (as in the two preceding chapters) is not primarily concerned with how Christ's death provides forensic immunity from punishment, but with the divinely-provided remedy to the anthropological incapacity that sin has imposed on humanity. This serves Paul's argument, which concerns this saving action's epistemological ramifications for the Corinthians, who judge Paul's ministry 'according to the flesh' despite his sharing, with them, in the reality of the new creation inaugurated in Christ's death and resurrection.

4.2.1 Overview: 2 Corinthians 5:21 in Context

2 Corinthians 5:21 appears at a climactic moment in the extended argument of 2:14–7:4, in which Paul defends his apostolic ministry against a third party under whose influence at least some of the Corinthians have come.[1] These gainsayers have apparently called his apostleship into question, citing as evidence the constant hardship his ministry is facing, and have presented themselves as ministers approved by God over against Paul and his associates.[2] In response, Paul endeavours to persuade the Corinthians to evaluate him, his ministry and the members of their own community according to a new epistemology, defined by faith based on the eschatological events surrounding Jesus, which produce a situation in

1. There is no consensus regarding the unity and integrity of 2 Corinthians as a whole, but it is generally agreed that chapters 2-7 (specifically 2:14–7:4) constitute a discrete textual unit, with some debate as to whether or not 6:14–7:1 is native to this unit (as well as whether it is authentically Pauline). Despite the *prima facie* plausibility of some partition theories, none of them is without problems; for overview and discussion, see Guthrie 2015, 23-32.

2. For discussion of Paul's opponents in 2 Cor., see Harris 2005, 67-87; Blanton 2007, 180 (esp. *Forschungsgeschichte* on 109-21). Here Barclay's cautions regarding mirror-reading (made with respect to Galatians) apply; see Barclay 1987. For the purposes of our investigation, it will not be necessary to determine whether Paul's soteriological statements specifically contrast and subvert his opponents' claims about the nature of Jesus' death and resurrection.

which the same phenomena may be viewed in conflicting ways depending on how one regards those events.[3] This concern frames the sub-unit of 5:14-21, in which the letter's clearest descriptions of Christ's soteriological role appear.

At this crucial moment in the argument, Paul roots the new epistemology that he wants to invite the Corinthians to embrace in God's saving action in Christ. Expressing his wish to give the Corinthians cause to boast in the sincerity of his motives, he explains that his ministry is animated fundamentally by his perception of what has taken place in Christ's death and resurrection: 'The love of Christ constrains us, because we have made this judgment: that one died for all, therefore all died [εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον]. And he died for all, so that those who live would no longer live to themselves but to the one who died and rose for them' (vv. 14-15). This perception determines how Paul regards the recipients of his ministry: 'Consequently [ὥστε], we know no one from now on according to the flesh; even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, we know him in this way no longer. Consequently [ὥστε], if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation [εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις]. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come about!' (vv. 16-17). At this point, Paul turns to how this same redemptive action and its attending epistemology must likewise determine the Corinthians' evaluation of him and of his associates:

> Everything is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is [ὡς ὅτι],[4] God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their offences against them, and assigning to us the message of reconciliation. So we act on Christ's behalf as ambassadors, God making an appeal through us: we ask on behalf of Christ, 'Be reconciled to God!' He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God [τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ].

Verse 21 thus constitutes a climactic statement in this sub-argument, setting the stage for Paul's appeal to the Corinthians in 6:1-13 that they open their hearts to him and recognise the legitimacy of his office.[5]

It is not immediately clear, however, whether this verse should be seen mainly as the content of the apostolic appeal in the preceding verse, as paralleling Paul's statements about the apostolic vocation in the preceding verses, or as a general soteriological statement substantiating the epistemological point of the paragraph as a whole. Furthermore, the precise

3. Cf. 2 Cor. 2:15-16; 4:3-4, 7-14, 18; 5:7.
4. Following most translations. For discussion regarding the enigmatic phrase ὡς ὅτι in v. 19, see Garland 1999, 292-93; Harris 2005, 439-40.
5. So Barnett 1997, 315.

meaning of the statement is somewhat opaque: what does it mean to be 'made sin' or to 'become the righteousness of God'? In what sense do these events come about, respectively, 'for us' and 'in him'? As we shall see in what follows, interpreters who read this verse along the lines of the typical model of penal substitution are not wholly of one mind in their answers to these questions, and this raises further questions regarding the implied narrative framework within which Paul understands God's soteriological action through Christ to function.

4.2.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Typical Substitutionary Reading of 2 Corinthians 5:21

In what follows, I will summarise and critically evaluate the prominent substitutionary readings of 2 Corinthians 5:21, taking note of their assumptions regarding the narrative role that Christ's soteriological function fulfils. Here, as we shall see, interpreters who espouse a broadly substitutionary view (granted their many similarities) divide over the question of whether the phenomenon Paul describes is exclusively forensic or involves the ontological transformation of believers in relation to Christ. As I will show in my critical assessment, it is problematic to limit Paul's description to a purely forensic reality, and this judgment must in turn affect our conclusions regarding the implied narrative that he constructs around Christ in this text. Along the way, I will also take note of how various Pauline backgrounds (sacrifice, scapegoat, Isaiah 53) are thought to influence his substitutionary portrayal of Christ's soteriological role, showing that cultic concepts such as animal sacrifice or expulsion rituals exercise little if any direct influence on what Paul says at this point, and that a suffering servant motif (though arguably present) is a problematic *basis* for understanding Paul's portrayal of Christ's soteriological role specifically as regards substitution.

4.2.2.1 Summary

Most interpreters who read 2 Corinthians 5:21 in substitutionary terms view it as a classic statement of a forensic exchange that transpires between Christ and believers. As F.F. Bruce puts it, 'Paul has chosen this exceptional wording in order to emphasise the "sweet exchange" whereby sinners are given a righteous status before God through the righteous one who absorbed their sin (and its judgment) in himself'.[6] Murray Harris employs the language of substitution and representation to describe this view of Christ's soteriological role, which he

6. Bruce 1971, 211.

portrays with the imagery of transfer:

> Because of God's transference of sinners' sin on to the sinless one, because sin was reckoned to Christ's account, it is not now reckoned to the believer's account. This total identification of the sinless one with sinners at the cross, in assuming the full penalty and guilt of their sin, leaves no doubt that substitution as well as representation was involved. Jesus died a death under the divine wrath that was deserved by sinners.[7]

As Harris's description suggests, this transfer takes place through double-imputation: 'As a result of God's imputing to Christ something that was extrinsic to him, namely sin, believers have something imputed to them that was extrinsic to them, namely righteousness'.[8] Similarly, Paul Barnett writes, 'The words "become the righteousness of God in him" point to forgiveness, the reversal of condemnation. Here, then, is the objective, forensic "justification" of God to those who are covenantally dedicated to God "in Christ," whom God "made sin…"'.[9] To summarise the above stream of interpretation in terms of our definition of substitution as 'replacement in a functional capacity', Christ's death *replaces the deaths of believers in sustaining the penalty of sin*. This soteriological role is set within an implied narrative in which the sin of which believers are guilty necessitates their death, but through the imputation of their sin to Christ and of his righteousness to them, this burden is removed. He dies in their stead, and his own righteousness serves as the basis for their acceptance with God. As in earlier chapters, then, the main 'problem' that Christ's substitutionary role addresses is, as it were, on God's end: '*The resolution of the divine displeasure at sin* in the One who knew no sin being made sin is the basis of the divine reconciliation of those alienated from God by their sins'.[10]

A few more recent commentators, still interpreting Christ's relation to believers in substitutionary terms, have argued that the context demands more than a mere forensic exchange. George Guthrie prefers the language of 'transformational interchange' to that of 'transference' or 'imputation' for describing how this substitution benefits others in verse 21:

> Christ the sinless One, through identification with us, took sin on himself and died, serving as our sin sacrifice. We the unrighteous, through relationship with Christ, take on God's righteousness, are reconciled to God, and transformed as newly created, new-covenant people in the world. In other words, because of our identification with Christ, we as the new-covenant people of God are in right standing before God and are an expression of God's righteousness before the world.[11]

7. Harris 2005, 453.
8. Harris 2005, 455.
9. Barnett 1997, 315.
10. Barnett 1997, 315, emph. added.
11. Guthrie 2015, 315.

Similarly, Frank Matera argues that, while the verse in and of itself suggests an imputation of righteousness, Paul's preceding statement in verse 17 that those 'in Christ' experience a 'new creation' should inform our interpretation as well, as it 'suggest[s] that something transformative has happened to them in Christ'.[12] Mark Seifrid too reasons that the 'transfer' of believers into a state of righteousness, though undeniably forensic, nevertheless 'entails a change of being', and interprets the righteousness of God in Christ as a metonymy for the new creation and life that God has realised through his death and resurrection.[13] Charles Irons, on the other hand, reacts strongly against such notions, which he regards as an effort 'to bring in the idea of moral transformation' that has the effect of 'blurring the line between justification and sanctification'.[14] He argues that the aorist tense of the two verbs in verse 21 'support the consistently forensic reading of the verse' because they are suggestive of 'two completed judicial actions' which leave 'little room for the notion of process'.[15] For Irons, the forensic verdict that God renders for believers is the 'judicial basis' of their 'renewed moral life'.[16]

Consequently, there exists a degree of uncertainty in recent substitutionary readings of 2 Corinthians 5:21 about the precise nature of the 'problem' that Christ's ostensibly substitutionary role in verse 21 is addressing, which in turn raises questions regarding its implied narrative. The traditional reading in terms of forensic exchange presupposes that the basic problem is divine indignation aroused by humanity's guilt, whose removal from believers *subsequently* enables the newness of life that they experience (which the traditional language of 'sanctification' describes). This conscious sequencing is evident especially in Irons' above response to the more recent readings. Similarly, Harris writes that 'becoming' the righteousness of God in verse 21 'points to the change of status that accrues to believers who are "in Christ" and that is the *ground* of the "new creation"'.[17] On the other hand, Seifrid in particular lays great stress on the fact that 'Christ was made what we *are*—in order that we might become what he *is* in his resurrected life'.[18] This entails an *ontological* identification between Christ and sinful humanity through his incarnation and death, as well as their ontological transformation through him: 'Salvation consists in the translation of our being

12. Matera 2014, 145.
13. See Seifrid 2014, 260-68.
14. Irons 2015, 294.
15. Irons 2015, 291.
16. Irons 2015, 294.
17. Harris 2005, 455, emph. added.
18. Seifrid 2014, 263, emph. orig.

from the reality of "sin" that has possessed us, to the reality of God's righteousness in Christ. God, with his "placement" of Christ into our being, picks us up in Christ's death and sweeps us up into Christ's life'.[19]

Such language mirrors that of the participationist readings we have considered, particularly Hooker's notion of 'interchange'. But this raises precisely the question of *implied narrative*, as such language (at least as it is normally employed in participationist readings) is more concerned with the anthropological problem of sinful humanity's incapacity to live to God than it is with the theological problem of God's incapacity to forgive sinful humanity apart from the diversion of a commensurate punishment onto a substitute. Those interpreters who lay greater stress on the ontology of union with Christ in verse 21 still often speak of the basic 'problem' in the latter terms.[20] But the question may at least be asked: to what extent does Paul's description of Christ's soteriological role correspond to one or both of these emphases?

Before we can address this question, it is worth finally noting that, as in Romans 8:3, substitutionary readings of 2 Corinthians 5:21 often identify certain historical backgrounds as the source of Paul's substitutionary portrayal of Christ's death. Many agree that the Isaianic image of the suffering servant underlies Paul's description of Christ in these verses.[21] Sometimes, in conjunction with this, a levitical sacrificial background is thought to convey the substitutionary character of Christ's death,[22] and some even argue that ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν in verse 21 should be translated as 'made a sin offering'.[23] Here as in Romans 8:3, however, McLean rejects such readings (particularly those that speak of sacrifice), arguing that a scapegoat motif better suits the context.[24] But his analysis of the underlying soteriological mechanism mirrors many of the above views: Christ comes 'to stand in [humanity's] place and to participate in a twofold imputation: he receives the burden of humanity's sin while humanity receives God's righteousness'.[25] It is not clear, though, how this relates to McLean's assertion immediately beforehand that Christ assumes this burden through his *incarnation* rather than a forensic imputation at the cross: 'Christ is sinless only so long as he eschews human form. Once human, he is sinful'. In this respect, McLean's analysis

19. Seifrid 2014, 263.
20. e.g. Matera 2014, 144: 'Christ absorbed the punishment for humanity's sinfulness (though Christ remained sinless). Thus Christ becomes the object of God's wrath for sin in humanity's stead'.
21. e.g. Barnett 1997, 313; Bruce 1971, 210; Guthrie 2015, 313-15; Hughes 1949, 213-14.
22. See e.g. Guthrie 2015, 313-14; Seifrid 2014, 262.
23. See e.g. Bruce 1971, 210; Scott 1998, 141-42.
24. See McLean 1996, 108-13. McLean is followed by Finlan 2004, 98-101.
25. McLean 1996, 112-13.

unwittingly reflects the ambivalence of the current discussion of this verse among substitutionary interpreters: it is unclear how forensic guilt and the ontological condition of sinful humanity are, if at all, related in Paul's discussion. Meanwhile, according to McLean, '[t]here is no hint of Christ's subsequent resurrection, nor his triumphant return' which, he says, 'belong to a different paradigm of salvation'.[26] In what follows, I will critically evaluate these claims and address the issue of Paul's implied narrative.

4.2.2.2 Critical Evaluation

In evaluating the above readings, our main concern will be with the question of whether an exclusively forensic focus does justice to Paul's statement. The reason for prioritising this question is because of its bearing on the question of implied narrative: what is the basic *problem*, and how does Christ's soteriological function address it? If the purely forensic model is the only viable option for reading this verse, then this would suggest that Paul's main intent is to describe how Christ's saving role enables divine forgiveness in spite of guilt. A more anthropological emphasis, however, would appear to shift the focus to how Christ's action addresses the incapacity of the human condition. While there is no reason, in principle, to treat these as mutually exclusive alternatives, it remains to be seen whether 2 Corinthians 5:21 reflects one or both of them. In what follows, I will argue that the exclusively forensic reading suffers from a number of weaknesses, and that our assessment of Christ's soteriological function in this verse must keep primarily in view the ontological significance, both of being 'made sin' and of 'becoming the righteousness of God'. Finally, I will argue that none of the historical backgrounds that some scholars identify as the basis of Paul's substitutionary construal of Christ's soteriological function does justice to the ontological realism of Paul's statement.

Numerous considerations problematise a reading of 2 Corinthians 5:21 purely in terms of forensic exchange. To begin with, such a reading does not self-evidently constitute the most obvious interpretation of Paul's highly concrete language ('made sin'; 'become the righteousness of God'). Based on the normal usage of the verbs ποιέω and γίνομαι, our most natural assumption, unless there is evidence to the contrary, should be that Paul is actually equating the object of the verb ποιέω with its predicate and the subject of γίνομαι with its complement. The main reason that one encounters among commentators for avoiding this implication—namely, that Christ could not have 'really' been sinful, just as those 'in him'

26. McLean 1996, 113.

cannot 'really' be the righteousness of God—is easily contestable. As our discussion of Romans 8:3 has shown, Paul understands Christ to have experienced the sinful condition of humanity in full (albeit in obedience to God rather than disobedience), and so there is no warrant for supposing that the concreteness of Paul's language must be figurative here on account of Christ's 'sinlessness' (thus understood).[27] Moreover, as we shall see in the next section, the assumption that Paul cannot mean that 'we' *actually* become the righteousness of God rests on faulty assumptions regarding what such a claim even means: as I will show, the phrase arguably has the same meaning as in Romans, describing how those who are made the recipients of eschatological life in Christ (particularly the apostles at this point in the argument) really become the embodiment of God's own righteousness in that they manifest the fulfilment of his promised eschatological deliverance.

A second problem dovetails with our observations in the preceding chapter regarding Christ's direct and personal presence to believers by means of the Spirit. Despite acknowledging that the transaction takes place for those who are 'in Christ', the purely forensic reading effectively detaches Christ's 'work' from his 'person', especially when it gives conceptual priority to the forensic effect of Christ's action and makes eschatological life the sequel of this action. As we saw above, for Harris 'the change of status that accrues to believers who are "in Christ"…is the ground of the "new creation"'.[28] But this surely confuses Paul's picture: *being 'in Christ'* is the 'ground' of participating in the new creation, just as being 'in him' is the ground of becoming the righteousness of God in verse 21. Even if the righteousness of God is understood mainly in forensic terms, then, Paul's argument gives us little warrant for making one's reception of such a status logically prior to one's involvement in the new creation. To do this would be to ignore the fact that, for Paul, these realities co-inhere as a seamless unity *in the person of Christ himself*. This is why, as he tells the Corinthians in their earlier correspondence, Christ has become not only 'wisdom from God', but equally 'righteousness [δικαιοσύνη] and sanctification [ἁγιασμός] and redemption [ἀπολύτρωσις]' for those who are 'in' him (1 Cor. 1:30).[29]

Part of the interpretative difficulty at this point, I suspect, owes to the assumption that any concept of new creation or eschatological life in Paul's argument must be referring to what most protestants have traditionally meant by 'sanctification'—that is, an ongoing *process of*

27. *pace* Harris 2005, 451-52, who cites Rom. 8:3 as evidence for this understanding. Cf. also e.g. Barnett 1997, 313-14; Hughes 1949, 213-14.
28. Harris 2005, 455, emph. added.
29. So Seifrid 2014, 260-61.

character renewal that stands in contrast to the punctiliar, declarative verdict of 'justification'. Thus Irons simply assumes, in his response to Matera, that καινὴ κτίσις in verse 17 must refer to 'the renewed moral life' and argues that verse 21 must have forensic justification solely in view because the aorist tense of the verbs mean that their action does not involve 'process'.[30] This argument is already dubious on its own terms,[31] but more importantly, there is simply no reason to adopt the assumption on which the whole objection is premised. For Paul, the bestowal and reception of the Spirit is every bit as definitive and 'punctiliar' as justification, and indeed *explicitly coincides* with it in the earlier Corinthian correspondence, where he tells the Corinthians that 'you were washed [ἀπελούσασθε], you were sanctified [ἡγιάσθητε], you were justified [ἐδικαιώθητε] in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor. 6:11).[32] Likewise, in 2 Corinthians 3 (where the language of righteousness occurs within an old/new contrast analogous to that of 5:17), Paul's 'ministry of righteousness' (ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης) is synonymous with the 'ministry of the Spirit' (ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος) and characterised by eschatological 'glory' (δόξα). While it is arguably valid to distinguish the initial moment of justification from a subsequent process of character transformation such as we find in 2 Corinthians 3:18 (though 1 Cor. 6:11 problematises our use of the word 'sanctification' to describe this process), maintaining this distinction simply does not require that we evacuate the verdict of justification of any pneumatological import.[33]

Third, the effect of the purely forensic reading, ultimately, is to obscure the way in which 2 Corinthians 5:21 contributes to the *epistemological* claim that Paul is making. It is not, in other words, a detached soteriological statement thrown in for good measure, but reiterates 'the hermeneutical function of the Gospel in overturning human perceptions and judgments'.[34] The reason that neither Paul nor the Corinthians should regard anyone (including Christ) 'according to the flesh' (v. 16) is finally because God's redemptive action in Christ defies natural human perception by making the sinless Christ to be the very

30. Irons 2015, 291, 294.

31. Even if καινὴ κτίσις does mainly have a transformative process in view, the perfective aspect that the aorist tense imparts to the verbs in verse 21 still leaves them entirely capable of describing that process—it means only that the action is denoted as a complete whole, whether it involves process or not. Furthermore, given the subjunctive mood of γενώμεθα and its purposive function, it is grammatically possible that Paul is not claiming that the action has yet been completed, even though he describes it as a whole.

32. So Dabney 2001, 57.

33. On the tendency, in theology and exegesis, to ignore the relationship between justification and the reception of the Spirit, see Macchia 2010; cf. also Dabney 2001.

34. Seifrid 2014, 261.

embodiment of sin, and those who are 'in him' to be the very embodiment of God's righteousness, despite their continuance in corruptible flesh that would otherwise fall under the normal parameters of human judgment. While the purely forensic model can serve to make this point as well—God's forensic verdict declares believers to be other than what they actually are—this would weaken Paul's point, as well as ignore its epistemological implications regarding *Christ* (whose 'flesh', on the traditional view, is sinless). Moreover, even as a basis for epistemology, the purely forensic reading has the effect of severing Paul's assertion from the preceding argument, which describes the benefit of Christ's saving role to believers in highly concrete and participatory terms. As I will argue below, far from advancing the argument from a basically different standpoint, Paul's construction of verse 21 deliberately retrieves these earlier statements, and so must be read in light of them.

A final point to be made in criticism of the above views (and this does not apply only to those that adopt a purely forensic reading) is that their attempts to ground Paul's substitutionary portrayal of Christ's death in a particular Pauline background (sacrifice, scapegoat, Isaiah 53) are problematic in several ways. As some have argued, there is little warrant for understanding Paul's description of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:21 as a reference to the levitical sin offering.[35] The main difficulty with this view is twofold: first, it requires us to understand the two occurrences of ἁμαρτία in verse 21 (separated only by two words) in different senses, despite the fact that Paul's statement appears deliberately to equate them (i.e. Christ was made to be that which he did not know—sin). Second, sin forms a natural contrast with righteousness in the second half of the verse, whereas a reference to the sin offering disturbs this straightforward juxtaposition. There is little reason, then, to suppose that Paul is referring to Christ's death as a sacrifice in this verse, much less that this constitutes the basis for his substitutionary portrayal of that event.

Neither, however, does McLean's alternative cultic reading of the verse in terms of Mediterranean expulsion rituals explain Paul's imagery. To begin with, the fact that becoming the righteousness of God *in Christ* is the express goal of his being 'made sin' does not fit naturally with the image of a scapegoat: if anything, what is transferred in Paul's picture is not sin, but those who are joined with Christ and borne, 'in him', *out of* the realm of sin and *into* that of God's righteousness. Second, McLean's claim that Christ's assumption of the burden of sin happened through his *incarnation* encounters difficulty in that the recipients

35. McLean 1996, 108-10 offers a helpful summary of the basic problems; cf. Bachmann 1922, 272-74.

of Christ's action in verse 21 continue to exist in the corruptible flesh (v. 16) that constitutes the burden that Christ, as scapegoat, is supposed to have taken away. Third, as I will show below, McLean's denial that Christ's resurrection is included in Paul's picture is flatly wrong and, indeed, surprising in view of Paul's clear assertion that Christ is now the one 'in whom' others become God's righteousness. Finally, as I will also show in what follows, the syntactical and thematic links between verse 21 and the argument preceding it further problematise the scapegoat reading, since they reveal one of Paul's key assumptions to be that Christ's death functions in place of the deaths of others (as we have seen in previous chapters) precisely because it is made *theirs*. While this involves substitution, it is not of a kind that the image of a scapegoat naturally conveys.

Last of all, even if Paul has Isaiah 53 in view—this is surely possible, given the other clear Isaianic motifs in the passage[36]—this observation is of limited value as an *explanation* of Christ's substitutionary role in the passage, given the marked differences between what Paul describes and the soteriological role assigned to the servant of YHWH. As we shall see below, Christ's substitutionary role is effective for believers because it functions, together with his resurrection, *to capacitate them for eschatological life orientated around Christ, rather than themselves, as participants in a new creation*. While this arguably entails an understanding of Christ's death not *unlike* that of the Isaianic servant in that it involves his death functioning soteriologically in the place of theirs, other noteworthy features of this substitution go beyond what Isaiah describes, even if (as we shall see) Isaiah's larger implied narrative is important for Paul's argument.

4.2.2.3 Conclusion

The preceding discussion has shown that a measure of uncertainty exists among interpreters of 2 Corinthians 5:21 who espouse a substitutionary reading of Paul's soteriology regarding the exact force of his language in this verse. I have argued that Paul describes more than a purely forensic phenomenon and that this in turn must shape our perception of Paul's implied narrative. Along the way, I have also engaged with various (and sometimes competing) claims regarding the influence of various historical backgrounds on the apostle's substitutionary portrayal of Christ's redemptive role, showing that none of these backgrounds can rightly be seen to support the typical substitutionary reading of this text (or, in several cases, even to be present in the text at all). These considerations set the stage for our

36. See esp. Gignilliat 2007; Wilk 2005, 149-52; see below.

consideration of the specific soteriological function that Christ fulfils in this text, to which I now turn.

4.2.3 Christ's Soteriological Function in 2 Corinthians 5:21

In this section, I will establish the soteriological function that Christ fulfils in 2 Corinthians 5:21, as well as its implied narrative framework. Because it is the stated goal of Christ's being 'made sin for us', our discussion will begin in the second half of the verse, in which 'we…become the righteousness of God in him'. I will argue that, as in preceding chapters, Paul is chiefly concerned with the theological implications of the *anthropological* effect of God's saving action in Christ—specifically, how this action capacitates believers (and, as I will argue below, the apostles) for a new manner of life as sharers and agents of God's new creation in Christ. To 'become the righteousness of God' in Christ is to become, as in Romans, the recipient of the eschatological life that he has promised to his people, and therefore to be constituted as a living emblem of God's fidelity to the promise that lies at the heart of his covenant with them. For Paul, this undergirds his apostolic vocation as a minister of this covenant. Christ's being 'made sin for us', meanwhile, refers to his assumption of the sinful human condition and experience of the full consequences of that condition climactically in his death, in order to make the promised eschatological life available to others, 'in him'.

Our first goal, however, will be to establish precisely whom Paul identifies as the specific recipient of God's redemptive action, and how this determines the shape of his argument.

4.2.3.1 To Whom Does 2 Corinthians 5:21 Refer?

In what follows, I will establish how our understanding of the specific party or parties that Paul identifies in verse 21 ('us' and 'we') determines the scope of his statement's applicability. In other words, does Paul have in view Christ's soteriological function for all of humanity or, as some have argued, does he intend to describe more specifically how Christ's soteriological role determines Paul's sense of apostolic vocation?[37] If the latter is the correct view, does this mean that Paul's statement applies to the apostles *to the exclusion* of believers more generally? As I will argue in what follows, verse 21 most immediately refers to the apostles as the beneficiaries of God's redemptive action in Christ. Nevertheless, there are

37. For this reading, see See esp. Hooker 2008; Wright 1993; Wright 2013a, 879-85; cf. Keener 2005, 187. Both Hooker and Keener regard 2 Cor. 5:21 as applicable to believers more generally, even though Paul's point, in context, is specific to the apostles.

good reasons for thinking that Paul intends this statement to apply, at least by implication, to believers more generally.

Several features of Paul's argument in the immediate context and in the larger body of the letter favour our reading 2 Corinthians 5:21 as a specific reference to the apostles. In the verses preceding and following, the only cases in which the referent of the first-person plural is unambiguous are ones that have the apostles in view: this is clear in verses 18b, 19b, 20 and verses 1-12 of chapter 6. Verse 21 is flanked by first-person plural statements that clearly refer to the apostles, and there is no indication that in the course of the three verses from 5:20 to 6:1 Paul has abruptly shifted the referent back and forth. Meanwhile, in the passage as a whole there is no use of the first-person plural that must clearly refer to people more generally. Additionally, it is worth noting that Paul makes frequent use of first-person plural language throughout the argument of chapters 2-6, and in the overwhelming majority of cases this refers to him and to his co-workers. In two cases, Paul refers to 'all of us' (3:18; 5:10), but here a form of πᾶς appears precisely to alert us to the fact that a broader reference is intended. In both instances, moreover, he immediately relates this back to his own ministry (4:1f.; 5:11f.), and employs the first-person plural to describe it. In 4:13-14, moreover, Paul demonstrates that he is perfectly comfortable speaking of Christ's saving action specifically with reference to the apostles *and not others* except by extension, as the 'with you' (σὺν ὑμῖν) at the end makes clear.[38]

Another piece of evidence favouring the restricted reading is the structuring of Paul's statements in verses 18-21. These soteriological statements about Christ possess a recurring pattern, the elements of which we can label with A and B.[39] Paul describes God's redemptive action in Christ (A), followed by the apostolic *telos* of that action (B):

> Everything is from God, **[A]** who reconciled us to himself through Christ **[B]** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
>
> That is, **[A]** God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their offences against them, **[B]** and assigning to us the message of reconciliation.
>
> **[A]** The one who knew no sin, he made to be sin for us, **[B]** that in him we would become the righteousness of God.

In both verses 18 and 19 the second half of the statement clearly refers to the apostles, whereas the first half of verse 18 could be understood in a broader sense (v. 19 clearly refers

38. *pace* Gorman 2015, 247n83, who supposes that a restricted reference in 2 Cor. 5:21 would amount to a new sort of 'limited atonement'.

39. See Wright 2013a, 880-81 for a similar analysis.

to ‘the world’). Understanding at least the second half of verse 21 as a reference to the apostles, then, would be consistent with this pattern.[40] Although Paul’s description of God’s redemptive action in verse 19 refers more broadly to the ‘world’ in general, his use of the first-person pronoun in the preceding parallel statement (‘who reconciled *us* to himself and gave *us* the ministry of reconciliation’) almost certainly refers to the apostles in both instances: there is no reason to think that the ‘us’ whom God reconciled through Christ are other than the ‘us’ to whom he gave the ministry that Paul’s argument is defending. It is natural, then, to read verse 21 as a continuation of Paul’s portrayal of his own ministry, describing how God’s reconciling action in Christ benefits him particularly as one who, in turn, is called to minister this reconciliation to others.

At this point, however, it is important to recognise that Paul’s statement in verse 21, while in continuity with what immediately precedes it, also self-consciously evokes and retrieves the understanding of Christ’s death and resurrection articulated in verses 14-17. This means that, even if verse 21 specifically refers to the apostles, it nonetheless assumes a commonality between his situation and that of believers more generally. The next section will substantiate this with respect to the verse itself, but for now I note that Paul’s larger argument in the letter suggests that he does not intend to draw a sharp distinction between how Christ’s soteriological role benefits the apostles and how it benefits believers generally. Though Paul argues that the apostles are in some sense the unique mediators of God’s glory in Christ (2 Cor. 3:4-13; 4:1-6), he also stresses that all believers behold the same glory with them and are transformed by it (3:16-18). Similarly, though the apostles uniquely embody Christ through weakness and suffering, the same eschatological life is being reflected both in the apostolic sufferings and in the Corinthians’ benefit from them (4:7-12). The apostles are motivated in their work by things common to all believers—the proleptic possession of the Spirit guaranteeing bodily resurrection (4:13-5:5), an impending judgment according to works that ‘all’ must face (5:10). If we allow for the integrity of 2 Corinthians as a single letter, it becomes significant that Paul initially addresses the Corinthians as those who share in his suffering and comfort through Christ as an apostle (1:7). Finally, in earlier correspondence with the Corinthians, Paul has presented himself as an example to be imitated, and does so precisely in defence of his apostleship (1 Cor. 4:9-16; cf. 11:1).

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40. This undermines the logic of e.g. Matera 2014, 144, who supposes that the likelihood of a wider reference in the first half of the verse must mean that the second half is identical in scope. (On the scope of Christ’s death in 5:14-21, see below.)

Accordingly, even if Paul is referring specifically to the apostles, his statement does not apply to the apostles *to the exclusion* of believers more generally.[41] Though Paul in verse 21 wishes to influence how the Corinthians perceive him specifically, the soteriological basis of this new perception applies to all who are 'in Christ'.[42] Paul's final appeal to the Corinthians in the next chapter for mutuality of affection—'Our heart is wide open to you…open wide your own!' (6:11, 13)—thus finds its soteriological basis in chapter 5, where Paul demands that Christ's death and resurrection alter the Corinthians regard for him (vv. 18-21), just as it has altered his for them (vv. 14-17). Paul's statement both continues the train of thought begun in verse 18, while also adducing the understanding of Christ's death and resurrection in the verses that precede it. It is not a claim about a basically different topic, but *a particular application of the redemptive logic of Christ's death and resurrection to the apostles in general and Paul in particular*, providing for the Corinthians a portrayal of him and his ministry that balances with his professed understanding of the recipients of that ministry in verses 14-17. Our discussion of Christ's specific soteriological role in this verse in what follows will support this conclusion further.

4.2.3.2 The New Creation and the Righteousness of God

As noted above, our consideration of Christ's soteriological function in verse 21 begins with the second half of the verse, which consists in a ἵνα-clause identifying the goal of Christ's being 'made sin for us'—namely, that the apostles (and by extension, all believers) would be constituted as the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) in him. I will argue that Paul employs this phrase here, not primarily to denote the juridical status that God bestows on those in Christ through justification ('righteousness *from* God'), but the attribute of God's own character that he discloses in so doing.[43] In other words, Paul applies to himself what he says of Christ in Romans: as a recipient of eschatological life, he has become a manifestation, in Christ, of God's own righteousness—understood as his fidelity to his promises and covenant with his people.[44] Accordingly, Paul leans on the same basic christological

41. So Hooker 2008, 365; cf. also Hays 2005, 147-48.

42. As Schmeller 2010, 61 argues, Paul's 'we' language in the letter generally presupposes more than that Paul is merely an *example* for believers. Rather, 'Das Wir hat eine spezifische Funktion der Leserlenkung. Die Leserschaft wird nicht nur mit einer »repräsentative(n) Existenz« konfrontiert, sondern an dieser Existenz beteiligt, in sie hinein gezogen.' Accordingly, the seeming ambiguity of Paul's 'we' language is deliberate: 'Die Leser können sich—gleichsam versuchsweise—in manche Wir-Aussagen mit einschließen. Das Ziel besteht darin, dass sie dieses Wir auf Dauer für sich übernehmen' (Ibid.).

43. Contrary to the assumption of most interpreters; see, most recently, Irons 2015.

44. On the meaning of God's righteousness, see ch. 2 above (esp. §2.2.3.3).

assumption that constitutes the main thrust of his argument in Romans, namely that the risen Christ is the divinely-provided bearer and mediator of eschatological life to sinful humanity. The effectiveness of his death in the first half of the verse, then, should be understood with reference to this ultimate aim.

In order to demonstrate that the claim of verse 21b depends on the risen Christ's embodiment of God's righteousness, as in Romans, we must first pay close attention to the significance of the verse's structure, both on its own terms and in relation to the verses preceding it. Read on its own, the structure of the verse suggests that the righteousness of God is to be associated specifically with Christ's resurrection from the dead. The ἵνα divides the verse into two halves, the first of which describes a past event and the second its subsequently-attained goal: God made Christ to be sin (past), so that 'in him' a new and contrasting condition would now be available to others (present). The movement from Christ's being 'made sin' in the past to his being the one 'in whom' others become the righteousness of God in the present presupposes his own movement from death to life, and the association of God's righteousness specifically with the latter.

In addition to this internal consideration, the verse's syntactical similarity to the first of Paul's soteriological statements in the passage further suggests an association between becoming the righteousness of God and experiencing new life through Christ. As Michael Gorman observes, the syntactical structure of verses 15 and 21 is the same:

> [Christ] died for all [ὑπὲρ πάντων], so that [ἵνα] those who live would no longer live to themselves but to the one who died and rose for them [ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν].
>
> [God] made him who knew no sin to be sin for us [ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν], so that [ἵνα] in him [ἐν αὐτῷ] we would become the righteousness of God [δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ].

In these two statements, we find a main clause describing the death of Christ, followed by a purpose conjunction and clause describing its intended outcome, with an added emphasis on his resurrection. Gorman concludes: 'It would be contextually inappropriate to interpret 2 Cor 5:21 as anything less than a reference to new life in Christ. To "become the righteousness of God" is materially parallel to "no longer living for themselves but for the one who died and was raised for them."'[45] While the syntactical similarities between these verses on their own

45. See Gorman 2014a, 196. Gorman's purpose in making this connection is to argue that becoming the righteousness of God in v. 21 entails 'transformation' (which Gorman interprets in terms of theosis). Overall Gorman's reading is broadly compatible with what I argue in this chapter, but his emphasis on a *gradual* process of transformation is misplaced in this text, whose purpose is to make an appeal on the basis of what is already true of the Corinthians and of Paul. Additionally, the relationship between God's δικαιοσύνη, his word, and his truthfulness in the argument of Rom. (as seen above) shows that the phrase is best understood in a more

may not be quite as definitive as Gorman suggests, the distribution of qualifying prepositional phrases that balance the clauses solidify this impression. Paul's claim that Christ was made sin 'for us' (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) and that 'we' become God's righteousness 'in him' (ἐν αὐτῷ) retrieves corresponding elements in the preceding argument as well (vv. 14-15, 17). The significance of Paul's ὑπέρ-language will be considered presently; for now we note that the phrase 'in him' recalls verse 17: 'if anyone is in Christ [ἐν Χριστῷ], there is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come about!' To become the righteousness of God thus conceptually parallels not only new life orientated around Christ, as in verse 15, but participation in the *new creation* that believers enjoy 'in Christ'.[46] This suggests that, as in Romans 3, Paul here understands the *risen* Christ as the embodiment and manifestation of God's righteousness, such that those who are 'in him' and receive the life of the coming age 'become' that righteousness as well.[47]

Paul does not explicitly say *why* sharing in the new creation in Christ makes him an embodiment of God's righteousness. A consideration of the Isaianic themes and motifs that run through Paul's argument, however, suggests that his claim constitutes an apostolic variation on a theme he develops in Romans: because he is in Christ, Paul is (like Christ) both the embodiment and (as Christ's apostle) a minister of the fulfilment of God's covenantal promises, chiefly those concerning the eschatological deliverance of Israel and the nations. This is evident in Paul's use of Isaiah 49:8 two verses later, which Mark Gignilliat describes as the 'hermeneutical key' to the entire passage.[48] The cited text, in which YHWH's servant is described as the recipient of God's help 'in the favourable time' and 'in the day of salvation', follows the commissioning of the servant as a light not only to Israel but all the nations of the world, whose successful mission will disclose God's fulfilment of his promises to his elect people (Isa. 49:6-7). Hence, immediately after the cited text, the servant is 'given as a covenant for the nations' (LXX εἰς διαθήκην ἐθνῶν).[49] God's redemptive act through the

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specific sense than Gorman intends ('God's justice' in a general sense).

46. On 'new creation' in 2 Cor. 5:17, see Jackson 2010, 115-49, who offers a more balanced reading of this phrase than the exclusively anthropological reading of Hubbard 2002.

47. So Wolff 1989, 133: 'Durch ἐν αὐτῷ ist auch eine Verbindung zu V. 17 gegeben; daraus ist deutlich, daß Rechtfertigung als Befreiung von der Macht der Sünde Neuschöpfung bedeutet'. (The reading given here, however, challenges Wolff's assumption that *Rechtfertigung* is Paul's primary concern in v. 21b.) Further considerations (which reasons of space prevents us from exploring here) warrant this conclusion further—in particular, the implied cultic scene of ch. 3, in which the risen Christ, as bearer of God's glory, appears to fill a role analogous to that of the levitical mercy seat. On the importance of 2 Cor. for understanding Rom., see Young 1990; following her lead, Gorman 2011.

48. See Gignilliat 2007, 57-60.

49. Some argue that Paul understands himself as the servant of YHWH in 2 Cor. 6:2, his apostolic ministry bringing the fulfilment of what Isaiah prophecied. So e.g. Beale 1989; Wilk 2005, 151-52; in support of

servant will accomplish the promised 'comfort' of Zion (v. 13; cf. 40:1-2), and as a result 'all flesh shall know' that YHWH is Israel's saviour and redeemer (v. 26). The servant's mission in Isaiah 40–55 culminates in his suffering and death (52:13–53:12), which bring about the purposed covenant renewal (chs. 54–55). In light of these observations, together with Paul's earlier reference in 5:17 (thick with Isaianic allusion) to a 'new creation' in which 'the old things [τὰ ἀρχαῖα] have passed away; behold, new things [καινά] have come about' (v. 17), it makes sense to understand the righteousness of God with reference to the fulfilment of Isaianic promises concerning the renewal of Israel's covenant and of creation itself.[50] This comes about through Christ's fulfilment of the servant's vocation, mirrored then in the apostolic ministry of Paul and (by implication) in the lives of all believers.

If the preceding analysis is correct, then it suggests we should understand the specific problem that 2 Corinthians 5:21 addresses in terms similar to Romans 3:25 and 8:3. That is, we encounter in this verse a description of how God's saving action in Christ remedies the anthropological incapacity of sinful humanity, making them the recipients of eschatological life despite their continuance in bodily mortality. As noted in our critical evaluation of substitutionary readings, such an anthropological focus suits the overall thrust of the larger passage, which concerns the epistemological ramifications of being in Christ while still possessing corruptible flesh. Because of God's intervention in Christ, those who belong to him can no longer be known and evaluated 'according to the flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα), because this natural, empirical reality does not of itself convey the truth of what they are in him: participants in a new creation, who no longer live to themselves but to the one who died and rose for them (vv. 15, 17). While Christ's accomplishment lies in the background in the second half of the statement rather than in its foreground (which mainly concerns what 'we' become 'in him'), for this very reason he is shown to be the bearer and mediator of this renewed condition in which Paul and others now participate. In other words, Christ's assumed soteriological role in 2 Corinthians 5:21b is *to attain and mediate eschatological life through his resurrection from the dead and continued existence as the risen Lord*. This fits within an implied narrative whose primary theological concern is with God's fidelity to his

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a ref. to Christ, however, see Gignilliat 2007, 57-60. This affects the present argument only as a matter of emphasis: in either case, Paul's preceding discussion associates God's redemptive action in Christ with the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies concerning covenant renewal and new creation. Furthermore, Paul's understanding of his own apostolic mission, as we are arguing, is based on Christ's redemptive mission; this can be seen in Paul's allusion to LXX Isa. 53:12 in 2 Cor. 4:11, where he describes the apostles as 'being handed over to death [εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα]', just like the servant (παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον).

50. Cf. Isa. 48:6-8; 65:17; 66:22; Hays 1989, 171, 225-26n48.

promises to Israel, rather than with the coherence of his justice and mercy in dealing with guilt.

In the next section, I will consider how these conclusions should determine how we assess Paul's description of Christ's being 'made sin', which has this goal in view.

4.2.3.3 Made to Be Sin

With the above analysis in place, we may now return to the first half of verse 21. If the argument of the preceding section is correct, then we should most naturally view Christ's being 'made sin' as instrumental to the anthropological renewal that he mediates to others, since Paul explicitly identifies the latter as the purpose (ἵνα) of this action. In this respect, 2 Corinthians 5:21a thus stands in a logical relation to verse 21b comparable to the relationship between Romans 8:3 and 4: the attainment of eschatological life depends upon a divine action to overcome sin, which constitutes a barrier to this life.[51]

If new creation life in Christ is the goal of his being 'made sin', then it would seem that Paul is concerned with more than simply a forensic reckoning of sins to Christ. As Seifrid comments, the phenomenon Paul describes in this verse

> is irreducibly ontological: God made Christ *to be* sin, so that we might *become* the righteousness of God in him. Paul's declaration of the Gospel here cannot be reduced rightly to a mere work of Christ. Indeed, the exchange of "sin" and "righteousness" is the work of *God*, who has acted in and through Christ. Furthermore, it entails something more than *work*. It involves the very person of Christ, who, in his suffering and death, "was made sin" for us.[52]

Paul's argument thus warrants our reading this otherwise enigmatic statement in terms similar to his description of Christ's mission 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' in Romans 8:3: through a divine action, Christ becomes the very embodiment of sin's entrenchment in the human condition, the 'place' where it attains its full height and is definitively terminated for those who are identified with him.[53]

While this occurs climactically in his death, Christ's being 'made sin' should not be divorced from the purpose of his earthly life as a whole. As Hooker comments, 'we

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51. As we shall see in the next chapter (and as is widely recognised), Gal. 3:13's concrete description of Christ's 'becoming a curse for us' constitutes another close parallel.

52. Seifrid 2014, 260-61, emph. orig.

53. *pace* e.g. Wolff 1989, 132, who deduces from the fact 'daß Paulus nicht sagt: »Gott machte ihn für uns zum Sünd*er*« sondern: »zur Sünd*e*«' that 'Durch diese Ausdrucksweise wird die Sündlosigkeit Jesu gewahrt' (emph. orig.), comparing this statement with Rom. 8:3. But this understanding of Christ's *Sündlosigkeit* would appear to be in tension with the claim that Christ, by his death, underwent 'die Verhaftung der ganzen Menschheit...an die Sündenmacht' (Ibid.). The comparison with Rom. 8:3, moreover, ought to push our reasoning in the other direction: Christ's *identification* with sinful humanity receives primary emphasis (see 3.2.3.2 above).

should…be wary of driving a wedge between incarnation and crucifixion' at this point.[54] Nevertheless, Paul's use of the prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν indicates that he is concerned especially with the climax of this action in Christ's death on the cross, where this fundamental impediment to new creation and the manifestation of God's righteousness is removed.[55] Read on its own, it is not clear how or why this experience should be instrumental in making others the righteousness of God, but when the verse is understood in light of the Paul's earlier soteriological statements in the chapter, Christ's assumed soteriological function becomes more readily apparent. As we observed in the previous section, the balancing prepositional phrases in this verse retrieve various elements from the preceding argument. Coupled with a reference to Christ's earthly mission culminating in his death, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν in verse 21 recalls Paul's earlier assertion that 'one died for all [ὑπὲρ πάντων], therefore all died. And he died for all [ὑπὲρ πάντων], so that those who live would no longer live to themselves [μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς] but to the one who died and rose for them [ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν].[56] Similarly, in Paul's description of the new creation 'in Christ' in verse 17 (to which v. 25b alludes), the arrival of the 'new' (καινά) presupposes that 'the old things have passed away' (τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν), presumably in Christ's death. According to these earlier statements, Christ's death brings to an end an old mode of existence in which life is ordered to the self, and exchanges this self-centric old creation for a new creation in which life is centred around God as revealed in Christ.[57]

Read in this light, Paul's statement in the first half of verse 21 identifies the anthropological ramifications of Christ's soteriological role, namely *his full assumption of the sinful human condition and experience of its fatal destiny in death.* By fulfilling this role, Christ becomes the bearer and mediator of the eschatological life through which God's righteousness is disclosed. This primarily christological focus complements Paul's emphasis on the beneficiaries of Christ's action in verses 14-15 and 17, furthering his aim of undermining confidence in judgments rendered 'according to the flesh' in order to defend the validity of his suffering ministry. If Christ's being 'made sin for us' is the divinely-appointed

54. Hooker 1990a, 17. So also 2 Cor. 8:9 (as Hooker notes).

55. It is not entirely clear whether ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν should be understood adjectivally (with ἁμαρτίαν) or adverbially (with ἐποίησεν or the εἶναι), though one of the latter would appear to mirror the syntactical function of ἐν αὐτῷ in v. 21b more precisely. In either case, the context makes Paul's allusion to Christ's death clear.

56. I will consider the significance of Paul's assertion that Christ's resurrection was ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν in the evaluation of the substitutionary character of Christ's soteriological role below.

57. Tilling 2012, 185 rightly identifies 2 Cor. 5:15 and other such statements in the surrounding context as an instance in which Paul's portrayal of the 'Christ-relation' parallels the exclusive 'God-relation' that characterises Jewish piety of the second-temple period.

means by which God's righteousness is manifested in the world, then this suggests that Paul's Christ-shaped ministry will not conform to the world's evaluative standards. Rather, the weakness of flesh climactically revealed in the dereliction of the cross is the route to God's fulfilment of his promises, and Paul's ministry characteristically participates in this paradox (6:3-10; cf. 4:7-15).

Paul's argument at this point does not require that he explicate Christ's death with reference to its penal character, as he does in Romans 8:3. Nonetheless, the link that his argument assumes to exist between sin and death at least carries this connotation, particularly when viewed in light of his earlier statements regarding the old covenant in chapter 3 (whose old/new contrast he retrieves in 5:17). In 2 Corinthians 3:5-8, Paul portrays the old covenant ministry through Moses as a 'ministry of death' (διακονία τοῦ θανάτου) and 'of condemnation' (τῆς κατακρίσεως)—not because death and condemnation are inherent in the δόξα that this ministry mediates, but because Israel's sinfulness and hardness of heart under the old covenant made the glory of God shining from Moses' face unbearable (vv. 13-14).[58] The Corinthians, on the other hand, can behold the glory of God in Christ with unveiled faces and not be destroyed, but instead be transformed into its likeness (v. 18). Paul's argument in chapter 5 makes explicit the reason for this difference: they are made new 'in Christ', freed from the old order by his death and brought into the new by his resurrection. Accordingly, it is unsurprising that Paul would describe the saving death of Jesus in verse 21 chiefly with reference to *sin*: it is the fundamental barrier to the life-giving revelation of God's glory in the eschatological new covenant (to which the second half of verse 21 pertains, as we have seen). This implies that Christ's death, as an embodiment of sin, embraces the fate that threatens Israel under the old covenant: he endures the condemnation (κατάκρισις) that the glory of God imposes on sinful human beings, in order to bring into being a new anthropological state in which this glory rightly belongs.[59]

4.2.3.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have shown that Christ's soteriological function in 2 Corinthians 5:21 primarily concerns the anthropological incapacity of sinful humanity, which stands as a

58. See Hafemann 1995, 278-86.

59. A similar portrayal of sin and death as the barrier to eschatological life appears in Paul's earlier correspondence with the Corinthians, in which he says that 'the sting of death is sin', but the victorious Christ, who has died for sins and been raised as the firstfruits of a glorified eschatological existence, assures believers of the fact that they are not presently 'in' their sins, that bodily death will not mean their perishing and that they will receive an incorruptible existence like his. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 17-18, 20-28, 42-58.

barrier to the fulfilment of God's promises concerning his people. While Paul's statement is specifically intended as a description of the apostles as recipients of this fulfilment in Christ, this emphasis complements the broader focus of verses 14-17, and is not intended to describe the apostles *to the exclusion* of believers generally. In Christ, and contrary to the impressions of natural perception 'according to the flesh', the apostles are a manifestation of God's righteousness in that they both embody and minister to others the eschatological deliverance that he has promised. This eschatological deliverance, Paul says, has come through Christ's experience (climactically, in his death) of the corrupted anthropological condition that stands in need of it. To summarise his soteriological function in a single sentence, *Christ's incarnation and death function soteriologically to assume and terminate the corrupt human condition, in order to attain the eschatological life in the new creation that those who are 'in him' receive*. In the next main section, we will pose the question of whether or not the fulfilment of this role involves a relationship of substitution.

4.3 Substitution & Participation in 2 Corinthians 5:21

In this section, I will consider whether Christ's soteriological role in 2 Corinthians 5:21 involves his functional replacement of others, as well as their participation in him. As I will show, this text assumes a relationship of substitution comparable to what we have encountered in previous chapters, one that is more expansive than (and yet overlaps with) the typical model of substitutionary atonement. As also in previous chapters, this substitutionary role is premised upon the union of Paul and other believers with Christ, and so not only coheres with but requires participation. Moreover, despite the presence of participatory motifs in 2 Corinthians that involve clear elements of process and transformation (as opposed to mere identification with Christ), nothing in Paul's argument suggests that the experiences of participants in Christ share in the fulfilment of the soteriological functions that Paul assigns to Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing life.

4.3.1 Christ as a Redemptive Replacement for Believers in 2 Corinthians 5:21

We turn, first, to the question of substitution. In what follows, I will argue that Christ's death and resurrection, as well as his ongoing eschatological life, function for Paul (and, by implication, all believers) in a substitutionary manner in 2 Corinthians 5:21. This is evident especially in light of this verse's relationship to the preceding argument, which portrays Christ's relation to believers in substitutionary terms, precisely in describing their relation to

him as one of participation. The anthropological renewal that enables believers' share in eschatological life takes place, first and foremost, in Christ's own body, crucified and raised from the dead. Despite their continuance in bodily mortality, the relation of Paul and the Corinthians to *Christ* placed in a situation in which they already inhabit the new creation 'in Christ', because of the function that his death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life fulfil for them, in place of their own bodily agency and experience.

4.3.1.1 Christ's Substitutionary Death

Assessing the substitutionary character of Christ's death in 2 Corinthians 5:21 requires that we attend to the significance of Paul's ὑπέρ-language in the larger passage, which here qualifies his being 'made sin'. As I argued in the previous section, this language recalls Paul's earlier assertions about Christ's death in verses 14-15, where it serves to describe his soteriological function. Our concern is with the syntax and logic of the first of these statements: 'one died for all, therefore all died [εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον]' (v. 14). As I will show, the logic of Paul's statement assumes a substitutionary relationship between Christ and believers, even though the inferences he draws from this concerns their participation in him. If, as I have argued, verse 21 reiterates a similar underlying point (εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν), then this suggests that Christ's being 'made sin for us' describes more than simply the *benefit* of his death to others. Rather, his particular embodiment of humanity's sinful condition climactically in his death on the cross functions *in the place* of the deaths of others.

The substitutionary character of Christ's relation to 'all' in verse 14 is apparent in light of the verse's syntax and logical argument. Paul's statement juxtaposes Christ and others by emphasising, respectively, their individuality and corporeity: the death of 'one' (εἷς) determines the situation of 'all' (οἱ πάντες). The qualifying prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ πάντων, in combination with the inferential particle ἄρα, spells out why this death determines their situation: it was because the one's death was 'for all' that 'all' died ('one *for* all…therefore *all*').[60] Meanwhile, the aorist tense of the verbs ἀπέθανεν and ἀπέθανον brings

60. This rules out Dunn's interpretation, which ignores the ὑπὲρ πάντων entirely (as well as the aorist tense of the two verbs) and takes the ἄρα as Paul's empirical inference that the fact of Christ's death 'must' mean all are destined for death. See Dunn 1991, 40. Dunn's reading, moreover, fails to account for the place of 2 Cor. 5:14 in Paul's actual argument: Paul is not arguing that Christ's death discloses the inescapable fate of all sinful humanity (as though Paul needed to be told), but that the relation to Christ that the recipients of his ministry enjoy requires that he consider them, not in terms of what they naturally are in themselves, but in terms of what Christ is for them: dead and raised.

the two halves of Paul's statement into even closer relation, indicating their simultaneity: all died *when the one died*.[61] While Paul does not go into further detail as to why this is the case, the simplest explanation is that this simultaneity reflects the *identity* of the death of the one and the many. In other words, they died when he did, because they are related to him in such a way that his death *is* their death, functioning *as* their death in the capacity that Paul describes. Precisely because his death functions as theirs in this capacity, it functions instead of their own.[62] Understanding the phrase ὑπὲρ πάντων as 'for the benefit of all' or 'for the sake of all', on the other hand, produces logical incoherency, since the death of all simply does not follow from the fact that the one's death was for their benefit.

The alternative to this reading would be to view the death of the one and the death of all as an aggregate, with the death of all merely conditional upon the death of the one and caused by it.[63] But the aorist tense of both verbs, again, would require that we locate not only the cause in the past but its result as well. Such a reading would also require that we understand the death of all in something less than a literal sense: clearly the physical death of all did not transpire in the past, when Christ died.[64] But this is an unlikely reading of Paul's statement, which uses the same verb twice in rapid succession and without any indication of a difference in meaning.[65] To differentiate the two would weaken the force of his logic, which depends upon the closest possible correlation between the two halves of the statement: what is true of Christ is true of 'all'. Finally, this reading weakens Paul's emphatic numerical contrast between 'one' and 'all', since this distinction becomes the mere result of the logical (not even temporal) priority of the former over the latter. In short, 'one died physically for the benefit of all; therefore all subsequently died in a metaphorical sense' is a tortuous reading of what Paul says, and it is most natural to take his statement more straightforwardly as *attributing the death of the one to all*, because it took place on their behalf in a way involving *both* a functional replacement *and* their participatory identification with him.[66] Precisely on the basis

61. So Harris 2005, 421; Macaskill 2013, 234; Thrall 1994, 410.

62. So e.g. Bultmann 1985, 151; Harris 2005, 421; Martin 2014, 287-88. See also Breytenbach 1993, 68: 'In diesen Fällen [incl. Rom. 5:6, 8] geht es um das Sterben anstelle des Sunders. Die sündige Existenz wird vernichtet' (which he regards as a plausible reading of 2 Cor. 5:21 also).

63. So e.g. Barrett 1973, 168: 'on account of the death of Christ, all men became potentially dead'; cf. Martin 2014, 289.

64. So e.g. Powers 2001, 67 describes 'Christ's actual death as being the metaphorical death of all'.

65. A weakness in the interpretations of e.g. Lambrecht 1999b, 94-95; Martin 2014, 291; Matera 2014, 134.

66. Whether such a reading depends on a 'merely forensic' understanding of how people relate to the death of Christ (as Powers 2001, 64-65, 79-80 objects) is a matter we will address in due course, when we consider the means of replacement.

of this verse's 'participatory' element, then, we can see that Christ's death is substitutionary.

One objection frequently levelled against this reading is that ὑπὲρ πάντων in the sense of a substitutionary replacement would require the second half of the statement to read something like 'therefore all escaped death' rather than 'therefore all died'.[67] As we noted in in the preceding chapter, however, such an objection fails to appreciate that the replacement in question is *functional*, and does not entail the total dissimilarity of believers' experiences and those of Christ. (Even if we think purely in terms of traditional substitutionary atonement, this objection appears to rest on a rather superficial assessment of the object of its critique. It ought to go without saying that the reformers to whom traditional forms of penal substitution can be traced were well aware of the fact that believers still die.) All that substitution means in this instance is that *Christ's* death functions for believers in such a way as to relieve them of needing to fulfil the same function for themselves, whether by their own deaths or by some other means. As we shall see below, this objection faces the same problems with respect to Christ's resurrection in the next verse.

If, as I have argued, Paul's use of ὑπέρ-language in the preceding verses should determine our assessment of its sense in verse 21, then this leads us to the conclusion that Christ's being 'made sin for us' describes his fulfilment of the soteriological function that Paul describes in a manner involving his replacement of believers: his death removes the anthropological barrier to eschatological life, so that people who continue to possess corruptible flesh (in this case, the apostles) nonetheless share in this life and must be evaluated accordingly. One implication of this is that, whereas Christ's death undergoes sin's deadly consequences in a manner consistent with Israel's experience under the old covenant ministry of death and condemnation, the fleshly weakness and mortality of Paul (and of the beneficiaries of his ministry) are not to be regarded as an indication of their punishment for sin. Paul clearly implies as much two verses beforehand, in saying that the recipients of God's reconciling action in Christ do not have their 'offences' (παραπτώματα) reckoned to them (v. 19). Whatever their continuance in bodily mortality may mean, then, it does not indicate their continued existence under condemnation. This is because *Christ's* death, rather than any action of theirs, has made them participants in the new creation 'in him' by undergoing the full consequences of sin in their stead.[68] Thus we can agree broadly with

67. For this objection, see Furnish 1984, 327; Powers 2001, 61-62 (cf. Stanley 1961, 139).

68. We therefore do not need to follow Park 2015, 207 in treating posing the exclusivity and inclusivity of Christ's achievement as alternatives, though he is correct in observing 'dass es hier nicht um eine bloße Sündenübertragung...gehe'. But this need not be deemed the only soteriological phenomenon that can be

Powers' summary that 'Christ participated in all the consequences of sinful man's alienation from God, including death, so that believers might participate in the consequences of Christ's own act of righteousness', while rejecting his conclusion that this relationship is therefore not substitutionary.[69]

4.3.1.2 Christ's Substitutionary Resurrection and Life

The evidence we have considered so far supports our identification of Christ's bodily death as the content of a redemptive replacement. But Paul's use of ὑπέρ-language is not confined to his description of Christ's death: it includes his resurrection as well. Following his description of the death of one for all, Paul continues the thought with a view to explicating its purpose for believers whom, as I argued earlier, Christ's death capacitates for a new life lived 'no longer to themselves' but to Christ. At this point, however, Paul describes Christ as 'the one who died *and was raised* for them' (τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι). Because the article τῷ governs both ἀποθανόντι and ἐγερθέντι, we ought to read the enclosed ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν as equally describing both participles.[70] Paul thus expands his description of the vicariousness of Christ's role in the preceding verse to include more than his death. The logical corollary assumed in his statement, then, is that one rose *for* all, therefore *all* rose—a reality now reflected in their living no longer 'to' themselves, but 'to' the crucified and raised Christ.[71] His bodily resurrection thus replaces theirs in enabling their new life no longer orientated around themselves.

As with the texts considered in previous chapters, a common refrain among interpreters here is that the very fact that Paul uses ὑπέρ-language with reference to Christ's resurrection means that 'the idea of substitution *must* be absent'—the assumption being that substitution's constitutive feature is a discrepancy between the experience of the substitute and the party that is replaced.[72] Thus, for Schmeller, this verse calls into question a substitutionary reading of Paul's preceding claim about Christ's death, 'denn an ein stellvertretendes Sterben und Auferstehen kann nicht gedacht sein'; instead, Paul's ὑπέρ-language must be deemed to

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understood 'im Sinne einer exklusiven Stellvertretung ("Substitution")', as he supposes. On the inclusivity of Christ's substitutionary role, see 4.3.2.1 below.

69. Powers 2001, 82. Cf. 79-80. It is problematic to attribute a representative view to Luther and a substitutionary view to Calvin, as Powers does, in that this neat division ignores their shared emphasis on union with Christ and on Christ's identification with sinful humanity (not to mention Luther's strong substitutionary statements). See esp. Chester 2017, 175-217, 265-318; Van Buren 2002.

70. So Harris 2005, 423; Martin 2014, 290-91; cf. Bieringer 2013.

71. So e.g. Harris 2005, 421.

72. Powers 2001, 63, emph. added.

indicate '[d]as Geschick des einen schließt das aller übrigen Menschen ein' (presumably an impossibility for a substitutionary reading).[73] Since Paul indisputably assumes that believers will also be raised bodily with Christ—in the present argument he has already said as much (cf. 4:14)—it is concluded that Christ's resurrection cannot be regarded as substitutionary in any sense. Similarly Bieringer comments, 'It can certainly not have an exclusive vicarious meaning, since then Paul would be saying that Christ was raised in place of us to our exclusion'.[74] As I just noted, however, such objections rest on a flawed and imprecise conception of substitution that ignores its functional character. 'Exclusion' in what sense?[75] While it is true that the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement does not normally speak of Christ's resurrection in such terms, none of its own affirmations rules out the idea that Christ's resurrection, and not only his death, does something for others that they do not do for themselves. Nor, meanwhile, does the fact that Paul assumes believers will also be raised bodily with Christ obviate the need for Christ's resurrection to function redemptively for them in a way that their own does not. In Paul's description, believers are presently granted a certain redemptive benefit, not because their own bodies have already been raised or transformed, but because of how they are related to *another* whose body has been raised from the dead *for* them.

The gratuity that substitutionary readings normally attribute to Christ's death thus applies equally to his resurrection: in Christ, believers are freely and vicariously provided not only with their death to the old order but also with their entry into the new, *via* the crucified and raised body of Jesus Christ, which functions in the place of theirs as the basis of their freedom from sin and for eschatological life. On its own, this observation need not require a substitutionary translation of Paul's ὑπέρ-language, whether of 'in place of' or with the softer 'on behalf of': after all, a substitutionary death is no less 'for the sake of' its beneficiaries than an effective death of a non-substitutionary kind! Rather, what pushes our reading of this language in the direction of a substitutionary rendering in this case is the logical tethering of verse 15 to the verse that precedes it—a link to which the aforementioned objections are

73. Schmeller 2010, 322. *Stellvertretung*, in this instance, is being understood strictly in the 'exclusive' sense that this term normally carries in ordinary German.

74. Bieringer 2013, 174.

75. Bieringer (who refers repeatedly to the scholarship on *Stellvertretung*) argues, however, that Christ's death and resurrection are 'vicarious' even when 'inclusive' (as here). In my view, this serves more to show the weakness of the 'inclusive'/'exclusive' dichotomy itself than it does to nuance the concept of 'vicariousness' in exegetically useful ways. The problem is that, even on Bieringer's 'inclusive' reading, Christ's actions and experience still functionally replace those of the people he saves. Invoking this dichotomy thus masks the presence of an exclusive, substitutionary dynamic even within the inclusive reading Bieringer commends.

rightly attentive, but which demands precisely the opposite conclusion.[76] As I showed in the previous section, the logic of Paul's claim in verse 14 depends on the use of ὑπέρ to indicate Christ's redemptive functional *replacement* of believers by means of his death; accordingly, the reiteration of this point at the beginning of verse 15 and continued use of the same ὑπέρ-language with reference to Christ's death *and* resurrection should lead us to question our assumption that there is no sense whatsoever in which the resurrection of Christ can be vicarious. The problem, as just noted, is the imprecision of our categories: the fact that believers will rise from the dead (and, for that matter, that they will die in the first place) *simply does not preclude the vicarious functioning of Christ's death and resurrection in place of theirs* in a soteriological capacity. Below I will discuss further how the related participatory dimension of Paul's claim in these verses should impact translation, but for now, I simply note that Paul's use of ὑπέρ in these verses *both* with reference to Christ's death *and* his resurrection cannot merely indicate 'benefit'.[77]

As in the preceding chapters, the substitutionary role that Paul attributes to Christ in this paragraph includes the *ongoing* functioning of Christ's risen life for believers. To extend Seifrid's earlier observations, just as verse 21 'cannot be reduced rightly to a mere work of Christ' but must involve his person as well, so also it cannot be reduced only to an account of events that transpired in the *past*, but extends, particularly in the second half, into the *present* as a declaration about the living Christ, 'in whom' the apostles and other believers 'become the righteousness of God'.[78] This is reflected in Paul's earlier description of the gospel, not

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76. Some readings simply distinguish the sense of ὑπέρ in the first and second halves of v. 15, arguing that the final instance simply means 'for the sake of'. So e.g. Wolff 1989, despite claiming that Paul's use of ὑπέρ in v. 14 indicates that 'Christus starb vor Gott den Tod der Menschheit, den sie sich durch ihre Sünde zugezogen hatte' (121), nevertheless argues that 'auch die Auferstehung des Christus steht also unter dem Vorzeichen des Pro nobis (vgl. Röm. 4,25; 7,4; 14,9; 1. Thess. 4,14), sie setzt die neue Existenz des Menschen erst eigentlich in Kraft (vgl. Röm. 6,4.10f.; 1. Kor. 15,17). ὑπέρ hat jetzt also die Bedeutung »zugunsten von«; denn stellvertretend ist Christus nicht auferstanden' (122, emph. orig.). But Paul's argument provides us with no basis for such a differentiation: on the contrary, the reiteration of ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν at the beginning of the verse, coupled with the appearance of Christ's death in the latter half of the verse modified by the same preposition (τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι), strongly suggests that ὑπέρ is being used in precisely the same sense as in the preceding occurrences.

77. This observation also coheres well with Paul's use of ὑπέρ in reference to his own ministry several verses later: 'on Christ's behalf' (ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ), Paul and his associates 'act as ambassadors' (πρεσβεύομεν) and 'plead' (δεόμεθα) with their hearers to be reconciled to God (v. 20). Here, as Park 2015, 203n31 observes, 'Die Doppeldeutigkeit der Präposition weist auf beide Aspekte der Stellvertretung hin, die hier zusammen enthalten sind'; thus, '[a]ls Beauftragter, das Wort der Versöhnung zu verkündigen...nennt sich Paulus "Gesandten", der "für Christus/an Christi Statt" das apostolische Amt der Versöhnung ausführen soll.... Dass er "für Christus/an Christi statt" bittet, impliziert wieder seine apostolische Autorität als Repräsentant Christi' (203). I will argue below that, in view of the particpatory motifs present in Paul's argument, his use of ὑπέρ with ref. to Christ in this context should be understood to carry the same dual meaning.

78. Cf. Seifrid 2014, 260-61.

primarily as an account of certain past events, but as an announcement of Christ himself—'the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God' (4:4). As the mediator of eschatological life, Christ does not cease to be the *unique* bearer of that life which he imparts to others. To employ John Barclay's language, their existence 'in Christ' is irreducibly 'eccentric' or 'ectopic'[79]—even as they inhabit the centre and *topos* in question, and he inhabits them! This is why, in Paul's earlier argument, the 'life' that is manifested in the apostles and those to whom they minister is properly *Christ's* life rather than their own (4:10-11), and why the knowledge that this manifestation of Christ's life produces in them is specifically 'the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ*' (vv. 4, 6). While this relationship of dependency is all the more pronounced in the present time as Paul and other believers continue in corruptible flesh, neither are we given any indication that he thinks this dependency will ever cease, or that the final destiny of believers will locate them anywhere other than ἐν Χριστῷ, such that the eschatological life they possess becomes intrinsically theirs in the same sense that it is his.

While 2 Corinthians 5:21 does not directly address the latter issue—Paul's main point, in support of the immediate argument, concerns what he has *already* become in Christ—it at least presupposes that *Christ's life replaces the natural life of those who are 'in him' as the means by which they presently live to God and embody his righteousness.* This is precisely why they must not regard each other 'according to the flesh' (or, we might say, according to what they are 'in themselves', as opposed to what they are 'eccentrically' or 'ectopically' in Christ). In certain respects, this is the most all-encompassing substitution presupposed in this text, as it constitutes the ultimate goal of God's saving action, to which the past events of Christ's death and resurrection are ancillary. God's reconciling purpose, attained in the new covenant and creation mediated in Christ, is *to become the very life that his people live* by redemptively *replacing* the life of their mortal flesh with his own Spirit and manifesting his righteousness in so doing. Although Paul's rhetorical aims do not require that he develop this theme in 2 Corinthians at any length, it clearly occupies a significant place within the deep structure of his thinking as regards Christ's soteriological role.[80]

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79. See Barclay 2015, 500-03; Barclay 2013, 65.

80. As we shall see in the next chapter, this theme is explicit in the argument of Galatians (see 5.3.1.2 below). See also 3.3.1.2 above for more detailed treatment of Christ's ongoing substitutionary role, which in Rom. 8 lays added stress on his active agency as an intercessor at the right hand of God (v. 34), and the intercessory role of the Spirit within believers (vv. 26-27).

4.3.1.3 Conclusion

In this section, I have shown that Paul's portrayal of Christ's soteriological function in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (as well as in the argument that precedes it) depends upon a substitutionary relationship between Christ and others. Not only in his death, but equally in his resurrection and ongoing life, Christ is the bodily means by which believers in general and Paul in particular attain to eschatological life, which they enjoy in union with him. Christ's redemptive replacement of believers provides precisely the substantiation that Paul's argument needs: he and believers should not regard each other according to the flesh, because their status and condition are dependant, not on their own flesh, but on Christ's crucified and raised body which functionally replaces theirs, bestowing upon them what Christ has achieved even now, despite their continuance in bodily mortality. In the next section, I will consider how related participatory motifs in the same passage should inform our understanding of how Paul regards such a relationship as possible.

4.3.2 Participation in Christ as a Means of Replacement

Having considered Christ's role as a redemptive replacement in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, we turn finally to related motifs of participation in the same text. I will show that, as in previous chapters, believers' participation in Christ is the means by which Christ replaces them in the soteriological capacities identified above. In this text the logical relation between substitution and participation is made especially clear, and runs in the opposite direction of what the typical model of substitutionary atonement normally assumes: participation in Christ is constitutive of his substitutionary role for others, and not the reverse. As I will also show, Paul's characterisation of believing participation in Christ in the larger argument of 2 Corinthians does not entail the sort of recapitulative participationism that precludes his substitutionary role in relation to others.

4.3.2.1 Participation and Paul's Soteriological Use of ὑπέρ-Language

Our preceding discussion has already served to demonstrate the unitive and participatory character of Christ's substitutionary role, even as its radical exclusivity is maintained: the death, resurrection and life through which Paul is able to become and be the righteousness of God are available to him only 'in Christ', whose experience of being 'made sin' obtains the eschatological life that Paul now enjoys. Moreover, as Paul's preceding argument makes clear, this participatory union means that the death and resurrection on which this new state

of affairs is based *replace* the natural agency of believers precisely in becoming functionally *theirs*: *they* are dead and now alive again to Christ because *Christ's* bodily death and resurrection fulfil this soteriological function for them in place of their own bodies. Even as Christ's substitution is radically exclusive, then, it is in another respect radically inclusive.

Among the various texts considered in this dissertation, 2 Corinthians 5 is of particular importance for our discussion of participation in that Paul's argument here more clearly delineates the logical relationship between Paul's participatory language and his substitutionary use of ὑπέρ-language. In verse 17, Christ's soteriological role for others is integrally related to their being 'in' him: '*consequently*, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation' (ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις). The combination of the ὥστε with the conditionality of Paul's statement establishes a logical relation between a person's being ἐν Χριστῷ and his redemptive action's being ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν in the sense described in verses 14-15 (i.e. as a functional replacement). *Because* Christ's death and resurrection function in place of all as the death of all and their entry into new life, he knows that being 'in Christ' makes one a participant in the new creation.[81] A similar logical relation implicitly recurs in verse 21, where Paul says that Christ's being 'made sin *for us*' took place '*so that* we would become the righteousness of God *in him*' (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν…ἵνα…ἐν αὐτῷ). The question is what sort of logical relationship between 'in Christ' and 'for all/them/us' verses 17 and 21 implies. Specifically, is it more appropriate to say that being 'in Christ' is the consequence of death's being 'for' others, or the reverse—that his death possesses this character in relation to others because they are 'in him'?

At first glance, verse 21 might appear to suggest the former, since ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν precedes ἐν αὐτῷ and is linked with it by a ἵνα. As in verse 15, however, Paul's point is not to *confine* these qualifying phrases to their respective 'sides' of the statement. As we have seen, Christ's resurrection, which realises the eschatological life by which others become God's righteousness, is as much 'for them' (ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν) as Christ's death; similarly, in verse 17, being 'in Christ' means not only that one experiences a new creation, but also that 'the old

81. Though debate understandably exists over whether or not ἐν Χριστῷ and related phrases *always* carries a locative nuance, the fact that in verse 17 this phrase is directly predicative of 'anyone' (with the copula implied) means that it cannot be a dative of means in this instance. On the theme of union with Christ and Paul's 'in Christ' language, see esp. Campbell 2012; Macaskill 2013; Thate et al. 2014. Campbell in particular insists that we not take the locative meaning for granted in every use of the phrase, but regards some instances as denoting merely a dative of means. See Campbell 2012, 25-27, 67-199. In verse 19, ἐν Χριστῷ could naturally be read as a dative of means with καταλλάσσων, though this is disputed because of the phrase's proximity to ἦν. For discussion of the phrase θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, see Harris 2005, 440-43; Martin 2014, 313-14; Thrall 1994, 432-35.

things have passed away' through Christ's death. Rather, the reason for the ordering in verse 21 (as, again, in v. 15) is to draw out the temporal priority of Christ's saving death for the apostles, who would not be able presently to enjoy eschatological life were it not for his prior willingness to be 'made sin' in his death, and to draw a striking juxtaposition between his suffering 'for [them]' and their benefit 'in him'.[82] Most importantly, the *conditionality* of Paul's statement in 5:17 and its logical entailments (i.e. the old has *not* passed away, and the new has *not* come for those who are not 'in Christ') indicate that the 'for-ness' of Christ's action is *premised* on their union with him, not the reverse: *if* people are 'in Christ', his death and resurrection alike function redemptively in this relation to them.[83] I conclude, then, that participation in Christ is *logically prior* to his substitutionary relation to others in Paul's description of his soteriological role. In other words, it is *because* one is in Christ that his fulfilment of these functions replaces one's own, and not the other way around.

This, as we have seen in both the present and the previous chapters, contrasts with the normal assumptions of many traditional substitutionary readings, which regard Christ's substitutionary role as pertaining to a preliminary (and often exclusively forensic) work from which participation in Christ is thoroughly distinct.[84] It also contrasts with the assumption of most commentators that the 'all' to whom Paul refers in verse 14 denotes all of humanity rather than all believers.[85] The unpopularity of this position, one suspects, is based partly on the supposition that this would amount to something like a reformed view of 'limited

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82. Cf. similar juxtapositions in 2 Cor. 4:12 and 8:9.

83. This contrasts with the reading of e.g. Schmeller 2010, 326, who takes Paul's parallel ὥστε-clauses as an expansion (*Ausweitung*) of Paul's claim in vv. 14-15: 'Nicht nur die Einschätzung der Mitmenschen ändert sich, sondern der ganze Mensch, der »in Christus« ist, d.h. an der Schicksalsgemeinschaft mit ihm teilhat (vgl. V. 14), wird von Grund auf neu geschaffen'. But this does not do justice to the logical relationship that these clauses indicate: Paul's deduction, made in light of vv. 14-15, is *premised* on the conditionality of one's being 'in Christ' (ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ). If this conditionality does not already apply prior to v. 17, its introduction at this point would serve only to destabilise the logic of Paul's argument by confining his epistemological claim to a subset of the group he has supposedly described prior to this point.

84. Whether this in fact coheres with the views of the reformers is, of course, capable of question. The oft-quoted opening of book 3 of Calvin's *Institutes*, for instance, would seem to imply that the substitutionary character of Christ's soteriological role is in at least some sense dependent upon participatory union with him.

85. For the universal reading, see Barrett 1973, 168; Furnish 1984, 327-28; Garland 1999, 278-79; Guthrie 2015, 305-06; Harris 2005, 420-22; Witherington 1995, 394. For the restricted reading, Hafemann 2000, 240-41 (including n.9; cf. Bruce 1971, 207); Martin 2014, 289-92. The restricted reading is further supported by the fact that (1) the only solidarity in which Paul clearly situates non-believers is that of Adam, not Christ (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22), and whenever he speaks of people dying in some form of solidarity or identification with Christ, he is always speaking of believers (Rom. 6:1-11; 7:1-6; 14:7-9; Gal. 2:19-20; Col. 2:20; 3:3; 1 Thess. 4:14; 5:10); (2) Rom. 14:15 and 1 Cor. 8:11 demonstrate that Paul can use the descriptor 'one for whom Christ died' as a synonym for a believer, and the rhetorical force of these statements is nullified if this descriptor is broadened to include all humanity; (3) though at points he does describe how his apostolic ministry appears to outsiders (cf. 2 Cor. 2:14-17; 4:3-4), Paul's argument in 2 Cor. is more generally concerned with his relation to the direct recipients of his ministry (4:12-15; 5:11-13; 6:1-3, 11-13; 7:2-4), and in the immediate context his concern is quite specifically with his and the Corinthians' mutual relations.

atonement'.[86] While the latter issue lies beyond the concern of the present study, it is worth noting that the explanation I have offered of Christ's soteriological role in this and the preceding chapters circumvents some of the difficulties that could potentially arise from this view. If the reading that I have offered is correct, then we are arguably mistaken to think that Paul assumes a *quantitative* correspondence to exist between sin and Christ's death, such that the degree of his sufferings is a function of the number of sins his death includes and the magnitude of the penalty that pertains to each of them.[87] Put differently, nothing that we have seen in Paul's writings suggests that what Christ suffered constitutes the *sum total* of what should have befallen individual sinners, such that its intrinsic significance would seem to be diminished by the limitation of its scope (since he would be suffering 'for fewer sins'). Rather, Paul assumes that a *qualitative* correspondence exists between the fate that Christ experienced and that which faces adamic humanity in general and the elect in particular; in saying that his experience becomes functionally effective only for some and not all in no way diminishes the inherent significance of his saving action. It is simply to delineate the scope of this action's substitutionary *function*—and in a way that should not be controversial, as it is perfectly clear to most interpreters of Paul that his soteriological action is finally effective *only* for those who are 'in Christ'.[88]

As with the texts considered in previous chapters, then, the participatory features of Paul's soteriological statements in 2 Corinthians 5 fit Constantine Campbell's description of participation in Christ as 'gracious inclusion in the achievements of another': Christ's agency

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86. Additionally, it might seem to problematise certain of Paul's assertions regarding Christ's soteriological role: if participation in Christ is *constitutive* of Christ's substitutionary role, how can he go out of his way to stress that '*while we were still sinners*, Christ died for us [ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν]' (Rom. 5:8)? Addressing this in detail lies beyond the scope of the present study, but I would argue that Paul's understanding of predestination is integral to his ability to make such assertions, whatever his understanding of the specific 'mechanics' of this divine act. Cf. Rom. 8:29-30; 9:22-24a; also Eph. 1:4-5, 11, whether taken as Paul's own articulation of his understanding or others' interpretation of it.

87. It is worth noting that the Reformed tradition itself exhibits a degree of ambivalence on this issue. Compare e.g. the following statements: Hodge 1874, 471: 'As the satisfaction of Christ was not pecuniary, but penal or forensic; a satisfaction for sinners, and not for those who owed a certain amount of money, it follows…[t]hat it does not consist in an exact *quid pro quo*, so much for so much…. [Christ] did not suffer either in kind or degree what sinners would have suffered. In value, his sufferings infinitely transcended theirs'. Owen 1967 [1647], 269-70: 'It was a full, valuable compensation, made to the justice of God, for all the sins of all those for whom he made satisfaction, by undergoing that same punishment which, by reason of the obligation that was upon them, they themselves were bound to undergo. When I say *the same*, I mean essentially the same in weight and pressure, though not in all accidents of duration and the like' (emph. orig.); cf. 163-74.

88. Exceptions can be noted, of course. E.g. Best 1987 understands Christ's resurrection in 2 Cor. 5:15 also to apply to all of humanity, so that they have received new life and reconciliation with God, 'though they may not yet have realized it' (55; cf. 51-52, 54-55)—a thoroughly untenable reading, in view of Paul's claims about the condition and fate of unbelievers, not least in 2 Cor. itself (cf. 4:3-4). As Dunn 2003, 323 remarks, 'Paul had no concept of the unconscious or unintentional Christian. He did not think of all men and women as willy-nilly "in Christ," whether they want to be or not, whether they know it or not'.

and experiences fulfil a soteriological function for believers and the apostles in place of their own agency and experiences, and *precisely for this reason* can be identified as *theirs*.[89] Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life belong to those for whom the replacement occurs, functioning as theirs in the capacity of attaining eschatological life through sin's condemnation. It remains, however, for us to test this claim against the recapitulative reading of Paul's participationism that we have considered in the preceding chapters.

4.3.2.2 Recapitulative Participationism in 2 Corinthians 5:21?

As I observed in the dissertation's introductory chapter, substitution and participation come into conceptual conflict to the degree that the latter encroaches on the *functions* of the former. Applied to the exegesis of Paul, this means that, to the degree that the actions and experiences of believers share or take part in fulfilling the soteriological function that Christ's actions and experiences fulfil, he is not their substitute, since substitution entails precisely the functional *replacement* of the one with the other. For this reason (and the argument of this and the preceding chapters have borne this out exegetically), a mere 'sharing of experiences' between Christ and believers does not rule out the possibility that his own experiences fulfil a function in place of theirs. Rather, the reading of Pauline participationism that most clearly rules out Christ's substitutionary role is the 'recapitulative participationism' best represented in the work of James Dunn—a view that sees the replication of Christ's experiences in the lives of believers as *sharing* (i.e. participating) in the soteriological function that Christ's own experiences fulfil. Thus Dunn cites 2 Corinthians 4:7–5:5 in support of the claim that 'the death of "the old nature", of "the body of sin" is not accomplished in an instant. Rather it is a lifelong process, only completed at the resurrection of the body'.[90]

In what follows, I will evaluate this reading in light of how Paul describes durative processes of participation in the argument of 2 Corinthians, as well as death, mortality, resurrection bodies and how they are received.[91] I will demonstrate that, as in Romans, Paul assumes the sole condition of eventual glorification with Christ to be the possession of the eschatological life of Christ (the Spirit), and not the recapitulation of a process analogous to Christ's own dying and rising. While the presence of the Spirit does conform believers to Christ through a transformative process, and while Paul does indeed take it for granted that

89. Cf. Campbell 2012, 351.
90. Dunn 1991, 47.
91. On the texts considered below, see esp. Matera 2002.

physical death is the destiny of mortal flesh, it does not follow from these that he posits a soteriological scheme *requiring* the death of believers, or that their death *functions* to condemn or deal with sin as a prerequisite to the attainment of eschatological life. Rather, their present conformity to Christ, not least in suffering, reveals that they are already partakers in the life to which he has attained in his death and resurrection, and therefore destined for final, bodily transformation into his likeness at his return. Consequently, the recapitulative reading of Pauline participationism fails in 2 Corinthians, and does not challenge the reading of Christ's redemptive replacement offered in this chapter.

The first piece of evidence we will consider consists in two related statements at the end of chapters 2 and 3, where Paul describes the apostles as Christ's 'fragrance' (εὐωδία), variously regarded by believers and unbelievers as a fragrance 'from death to death' (ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον) and 'from life to life' (ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωήν; cf. 2:15-16). A similar expression appears in 3:18, where Paul describes the apostles and all believers together being transformed 'from glory to glory' (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν) by the Spirit as they look at Christ. In both instances, Paul's concern is mainly with the positive sense in which the apostles and believers in general experiencing transformation: they are becoming more and more a fragrance of Christ's life, and being transformed more and more into his likeness.[92] Those who perceive their transformation in a negative light, as a destructive process of entropy, are mistakenly focussed on what is seen rather than what is unseen (cf. 4:16-18). In neither of these cases is there any indication that the process Paul has in view requires any particular scenario concerning the believer's suffering and/or death. Rather, believers are already encountering Christ's eschatological glory, and can anticipate sharing in it more and more fully as they continue to live 'in him'. This happens, quite simply, because they possess the Spirit of Christ (καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος). Neither of these passages, then, support the claim that believers must undergo a process of dying in order to attain eschatological life.

The second piece of evidence that is significant for our discussion is 4:16-18, where Paul expresses confidence that 'even if our outer man [ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος] is wasting away, our inner one [ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν] is being renewed day by day', and that the present suffering is 'producing for us [κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν] an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison'. While

92. The present and continuous and nature of the action described with μεταμορφούμεθα and its connection with the phrase ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν makes it unlikely that Paul is referring to believers' transition from the glory of the old covenant to that of the new (as in Duff 2008; see the reply of Lambrecht 2009). Such a reading also fails to recognise that Paul's earlier discussion of the glory of the two covenants does not contrast two *different* glories, but the veiling and unveiling of the *one* divine glory that each covenant mediates.

it may be tempting to hear in Paul's use of κατεργάζομαι an assumption that the destruction of his 'outer man' is instrumental in his reception of glory, this is surely an excessive reading.[93] Paul's point is not to summarise a necessary soteriological process that his body must undergo in order to be glorified, but to explain his basis for hopefulness, which *does not depend* upon the condition of his mortal flesh: *even if* (εἰ καὶ) this is happening outwardly and empirically, the truth is that Paul is actually being made alive, not that he is being killed. Meanwhile, the twin processes of wasting away and renewal proceed side by side, without any hint from Paul that the former is instrumental to the latter. Nor is it clear that the outer man's 'afflictions', which Paul goes out of his way to minimise in comparison with the coming glory (τὸ…παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως), effect a process of condemnation that Paul's old nature must undergo in order to experience glorification. It is more natural to hear, simply, a reference to the character of the coming glory as a reward for the sufferings endured—a notion right at home in Jewish eschatological expectation.[94]

The third piece of evidence for us to consider is Paul's description of his apostolic ministry in 4:7-12 in terms of its weakness, 'always carrying around the dying [or 'deadness': νέκρωσιν] of Jesus in the body, so that [ἵνα] the life [ζωὴ] of Jesus would be manifested in our body', and as being 'always…handed over to death because of Jesus, so that [ἵνα] the life of Jesus would be manifested in our mortal flesh' (vv. 10-11). Here the instrumental relationship between carrying the dying of Jesus and the manifestation of his life is clear (noting the two ἵνα-clauses). But it is unlikely that the manifestation of Jesus' life in Paul refers to eschatological glorification, since his whole point in the passage is how his ministry *presently* possesses a 'treasure in clay jars' in order to magnify the power of God (v. 7).[95] His repeated language of 'manifestation' better fits this reading as well, since it suggests the disclosure of something already in existence, rather than its arrival. So, through the sufferings of the apostles, which are met with the sustaining power of God in providing for them and rescuing them from destruction (vv. 8-9), Christ discloses himself as the risen Lord who was 'crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God' (cf. 13:4). The apostolic ministry thus

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93. It may surely be granted that the θλῖψις is 'instrumental' in conformity to and identification with Christ (on which see Matera 2002, 399-400). But nothing Paul says suggests that this conformity is identical with the 'wasting away' of the outer man *as a soteriological means of destroying the sinful condition*.

94. See Kirk 2008, 14-32.

95. The only other occurrence of νέκρωσις in the NT is in Rom. 4:19, where it does not denote a process of dying, but the 'deadness' of Sarah's womb. Despite significant parallels between Paul's argument in the two texts, however, the fact that the phrase τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ occurs in parallel with 'always being handed over to death because of Jesus' in v. 11 suggests that 'dying' rather than 'deadness' is a more accurate translation.

becomes a visible portrayal of the gospel that they preach.[96] It is unlikely that Paul is attempting to articulate a theory of 'participation in Christ' in this context, still less that his self-description is meant to explain how all believers must necessarily deal with their sin and attain to glorification.[97] In this case, Paul's conclusion, 'so death is at work in us, but life in you' (v. 12), would be quite out of place: he is assuming that his and the Corinthians' experiences have differed precisely *because* of the suffering that has characterised his ministry. Consequently, this passage, as with the others we have considered, cannot bear the weight of meaning that the recapitulative reading must place on it. Paul is not expounding a participationist soteriology, but is describing the way in which his ministry bears the stamp of Christ's death and resurrection.[98] Though we have good reasons to think that Paul intends his apostleship to be exemplary for believers in general, this broad applicability (for which we have argued above) should not be so emphasised as to diminish or miss altogether the primarily apologetic and self-referential force of his actual argument.

The last statement we will consider appears at the beginning of chapter 5, where Paul combines building and clothing imagery to describe the hope of bodily resurrection. Paul writes (vv. 1-5):

> We know that, should our earthly tent-dwelling be destroyed, we have a building from God—a dwelling not made by hand, eternal in the heavens. For in this dwelling-place we groan, longing to put on the one from heaven—if indeed we may not be found naked, once we have put it on [or 'taken it off'[99]]. For while we are in the tent we groan, burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed further, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life [καταποθῇ…ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς]. The one who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the pledge of the Spirit [τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος].

For our purposes, it will not be necessary to resolve the main debates that have revolved around this text—chiefly whether or not Paul refers to an 'intermediate state', or whether the 'heavenly dwelling' refers to the believer's resurrection body (apparently already in existence) or to the risen body of Christ, from which it is derived (though the latter would complement the reading of Paul's soteriological statements offered in this chapter).[100] It will be sufficient simply to make the following pertinent observations: first, Paul does not suppose that his earthly 'dwelling' (i.e. the mortal flesh) must be destroyed *in order* to attain to the heavenly one, only that the possibility of its destruction does not negate the promise of

96. So Matera 2002, 398.
97. So Thrall 1994, 331-35.
98. *pace* e.g. Proudfoot 1963, 153-56.
99. The reading ἐνδυσάμενοι enjoys far better MS support than the NA28's ἐκδυσάμενοι, appearing in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ ℵ B C D^2 K L P Ψ 0243. 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881. 2464 𝔪 lat sy co; Cl.
100. See e.g. Hafemann 2000, 206-14; Harding 2015, 332-61; Woodbridge 2003; Wright 2003, 361-71.

the heavenly dwelling. He considers the prospect of physical death as a mere possibility: '*should* our earthly place of lodging be destroyed [ἐὰν…καταλυθῇ]' (v. 1). There is certainly no indication that the destruction Paul's body may undergo is in some way requisite to his freedom from sin or eschatological condemnation. Second, the hope Paul does express is that the heavenly dwelling will replace this present mortal existence (for which Paul waits, whether he will be physically alive or dead when it happens) by being put on *over* it like an added layer of clothing (ἐπενδύσασθαι), an image that does not fit neatly with the idea of recapitulating Christ's death and resurrection as part of a soteriological process.[101] Paul seems simply to be waiting for the arrival of something that in no way depends upon his present condition. Third, Paul explicitly identifies the Spirit as the 'pledge' (ἀρραβών) of what he will eventually experience in full, the foretaste of the 'life' that will eventually 'swallow up what is mortal' (vv. 4-5). Not a requisite suffering and death that his body must undergo, then, but the present possession of Christ's eschatological life, is the condition of being glorified with him at the resurrection.

In sum, the physical deaths of believers do not appear to occupy a soteriologically load-bearing place in Paul's thought as he articulates it in 2 Corinthians. Within the Corinthian correspondence more broadly, the closest Paul comes to suggesting death's necessity as part of the process of attaining eschatological life is in his illustration regarding the seed and the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15: 'what you sow is not made alive unless it dies' (v. 36). But Paul's point in the illustration is to explain the fundamental difference between the natural body and the resurrection body that follows it, not to draw a precise parallel to the process by which the transition between the two happens and to assert that the believer's death *must* take place in order for the resurrection body to come into being. Paul's conclusion to the argument (in terms reminiscent of 1 Thess. 4) directly contradicts such a reading: 'we shall *not* all sleep [i.e., die], but we shall all be changed' (v. 51). Furthermore, the contrast that he draws between the bodily condition corresponding to what is sown and to what grows out of it is presented in terms equally applicable to all mortal existence and not only to those who have died: it is 'sown in corruption…dishonour, weakness…a natural body' (vv. 42-44). It is clear that, for Paul, the point is that the perishable, mortal body must 'put on' (ἐνδύσασθαι, as in 2 Cor.) imperishability and immortality, whether it is biologically alive or not. Regardless of whether or not believers undergo bodily death, they will be partakers in

101. So Lambrecht 2013, 147-48.

final eschatological life and glory through the Spirit, which will transform the mortal body into 'the image of the heavenly man' (v. 49) whatever its condition at the time of Christ's return. Then, in language paralleled in 2 Corinthians 5:4, death will at last be 'swallowed up' (κατεπόθη, 1 Cor. 15:54).

There are no strong grounds in the Corinthian correspondence, then, for supposing that Paul's soteriology requires the bodily deaths of believers at all, much less that their deaths function redemptively in a manner analogous to Christ's death for them. Rather, Paul relativises the meaning of believers' bodily deaths to the eschatological life they *already* enjoy in Christ. Their need is not to die in a fleshly sense, *but to be made alive by the Spirit, which confers Christ's redemptive replacement on them in the present and promises to conform them fully to his likeness in the future.* The reading of participation in Christ as an individual recapitulation of Christ's archetypal dying and rising, at least in 2 Corinthians, fails.

4.3.3 Conclusion

In this section, I have demonstrated that Paul understands the relationship of replacement that exists between Christ and believers to depend upon their participatory union with him, which forges an identification between him and them that entails the redemptive functioning of his death, resurrection and ongoing life as their own, in place of their own. Furthermore, despite his emphasis in the larger argument of 2 Corinthians on a durative process of transformation that believers undergo as they participate in Christ, Paul nowhere espouses the sort of recapitulative participationism that treats the redemptive function of Christ's actions and experiences as being shared in the actions and experiences of believers. In what follows, I will summarise the findings of the chapter's argument as a whole.

4.4 Conclusion

The argument of this chapter has shown that Christ's relationship to believers in 2 Corinthians corresponds closely to what we have seen in the previous chapters on Romans. Christ's soteriological role and the implied narrative that structures it are concerned chiefly with God's provision for the sinful human condition which, as especially seen under the old covenant, stands as a barrier to the saving manifestation of God's glory in the midst of his people. To remedy this situation, God provides Christ as the one in whose death and resurrection this barrier has been removed, and eschatological life made available to the

people of God. The fulfilment of this soteriological function in Christ's crucified and raised body is effective for others *in place* of their own natural condition, which continues to share in the corruptibility and weakness of the present age but which (by virtue of believers' relation to Christ) can no longer constitute the basis of evaluative judgments of the kind that some of the Corinthians are rendering against Paul. The replacement which, in Paul's view, necessitates a new epistemology comes about through participatory union with Christ, which makes his bodily death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life effective for others in place of their own natural condition. While this participation involves a process of gradual conformity to Christ through the transformative power of the Spirit, it does not entail the sharing of a soteriological function between the actions and experiences of Christ and those of believers.

In the next and final chapter of the dissertation's main argument, we will consider Christ's soteriological role in Galatians 3:13 and its relation to the findings of our discussion thus far.

Chapter 5
Substitution & Participation in Galatians 2 & 3

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we turn to the fourth and final text considered in this dissertation, Galatians 3:13. As in the preceding chapters, I will begin by establishing Christ's soteriological role in this text with reference to the larger argument of which it is a part and in conversation with the predominant substitutionary readings. Then, with this in view, I will assess the validity of the language of substitution and participation for describing Paul's portrayal of Christ's soteriological role in this text. As I will show in what follows, Christ fulfils a soteriological function in Galatians 3:13 (and in verse 14, following it) that is in basic continuity with previous chapters, granted differences in emphasis. In this verse and the one following it, Paul describes how Israel's pre-eschatological condition under the law and its curse finds its resolution in the arrival, through Christ's death and resurrection, of eschatological life and blessing for Jews and Gentiles. As in previous chapters, Christ's soteriological role in this text involves both substitution and participation, not simply in a relationship of coherence or compatibility, but in one of mutual dependency. Accordingly, participation in Christ as described in Galatians does not entail the recapitulation of these events in one's own bodily experience in such a way that the experiences of those 'in Christ' themselves take up and share the soteriological functions that Christ's own bodily agency fulfils in their stead.

5.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Implied Narrative Context of Galatians 3:13

As in previous chapters, our first concern lies with Christ's soteriological function in our text and the implied narrative context in which this function makes sense, which we must draw from Paul's larger argument. As I will show in what follows, the typical substitutionary reading of this verse is problematic in a number of respects, most of them involving an imprecise construal of how Paul's statement relates to the larger argument that he is making. Rather than describing how all of humanity, guilty in the sight of the law, find forgiveness through Christ's bearing of the law's penalty in their stead, Paul's statement identifies Christ's particular, salvation-historical role in relation to *Israel*, whose covenantal curse he assumes in order to become the mediator of eschatological life and blessing to the nations.

Here the limitations of the present study must be acknowledged clearly at the outset, since Galatians 3:10-14 is one of the most hotly debated texts in the whole NT and it will be simply impossible to address all of the issues that may be raised in connection with it.[102] The serious interpretative difficulties that these verses pose constitutes a further justification for discussing the texts relevant to our topic in canonical order: even if one takes a radically different stance on the force of Paul's argument here, the previous chapters (it is hoped) have already established the plausibility of my reading on other grounds. In particular, my argument will depend on two assumptions about these verses that space prevents me from establishing at length. These assumptions, shared by most interpreters but challenged in some more recent works, are as follows: (1) that Paul is in fact attributing a soteriological function or instrumentality to Christ's death in verse 13;[103] (2) that Christ is dealing with a state of

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102. On Gal. 3:10-14, see e.g. Bonneau 1997; Brondos 2001; Bruce 1982a; Caneday 1989; 2014; Cranford 1994; Dalton 1990; Das 2012; Davis 2002; Donaldson 1986; Dumbrell 2000; Dunn 1985; Garlington 1997; Gombis 2007; 2014; Hamerton-Kelly 1990; Hunn 2015; Lambrecht 1999a; Martínez 2014; Matlock 2009; Morales 2009; Morland 1995; Onwuka 2007; O'Brien 2006; Scott 1993; Stanley 1990; Streett 2015; Taylor 2012; Willson 2015; Wisdom 2001; Wright 1992a; Young 1998a; b.

103. *pace* Streett 2015, who denies that these verses are in fact 'describing the *mechanism* by which atonement or redemption from the curse is achieved' (194, emph. orig; cf. 202-3). Streett's argument, however, fails to appreciate that much of the very evidence he brings forward—texts describing becoming a curse in terms of 'loss of status' (LXX Isa. 64:9; 65:23; Jer. 24:9; 36:22; 51:8; Sir. 23:26; Prot. Jas. 3:1 and Acts Thom. 104:8)—itself describes the form that divine *judgment* on Israel takes under the covenant terms outlined in Deuteronomy (which warns that unfaithful Israel will become 'an object of horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples', Deut. 28:37). Similarly, Brondos 2006 interprets Christ's death in this text as the means of redemption only in an incidental sense—i.e. dying is what the fulfilment of Jesus' mission 'cost' him, but the actual redemption he mediates is not integrally related to that death, merely subsequent to it and associated with Christ's resurrection (see 147-49; cf. Brondos 2001). However, Brondos' insistence that the 'necessity' of Christ's death arises only out of the circumstances of his earthly ministry is difficulty to verify in Paul, who does not dwell at length on this ministry. Moreover, the recent work of Gathercole 2015, particularly on 1 Cor.

affairs that has come about prior to his arrival, whether this situation is understood in terms of an already-active curse or only of guilt that makes those he redeems liable to be cursed (see below).[104] With these assumptions stated, I will now provide a brief overview of the context of Galatians 3:13, before turning to the critical evaluation of the traditional substitutionary reading.

5.2.1 Overview: Galatians 3:13 in Context

Of the texts considered in this dissertation, Galatians is surely the fiercest in its polemic against the representatives of the views Paul wishes to reject.[105] His opponents have led the Galatians to believe that they will be numbered among the justified, eschatological people of God *if* they accept circumcision and undertake at least some measure of Torah observance. Until this happens, they are (at best) second-class citizens within the believing community—comparable, perhaps to Abraham prior to his circumcision.[106] In response, Paul insists that the uncircumcised Galatians are already Abraham's descendants because, through Abraham's faith, they have already received the eschatological life (the Spirit) that belongs to the righteous.[107] God's bestowal of the Spirit through faith reveals that they are accounted righteous, even in the present, *as* Gentiles.

In Galatians 3:13, Paul writes that 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by

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15:3, undermines one of Brondos' main contentions, namely that the pre-Pauline tradition has no sense of the theological necessity of Christ's death.

104. The salvation-historical logic of Paul's statement in Gal. 3:13-14 (i.e. Christ deals with the curse *in order* to extend the blessing to the Gentiles), as well as Paul's continued focus on the period between the Abrahamic promise and the arrival of Christ in the rest of the chapter, tells against readings that treat the curse as an unrealised potentiality (so e.g. Braswell 1991; Young 1998b). In particular, it tells against the interpretation of Trick 2016, who rejects the assumption that Paul is describing a situation prior to Christ's arrival since, as he reasons, 'gentiles could not incur the curse of a law to which they were never subjected and…Jews already had means of atonement (repentance, restitution, and sacrifice) included in the law itself' (119; cf. 114-22). Instead, Christ's advent actually *occasions* the realisation of the curse, in that it brings Jews into fellowship with Gentiles contrary to the demands of Torah and thereby requires that they become transgressors of the law. This rests on a dubious reading of Deuteronomy 28–32 and related texts, in which grievous sin actually renders the cultic system ineffective and brings about the national experience of curse (precisely the background Paul's statement likely assumes). Furthermore, Paul's own language of purchasing (normally translated 'redeemed'), both here and in the parallel in 4:4-5, suggests a pre-existing condition, from which Christ's death and resurrection brings release. Paul describes this former condition explicitly as imprisonment and slavery in 3:22-23; 4:1-9, 25–5:1, 13, and it makes little sense in view of Paul's larger argument to think of this condition as something occasioned by his arrival.

105. For an overview of recent discussions of the letter, see esp. the essays in Nanos 2002.

106. On second-temple Jewish views of proselytism and their possible implications for our understanding of Paul's opponents in Galatia, see Thiessen 2016, 19-41. While the present study broadly agrees with Thiessen's construal of the problem in Galatia (i.e. dispute over the Gentiles' claim to Abrahamic kinship and the proper means of attaining it), our analysis of Paul's solution to this problem differs significantly, as will be seen below.

107. Cf. Gal. 3:1-9; 5:5.

becoming a curse for us' (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα), in fulfilment of Deuteronomy 21:23, 'cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'. In verse 14, Paul identifies the goal of this action: 'in order that the blessing of Abraham would come to the nations in Christ Jesus, in order that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith'. Paul's pronouncement concerning Christ's soteriological role follows abruptly (noting the asyndeton) from verses 10-12, which describe the law's role in pronouncing a curse on those who do not comprehensively obey the law (v. 10; cf. Deut. 27:26), while also rejecting the notion that the law could ever justify those who adhere to it, since life is offered in the law on the basis of observance, whereas the prophet declares that those who are righteous by faith will live (vv. 11-12; cf. Hab. 2:4; Lev. 18:5).[108]

Together with verses 10-12, Paul's soteriological statement fulfils at least four distinct rhetorical functions in the argument of Galatians 3. First, its emphasis on the curse in connection with the law creates a contrast with the blessing promised to Abraham through faith (vv. 6-9, 14), placing the law on the negative side of that contrast. Second, by making the law's role penultimate to the fulfilment of God's promises in Christ through the Spirit, it sets the stage for Paul's argument in verses 15-25 that the law played an interim role in the life of God's people that has ceased with the arrival of Christ. Third, its emphasis on the Spirit's arrival through faith *following* the curse of the law provides a salvation-historical basis for the probing rhetorical questions of verses 1-5, where Paul rebukes the Galatians for reversing this proper order, despite having undeniably experienced the Spirit through faith already. Fourth and finally, by describing the fulfilment of God's promises 'in Christ' and through the faith that makes one a descendant of Abraham, it prepares the audience for Paul's climactic announcement at the end of chapter 3 that, as those who are 'in Christ' through faith and clothed with him in baptism, they are Abraham's descendants, and heirs according to the promise (vv. 26-29).

We shall see below precisely how Paul's portrayal of Christ's soteriological function in the verse supports each of these objectives; first, however, we must consider the predominant way in which those who espouse a substitutionary reading of Paul's soteriology read Paul's argument at this point.

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108. Wakefield 2003, 162-67 argues that in v. 11 Paul reasons *from* the premise that no one is justified in the law (taking δῆλον with the following rather than preceding ὅτι). See the critiques of this position in Campbell 2009, 1154-55n82; Trick 2016, 98n104. Because v. 13 carries with it the implied premise of the curse's activity (see below), it will not be necessary for us to resolve this issue here.

5.2.2 Christ's Soteriological Function in the Typical Substitutionary Reading of Galatians 3:13

In what follows, I will establish the main contours of the traditional substitutionary reading of Galatians 3:13, as found in many contemporary readings of this verse. This construal follows the basic pattern noted in previous chapters: Paul presents Christ's death against the backdrop of an implied narrative in which all of humanity stands guilty before God, and Christ's death resolves this problem through the redirection of their impending fate onto himself. I will argue, however, that, while some representatives of this view describe the substitutionary function of Christ's death in this text in helpful ways, the implied narrative within which Paul situates Christ's redemptive action is more historically particular than this. He is concerned chiefly with Israel's experience under the old covenant of the already-realised curse of the law, which finds its narrative resolution in Christ's death and resurrection. This, as we shall see in later sections, effects our understanding, not only of the soteriological function that Christ fulfils, but of how this function may be described in terms of substitution.

5.2.2.1 Summary

Many interpreters have viewed Galatians 3:13 as a concise statement of the basic logic of substitutionary atonement as per the typical model. In McLean's words, 'Paul portrays all who observe the law as being burdened by a curse which prohibits their entrance into Christ's new creation…. As a remedy, God transferred this curse from humanity to a substitutionary victim, Christ'.[109] Meanwhile, McLean denies that Christ's resurrection or *parousia* are in view in this passage; the focus, rather, falls wholly on the *removal* of the curse, and the 'resultant state' of Jews and Gentiles, who can now receive blessing because of this transfer.[110] Similarly, Schreiner comments that

> Jesus did not suffer and die for his own transgressions. He died for the sake of his people. We have here the language of substitution…. Nor is it persuasive merely to speak of interchange or representation here, if that language is used to rule out substitution. Paul teaches that Christ took upon himself the curse that sinners deserved, that he stood in their place and absorbed their punishment.[111]

The comments of Ridderbos most clearly situate this reading within the implied narrative

109. McLean 1996, 124. Cf. Lightfoot 1884, 138, who explicitly compares this with the scapegoat.
110. McLean 1996, 125.
111. Schreiner 2010, 217. Schreiner takes note of Hooker's use of this language as an alternative to substitution.

framework of the typical substitutionary model, in which Christ's death establishes the coherence of divine justice and mercy in light of human sin:

> At issue here is satisfaction of violated justice, as is evident from the phrase: *from the curse of the law*…. It is from this sentence of death that Christ has redeemed them by Himself "becoming a curse" for them—that is to say, a cursed one. This refers to the way in which He gave Himself to death. What we have here, in other words, as is evident also from the phrase "for us," is the thought of *substitution*. The curse, to which Christ yielded Himself victim, is not an independently operative principle, but the personal judgment of God, in which He had Christ undergo the sentence instead of the condemned ones (*cf.* Rom. 8:3 and 2 Cor. 5:21).[112]

Morris also spells out the substitutionary logic of this view: 'If I should have been under a curse, but instead Christ was made a curse, so that now I am free, redeemed from the curse, then His action is of a substitutionary kind'.[113]

Several pieces of evidence in Paul's argument are seen to support this reading. First (as the preceding quote suggests), some argue that Paul's use of the preposition ὑπέρ in describing Christ's death should be understood specifically in a substitutionary sense. A.T. Robertson, for example, identifies Galatians 3:13 as an instance in which this preposition 'has the resultant notion of 'instead' and only violence to the context can get rid of it'. He roots this sense in the spatial connotations that Paul's language carries:

> In verse 10 Paul has said that those under the law were under a curse (ὑπὸ κατάραν). In verse 13 he carries on the same image. Christ bought us "out from under" the curse (ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου) of the law by becoming a curse "over" us (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα). In a word, we were *under* the curse; Christ took the curse on himself and thus *over* us (between the suspended curse and us) and thus rescued us *out from under* the curse. We went free while he was considered accursed (verse 13).[114]

Second, McLean in particular views Paul's commercial language (ἐξαγοράζω) as carrying this meaning, especially as it is used in conjunction with the phrase ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν:

> Commercial exchanges are substitutionary in nature since the value of the payment is commensurate with the value of the goods purchased. In other words, money is rendered as a substitute for the goods. Thus, Gal. 3.13 states that Christ offered his own life as payment for (in exchange for) the lives of Christians who were slaves to the law. This commercial metaphor explains how Christians are freed from the curse at the cost of Christ's life which was given in exchange.[115]

This assessment introduces a second image for describing the means of Christ's

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112. Ridderbos 1953, 126-27, emph. orig.

113. Morris 1955a, 55; cf. 59, 203-4.

114. Robertson 1914, 631. Cf. McLean 1996, 126-27. Moo 2013, 213 is more cautious, but still favours this meaning: 'The preposition ὑπέρ means basically "on behalf of," but in certain contexts what is done "on behalf of" takes the form of doing something "in place of." This substitutionary idea is likely present here, since Christ is pictured as identifying with the plight of those he redeems…. It is not that ὑπέρ here *means* "in place of"; it is rather that Christ's work "on our behalf" involves the specific mechanism of identification with us' (emph. orig.).

115. McLean 1996, 131; cf. his excursus on this verb on 127-31.

substitutionary role in addition to the imagery of 'transfer' that McLean and others employ or presuppose, which depends on a different construction of the soteriological 'space' in which substitution occurs. In the one case, sin shifts locations; in the other, Christ and believers do.

The imagery of exchange, moreover, introduces new possibilities for conceptualising Christ's relation to believers in the process of substitution. Whereas McLean strenuously avoids any notion of a participatory identification between Christ and believers in the texts he considers, Richard Longenecker's reading appears to tend in the opposite direction. Describing the phenomenon that appears in Galatians 3:13 as 'an exchange curse' (*Tauschgeschäft*), wherein Christ assumes our accursedness and we assume his righteousness, Longenecker then quotes Luther: 'Thou Christ art my sin and my curse, or rather, I am thy sin, thy curse, thy death, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and contrariwise, thou art my righteousness, my blessing, my life, my grace of God and my heaven'.[116] In this conceptualisation of exchange, solidarity and participation feature as much as distinction and substitution: Luther *is* the sin that Jesus 'bears', Jesus *is* Luther's righteousness, and their mutual capacity to assume and bear the attributes of the other depends upon their mutual immediacy in union with each other. Similarly, Moo comments that Christ's action ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν is substitutionary precisely *because it* 'involves the specific mechanism of *identification* with us', though he does not go on to explain precisely how this is possible.[117] Ridderbos, immediately following the quotation above regarding 'the thought of substitution' in this verse, describes the mechanism of this action as follows:

> How Christ ransomed his own in this way is not more specifically set forth. The thought is that God in His grace *made the punishment accomplished in Christ valid for His own*, and so brought reconciliation through Christ's death. Such a redemption (ransoming, redeeming) has *not, therefore, the character of a transaction*, a nice balance of the active and passive, but is a mystery of salvation in which is manifested the integrity of God's justice and His grace, *and the deep bonds of unity between Christ and His own*.[118]

For Ridderbos, then, the *unity* of Christ and believers is the basis of his substitutionary role, not their separation. Indeed, his comments come very near to the view commended in the previous chapters of this study: through their union with Christ, God makes his death (specifically, Ridderbos emphasises, the punishment enacted in it) soteriologically effective for others in place of their own deaths.

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116. Longenecker 2003, 121. He also describes Jesus' death 'as a redeeming and atoning self-sacrifice' (Ibid.), not addressing how this relates to Paul's curse-language (which naturally contradicts a sacrificial ref.).

117. Moo 2013, 213, emph. added.

118. Ridderbos 1953, 127, emph. added.

For most interpreters who espouse a substitutionary reading of Galatians 3:13, the implied narrative within which Christ's redeeming action functions is made explicit in the argument of verses 10-14. According to Paul, on this reading, a curse looms over all of humanity because of their inability to obey the law of Moses perfectly. The latter assumption is taken to be the unstated premise linking Paul's citation of Deuteronomy 27:26 to his claim that 'those who are of works of the law are under a curse' (v. 10): '[H]e is concerned to stress the unfulfillable character of the law: by the standard of the law every one is 'under a curse' because no one is able to keep it in its entirety'.[119] This accursedness falls upon Jews and Gentiles alike (though it is not always clear whether Gentiles who do not attempt to keep Torah are included). Meanwhile, scripture attests that *even if* one obeyed the law perfectly, it still would not justify, because (as the contrast between Hab. 2:4 and Lev. 18:5 shows) justification is by faith, whereas the law's blessing is based on obedience (vv. 11-12).[120] Humanity is thus placed in a hopeless position, threatened by a curse for disobedience, yet incapable of escaping it through law-observance. This determines the soteriological function of Christ's substitutionary death: by becoming the recipient of this curse in humanity's place, he removes the penalty that results from their disobedience (v. 13), thereby enabling them to receive the soteriological benefits promised to Abraham's descendants through faith (v. 14). Or to put it in our preferred language for describing a substitutionary relationship, *the death of Christ takes the place of the deaths of believers in the capacity of undergoing the law's curse against sin, in order to remove their penal liability.* In the next section, I will evaluate this understanding of Christ's soteriological role in Galatians 3:13 and identify some of the key issues that my own account of this role will need to address.

5.2.2.2 Critical Evaluation

As I will argue in due course, the above interpretation of Paul's intended meaning in these verses is right in some if its basic contentions: the death of Jesus does play a substitutionary role in dealing with the curse of the law, and Paul's use of the preposition ὑπέρ and the verb ἐξαγοράζω can rightly be seen to support this understanding. Moreover, as we shall see, the intuition of Ridderbos, Longenecker and Moo that this substitution depends upon an identificatory relationship between Christ and those he redeems is basically correct.

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119. Bruce 1982b, 159. Cf. Bruce 1982a; so also e.g. Das 2012; Das 2014, 311-12; Fung 1988, 141-43; Moo 2013, 202; Schreiner 2010, 204-05.

120. Cf. Bruce 1982b, 160.

As I will show, however, this identificatory relationship entails a relationship of substitution that is more expansive than these readings imagine since, as in previous chapters, it arguably extends to the soteriological function of his resurrection and ongoing eschatological life as well (at least, when vv. 13 and 14 are read together, as Paul's argument clearly demands). Furthermore, the above reading suffers from several weaknesses and shortcomings that must first be addressed before sound conclusions regarding the place of substitutionary and participatory motifs in Paul's argument can be reached. In what follows, I will identify these problems, but leave their resolution for our discussion of Christ's soteriological function in the next section.

One of the main problems with the above reading is its assumptions regarding the implied narrative constructing the plausibility of Christ's redemptive action in these verses. Paul's use of Deuteronomy suggests that he employs curse-language in this passage, not merely as one of many possible metaphors for describing humanity's guilt before God on account of sin and the need for its removal through a commensurate punishment, but as a way of evoking the specific historical *narrative* of Israel's covenant with God. Paul's re-wording of Deuteronomy 27:26 in verse 10, which brings it into conformity with a recurring formula in Deuteronomy 28-30, suggests that he is well aware of the fact that Deuteronomy 27:26 describes a ceremony of covenant renewal upon Israel's entry into the promised land, laying out the covenantal terms on which Israel in general and Israelites in particular occupy their promised inheritance.[121] The curse pronouncements in this passage are explicitly linked with Israel's special covenantal status, and their lengthy enumeration of the blessings and curses, culminating in exile and death, that hinge on Israel's fidelity to the law (ch. 28) culminate in the prediction (indeed, the prophecy) that Israel will in fact prove unfaithful and suffer the curse (chs. 29-32). Nevertheless, Moses holds out the promise of covenant renewal in exile, when God will circumcise the hearts of Israel and of Israel's 'seed' (τοῦ σπέρματός σου), 'in

121. Whereas LXX Deut. 27:26 reads 'cursed is every man who does not remain in all *the words* [τοῖς λόγοις] of this law, to do them', ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὃς οὐκ ἐμμενεῖ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτούς, Paul amends this to 'remain in all *the things written in the book* [τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ] of the law'; cf. LXX Deut. 28:58, 61; 29:19, 20, 26; 30:10. One may also note that Paul demonstrates an awareness of the broader pericope in Deut. elsewhere in his letters, particularly in Rom. 10:6-8. The individual nature of the curses in this pericope are sometimes taken as evidence against the 'corporate curse' reading that I follow here, but on this issue Schreiner's self-undermining quotation from Das 2001, 151-52 makes the point well: 'That the law was given to Israel as a whole does not deny individual responsibility to abide by the law. It is not an either/or matter.... The fate of the nation as a corporate whole cannot be abstracted from the conduct of its individual members. The sin of individual Israelites accrues to Israel as a whole'. Despite citing him, Schreiner 2010, 206 appears to have missed part of the point, and merely opts for the other side of this false either/or, while simultaneously undermining his own argument by conceding that individual sin accrues to corporate Israel.

order that you may live' (ἵνα ζῇς σύ, 30:6; cf. v. 20)—promises that are paralleled in prophetic and second-temple texts describing an outpouring of the eschatological Spirit in a new (or renewed) covenant,[122] as well as in Paul's own language in Galatians.[123]

Paul's attentiveness to this broader literary context suggests, as many interpreters have argued, that he shared the conviction of not a few of his Jewish contemporaries, that Israel's enslavement and the curse's activity were ongoing.[124] What is more, if he consciously intends to evoke this larger context, then it would seem that he understands Christ's redemptive action in terms of its role within this narrative, as the crucial element to its resolution. As I will show, Paul's description of this narrative's fulfilment in 3:22 and elsewhere shows that Christ's death is not only effective by virtue of its nature as punishment, but as an act of faith in the promise that fulfils the narrative function that Moses accords to Israel's exile-ending, covenant-renewing national repentance in Deuteronomy 30. Our understanding of God's righteous judgment on sin, the need for release from guilt and how Christ's death addresses this problem, must be situated firmly within that narrative.

This claim dovetails with another significant and related problem in the above reading, which is its failure to appreciate the historical particularity of what Paul is describing. As some interpreters have recognised (and as I will argue further below), he is explaining how Christ's redemptive role addresses *what has taken place in Israel's history in particular* and, while the resolution to this problem addresses the world's plight by extension (to which Paul in Gal. 4 compares Israel's situation under the law), it misses Paul's immediate point in the passage to universalise the curse of the law and to translate his argument into a general narrative about how guilty humans find salvation. This is not the point of his argument, which rather concerns *the historical penultimacy of Israel's law to the fulfilment of God's*

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122. Cf. Isa. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 11:14-21; 36:22-38; 37:1-14; 39:25-29; Jub. 1:15-25 (esp. v. 23); 1QS IV,19-26; cf. also Isa. 11:1-16; 32:14-15; 61:1-11; Ezek. 18:30-32. For discussion of second-temple expectations regarding the outpouring of the Spirit and their bearing on Paul's argument in Gal., see esp. Boakye 2017, 30-76; Lee 2013; Morales 2010.

123. Cf. Gal. 2:19-20; 3:11-12, 16, 19, 29; 5:25.

124. On the theme of 'continuing exile', see now the survey in Piotrowski 2017; also the essays in Scott 2017; less recently, in Scott 1997 (particularly Hafemann 1997). Cf. also e.g. Gregory 2007, 489-92; Halvorson-Taylor 2011; Knibb 1976; Schofield 2010; Wright 2013a, 139-63. The question of whether the specific nomenclature of 'exile' is best to describe this phenomenon need not concern us here (see Wright 2013a, 162); in any case, there is abundant historical evidence for widespread Jewish belief in the second-temple period that the nation was still enduring the covenantal sanctions of Deuteronomy, and still awaiting the fulfilment of the promised restoration. Cf. e.g. Ezra 9; Neh. 9; Dan. 9; Tob. 14:4-7; Bar.; Pr. Azar.; 4 Ezra; 4 Bar.; 1 En. 85-90; Jub. 1:9-18; *T. Levi* 10; 14-18; *T. Jud.* 18:1; 23; Apoc. Ab. 27-29; CD I, 3-11a; 4QMMT (see 4Q397-98); 4QDibHam (4Q504) V; VI; 11QTemple LIX. Scott 1993, 217 notes that Paul's language of 'the fulness of time' (Gal. 4:4) is employed elsewhere to indicate the Israel's redemption from exile; cf. Tob. 14:5; 4 Ezra 4:35-37; 11:44.

promise to Abraham, which has now arrived in Israel's anointed king.[125] While it is indeed the case, as we shall see, that Christ's death replaces the deaths of *all* who belong to him (Jew or Gentile) in addressing their condition of enslavement under the 'elements of the world' (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου), the specific problem that Paul is dealing with in Galatians 3:13 is the historical problem that *Israel's* captivity to the curse poses: their unfulfilled narrative awaits the enactment of that eschatological repentance which Moses and the prophets say will inaugurate a new covenant defined by the presence of God's Spirit in and among his people.

This brings to light a third and final problem, one that specifically regards how Christ's substitutionary role would fit within such a narrative. In the traditional model of penal substitution (as summarised heuristically in the introduction), God's saving action involves the the diversion of an *unrealised and impending* penalty onto Christ, so that what *would* have befallen the other party befalls him instead. In this instance, however, this is an unlikely reading of Paul's argument at the level of narrative, which assumes the law's curse to be *already* in effect and thus constitutes the barrier to the fulfilment of God's promises that Christ's death must remove. One could hypothetically speak of Israel's guilt itself as such a barrier, but Paul's vivid language of imprisonment and slavery to describe the conditions of the old covenant (3:22-23; 4:3-5, 21-31) suggests that an active curse is in view.[126] Thus the traditional substitutionary reading of Galatians 3:13 faces difficulty in this text to the degree that it depends upon this understanding of the law's curse—a difficulty that commentators such as de Boer have noted, as we saw in the introductory survey.[127] On this point, moreover, there exists a degree of ambiguity in the way that some of the above interpreters express

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125. On the royal/messianic meaning of Paul's use of Χριστός, see Novenson 2012; 2017; cf. Jipp 2015.

126. Thiessen 2016, 74-101 argues that Paul's allegory in 4:21-31, as well as his references to life 'under the law' elsewhere in the letter, refer to two different evangelistic missions to the Gentiles (the one promoting circumcision, the other not requiring it), and as such contains no implicit critique of Jews who continue to observe Torah. While it is indeed likely that Paul had no problem with continued Torah observance among Christ-following Jews (provided it did not form a barrier to Jew-Gentile fellowship, as in Antioch), Thiessen's interpretation of the allegory is implausible in view of the fact that Paul refers to the two women explicitly as two *covenants* [διαθήκαι], which are most naturally seen to correspond to those he describes in 3:15-17—that made with Abraham and that made with Israel at Sinai 430 years later (to which Paul explicitly refers in 4:24). It is most natural, accordingly, to view the duality described in 4:21-31 as the eschatological result of Christ's redemptive act for Jews and Gentiles, which relativises Torah observance and reveals it to be a state of pre-eschatological slavery in comparison with the new state of existence realised in Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Phil. 3:7-8; so Hafemann 1997, 356-67). Consequently, those who trace their Abrahamic descent through law-observance and treat this as the basis of their justification find themselves under the curse that pertains to the pre-eschatological state that Israel experienced prior to the coming of Christ, when in fact they are called to freedom through Christ's crucifixion of the flesh.

127. de Boer 2011, 211-12; see below. Here McLean's interpretation fares better than most, since it assumes the removal of an existing curse and its placement on Christ in his death. As we shall see, however, the imagery of transfer on which this view depends (as in previous chapters) does not cohere well with the related participatory motifs in this passage and the surrounding argument.

themselves. Schreiner speaks of 'the curse that sinners *deserved*', Robertson of a curse '*suspended*' over sinners, such that Christ interposes himself between them and it, Ridderbos of 'the *sentence* of death' that awaits humanity apart from Christ's substitution and Morris of how he '*should have been* under a curse'.[128] In these instances it is not entirely clear whether the scholars who speak in these terms understand the curse as in some sense already in force, or whether the penalty Christ is said to sustain remains wholly future and unrealised until the cross. This point will demand some clarification in our discussion below, since both the analysis of Paul's narrative given here and participationist objections to a substitutionary reading of this text prominently concern this issue.

5.2.2.3 Conclusion

As we have seen, substitutionary readings of Galatians 3:13 understand Paul's statement within the typical implied narrative of this atonement model, which verses 10-14 are thought to convey: all humanity stands guilty under the standard of God's law, and Christ's death sustains the law's curse in their stead in order to grant them a share in the blessings promised to Abraham. There exists some notable diversity among these readings regarding the means of substitution (transfer, exchange, identification). They are united, however, in presupposing the curse's universalisation to all humanity; moreover, it is not altogether clear whether the curse is viewed mainly as an impending fate suffered by Christ rather than something already in force that he removes. In the next section, we will consider how Paul's use of the historically particular narrative of Israel under the curse of the law determines his conception of precisely how Christ fulfils his soteriological role in this text.

5.2.3 Christ's Soteriological Function in Galatians 3:13-14

In this section, I will offer an account of the soteriological functions that Paul explicitly or implicitly assigns to Christ in these verses, as well as the implied narrative within which they are plausible. As I will show, Christ's attainment of eschatological blessing through his death and resurrection in these verses operates within a plausibility structure constituted by the divine promise to Abraham and Israel's subsequent disobedience under the law, resulting in the activity of the curse. Through his faith in the promise, Christ becomes the mediator of Israel's eschatological blessings to the nations by first enacting Israel's return to God within the depths of the law's curse. Through his experience of the curse's full eventuation in his

128. Morris 1955a, 55; Schreiner 2010, 217; Robertson 1914, 631; Ridderbos 1953, 127, emph. added.

crucifixion, Christ attains to eschatological life and thus ends the penultimate period in which the law held sway over Israel. As I will show, this means that Christ's redemptive action as regards the curse pertains specifically to Jews such as Paul, who formerly lived within the conditions of the law's curse but are now identified with Christ through faith.

5.2.3.1 The Abrahamic Blessing and the Promise of the Spirit

As in Romans 8:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul's soteriological statement here explicitly identifies the purpose or goal of the redemptive action that he describes with the two ἵνα-clauses in verse 14: 'in order that the blessing of Abraham would come to the nations in Christ Jesus, in order that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith'. As I will argue in what follows, this stated purpose gives us insight into the larger narrative within which Paul is situating this action: it is not concerned, first and foremost, with how individual sinners generally find release from their guilt, whether by the redirection of their punishment onto another or by some other means. Rather, Paul's concern is mainly *historical* and *christological*: Christ's redemptive action serves to bring Israel's story to its narrative fulfilment and, by the same token, to establish him as the mediator of Israel's promised eschatological blessings. Moreover, the structures of plausibility that determine Paul's implied narrative rest primarily on the theme of divine *promise*, as Paul's evident use of Isaac-typology in these verses suggests. The significance of the law's curse as well as the means of its resolution must be understood in this light.

The *telos* of the redemptive christological narrative that Paul describes is evident in the two prepositional phrases ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and διὰ τῆς πίστεως, which indicate how the redemptive results of his death are mediated to others. These do not pertain to two different and unrelated goals, but describe the same reality from different angles, as the reappearance of these phrases at the culmination of the chapter's argument makes clear (vv. 26-29):

> For you are all sons of God through faith [διὰ τῆς πίστεως], in Christ Jesus [ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ]. For as many as were baptised into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus [εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ]. And if you are of Christ [Χριστοῦ], then you are Abraham's seed [τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα], heirs according to the promise.[129]

In the verses preceding this conclusion, the revelatory arrival of 'the faith' in question

129. Similarly, in 3:1-9, reception of the Spirit is closely associated with faith in the promise (v. 6, καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν). Commentators generally agree that διὰ τῆς πίστεως and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as separate constructions (normally εἰς or πρός denote the object of faith). So e.g. Das 2014, 377-78; Dunn 1993, 202; Moo 2013, 250-51; in a slightly diff. sense, Martyn 1997, 375.

coincides with the arrival of Christ himself (cf. vv. 23-25), 'in' whom Paul says all find divine sonship, Abrahamic kinship, and the status of heirs. Similarly, the sonship that Paul associates both with faith and with being in Christ is experienced through the indwelling Spirit (cf. 4:4-6), whose availability Paul identifies as the goal of Christ's redemptive action in 3:14. All of this clues us in to the point of Paul's soteriological statement in 3:13-14: the central problem with which he is concerned is not with how Christ addresses a general need for 'atonement' for sin, but with how his redemptive action enables his *present and ongoing* mediation, through faith and the indwelling Spirit, of eschatological Abrahamic kinship and divine Sonship to Israel and the nations.[130] Rhetorically (as noted in the overview above), he makes this point in a way that stresses the law's penultimacy to the fulfilment of the promise, thereby relegating it to a state of divinely-planned, eschatological obsolescence.[131] Like the anthropological condition of sinful humanity in previous chapters, the law's curse constitutes the historical barrier in Paul's implied narrative to the arrival of eschatological life in fulfilment of God's promise, and Christ's redemptive act to deal with the curse in his own person (see below) constitutes him, implicitly in his resurrection, as the 'locus' of this fulfilment for others.[132]

When viewed in light of his larger argument, Paul's identification of Christ as the one 'in' whom the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles is highly suggestive of the implied narrative role that he fulfils. As Paul's climactic statement in verses 26-29 makes clear, being 'in Christ Jesus' (where v. 14 locates the blessing of Abraham) constitutes believers as a singular unity (εἷς), and therefore as the 'Abraham's seed' (τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα). Paul refers back to verse 16, where he observes that 'the promises were spoken to Abraham *and to his seed*', and appears to infer from the singularity of the seed (ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός) that it refers to Christ rather than to a large group (ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν)—an interpretative move that has occasioned much discussion.[133] Recent scholarship has argued that Paul associates the promise regarding Abraham's seed in Genesis with the similar promise to David in 2 Samuel

130. Some have argued that the promise of the Spirit is distinct from the blessing of Abraham in Gal. 3:14 (the latter referring to justification); so e.g. Moo 2013, 216, following Kwon 2004, 107-17. But this fails to do justice to the link in Paul's argument between justification and vivification (see esp. Boakye 2017).

131. This way of expressing the relationship is preferable to that of e.g. Lührmann 1992, who goes so far as to say that 'Christ destroyed the law itself' (48), and that '[t]he curse associated with the law came to an end, in that the law itself cursed Christ' (61), which does not cohere well with Paul's insistence in Gal. 3:21a that the law is not contrary to God's promises.

132. On the importance of Christ's resurrection in Galatians (a traditionally neglected theme), see esp. Boakye 2017; cf. also Bryant 2001; *pace* McLean 1996, 125.

133. See survey in Collins 2003, 76-79.

7, where it clearly refers to a single individual (Solomon) who will receive his father's kingdom and build a temple.[134] This reading hypothesises a link in Pauline and early Christian circles between a messianic exegesis of 2 Samuel 7 and God's promises concerning Abraham's seed. Without denying the possibility of this association for Paul and his communities, another scriptural background finds a more immediate resonance in Paul's argument, with greater potential to shed light on the meaning of Christ's death in verse 13: his stress on the singularity of the seed arises from an association of Christ with *Isaac*, the 'only son' of Abraham.[135] Scott Hahn makes the best case for this reading, observing that the divine oath in Genesis 22:15-18 (in response to the sacrifice of Isaac) serves as the climactic ratification of God's covenant (διαθήκη) with Abraham, and it is accompanied by the promise that 'in your seed [ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου] all the nations will be blessed'—the only text in Genesis that links Abraham's *seed* with the blessing of nations.[136] Likewise, in Galatians, the earlier covenant 'ratified by God' (3:17) promises that 'in you [Abraham] all nations will be blessed' (v. 8). While most interpreters assume that this citation conflates

134. See now Thiessen 2016, 122-27; cf. LXX 2 Sam. 7:12-14; LXX Gen. 13:15; 15:3; 17:8; 22:18; 24:7; Thiessen is modifying esp. Hays 1989, 85; Novenson 2012, 138-42. For a very different solution, see Wright 1992b, 162-69, who argues that Paul's reference to the singular seed in Gal. 3:16 is also corporate, and that ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός refers to the corporeity that exists in Christ rather than solely to Jesus the individual. It is true that Paul uses the collective plural elsewhere (cf. Rom. 4:13, 16; 9:7, 8; 2 Cor. 11:22). Nevertheless, while ingenious, Wright's interpretation faces several difficulties: (1) the use of the bare appellative Χριστός, without a preposition or further elaboration, to describe a corporate entity finds no precise parallel anywhere else in the NT, nor in any second-temple literature of which I am aware. The closest one comes to a parallel within Paul is in 1 Cor. 1:13 and 12:12 (which, curiously, Wright does not mention). In the first case ('Is Christ divided?'), the precise meaning is somewhat obscure: it need not be a reference to the corporate body of Christ, but simply Paul's rhetorical denial that the church can be any more divided than the person who is the basis of its unity. In the second case ('Just as the body is one and has many members…so also Christ') the presence of the body metaphor disambiguates the use of Χριστός here, whereas in Gal. no such explanation is given. (2) This problem is compounded by the fact that Paul's use of Χριστός throughout the rest of the letter (including in the immediate pericope of 2:15-3:29) refers unquestionably to Christ as an individual. (3) It is not clear why the agitators' position would in fact result in multiple 'families': they are demanding that Gentiles be circumcised in order to enter into the *one* family of Abraham, to which they are implicitly outsiders. Trick's criticism is apropos: 'If anything, bringing Jew and gentile together in their differences would seem to create a greater plurality than forcing all members to live like Jews in a single, Torah-observant family'. Trick 2016, 184. (4) Paul himself identifies a specific time at which the 'seed' (to whom the promise was made) *arrived* (3:19), a claim that makes better sense with reference to an individual than a corporate entity (which, if it included those of Abraham's descendants who were justified by faith prior to Christ, could hardly be said to 'arrive' at a certain point in history).

135. The observation of Collins 2003, 85 (following T.D. Alexander) that Ps. 72:17 may refer to Gen. 22:18 suggests that an Isaac-typology and a Davidic/messianic reading need not be played off against each other.

136. See Hahn 2005. It is true that a covenant-making ceremony is recorded in Gen. 15, but this need not contradict the sense of a climactic ratification when Abraham's faith is tested and produces obedience: 'The ratification of the covenant at the Aqedah is not merely one of three covenant-making texts (Gen 15:17-21; 17:1-27; 22:15-18) on which Paul could have chosen to draw. Rather, as the final ratification of the covenant with Abraham, it is the "last word," the definitive form of that legal bond. For Paul, the Aqedah is the occasion on which the Abrahamic covenant takes on its greatest theological significance, where Abraham's faith and God's promise reach their quintessential expressions (cf. Jas 2:21-24)' (94).

LXX Genesis 12:3 and 18:18,[137] Paul's statement later in the chapter that 'the promises were spoken *to Abraham and his seed*' suggests that Paul has 22:18 in view, since here the promise of blessing for 'all the nations' (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) is directly addressed to Abraham and explicitly refers to his seed, whereas 18:18 is not even spoken directly to Abraham.[138]

Additionally, in Galatians 3:13-14, Christ's death 'on a tree/on the wood' (ἐπὶ ξύλου) may deliberately echo Isaac's offering ἐπάνω τῶν ξύλων, especially in view of the fact that Christ's death leads to the very blessing God promised to Abraham in response to the offering of Isaac.[139] As God promised Abraham, following the offering, that 'in your seed [ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed', so the blessing of Abraham following Christ's death on the tree in Galatians 3:13-14 comes 'to the nations in Christ Jesus', whom Paul then immediately goes on explicitly to identify as Abraham's single seed (v. 16). This interpretation also does justice to the emphatic stress in Genesis 22 on the exclusivity of Isaac's sonship ('your son—your only son', vv. 2, 12, 16), despite Ishmael's birth earlier in the narrative. Paul makes the same basic move in Galatians, identifying Christ as the single seed and, in his allegory of the 'two covenants' excludes Ishmael from the promise (4:21-31). Here he identifies the Galatians as 'children of the promise, *according to Isaac*', who are born 'according to the Spirit' rather than the flesh (v. 28-29), drawing on the same themes that appear in his description of Christ's mediation of the blessing of Abraham in 3:14. In view of these considerations, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul patterns Christ's soteriological role in Galatians 3:13-14 after Isaac's offering in Genesis 22.

In sum, Christ's soteriological function in Galatians 3:14, for which his death in verse 13 is instrumental, is *to obtain and mediate the eschatological life and blessing for the nations that God promised to Abraham and his seed*. The implied narrative within this role makes sense is driven chiefly by the divine promise of blessing, which stands in tension with the law's pronouncement of a curse on the disobedience of its would-be observers. The fulfilment of the promise, and so of the narrative, thus depends upon the resolution of this tension through Christ's death. Granted this, there is little justification for supposing, as some

137. So e.g. Das 2014, 308-09; Dunn 1993; more cautiously, Moo 2013, 199-200. The common objection to seeing Gen. 22 as the main background is that it predicates the fulfilment of the promise on Abraham's *obedience* rather than on his *faith*, but this arguably restricts the normal sense of πίστις, which is not used in a way that suggests a strong divide between faith (i.e. trust) and its expression in obedient action. Cf. Jas. 2:21-23.

138. So Collins 2003, 80-83. LXX Gen. 26:4 also refers to the blessing of 'all the nations in your seed', but the promise is spoken to Isaac.

139. So e.g. Hahn 2005, 93-94; Trick 2016, 130; Wilcox 1977, 97. Tertullian (*Adv. Jud.* 10.6) makes note of this wordplay.

of the readings surveyed in the introductory chapter have, that Paul denies the law's divine origin.[140] At least three considerations undermine this interpretation: first, and most importantly, Paul explicitly denies that the law is contrary to the divine promises (3:21)—making, in effect, the same basic rhetorical move as in Romans, where his 'negative' statements about the law[141] are balanced by a clear insistence that the law itself is not in fact the problem and even attains its purpose through Christ and the Spirit.[142] Second, Paul's repeated use of the passive voice in 3:19-24 without an identified actor to describe *both* the law's institution *and* the fulfilment of the promise (the latter performed clearly by God) make it unlikely that he regards the law as having an origin other than God.[143] Third, Paul's later portrayal of existence under the law in terms of an heir's minority (4:1-11) naturally suggests a situation directly instituted by God: the imagery assumes that the 'guardians' (ἐπιτρόποι) and 'managers' (οἰκονόμοι) are *put in place* by the heir's father, and not only that he determines the time when their role will cease (as Paul notes in v. 2). Consequently, we ought to understand God as the ultimate acting agent in the implied narrative of Galatians 3:13-14, as in the larger argument: having originally promised blessing to the nations, God temporarily instituted the law to exercise stewardship over his people, with the intent that the promise would come to fulfilment through the curse's resolution in Christ. It is to this topic that we now turn.

5.2.3.2 The Scope of Christ's Redemptive Action

Before establishing the precise soteriological function of Christ's death in Galatians 3:13, it will be helpful first to address the question of this action's *scope*. As our earlier discussion showed, traditional substitutionary readings of Galatians 3:13 regard Paul's statement as applicable directly to all of humanity: the curse denotes the law's penalty against all sin, and the 'us' whom Paul says Christ's death has redeemed equally includes Jews and Gentiles. My critical analysis of these readings pointed out several problems with this reading, but it is necessary to substantiate its alternative further. In agreement with a considerable number of interpreters, I will argue that, contrary to the assumptions of most traditional substitutionary

140. As in e.g. de Boer 2011, 226-30; Martyn 1997, 354, 364-70. For a more balanced view, see Longenecker 1998, 58-63.

141. Cf. Rom. 3:20; 5:20; 6:14; 7:4-6; 8:3.

142. Cf. Rom. 3:31; 7:7-14; 8:1-2, 4-9a; 13:8-10; so likewise Gal. 5:14.

143. Cf. 3:19 (προσετέθη, διαταγεὶς), 21 (ἐδόθη); similarly v. 23 (ἐφρουρούμεθα). Meanwhile in the very same passage (vv. 19-24) divine passives are used in a positive sense: the seed is the one 'to whom it was promised' (ᾧ ἐπήγγελται), the promise is 'given' (δοθῇ) to those who believe, the coming faith is revealed (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι), those under the law's stewardship until Christ are justified (δικαιωθῶμεν) by faith.

readings, Galatians 3:13 is not a general statement about the atoning efficacy of Christ's death for all humanity alike, but a more particular explanation of how the law's former and temporary role in relation to God's people (i.e. Israel) has been concluded.[144] This fits well with the narrative dimensions of Paul's argument that I have already highlighted: his portrayal of Christ's redemptive role is concerned especially with an *historical* problem, namely how Christ's redemptive action enables the extension of eschatological life and blessing to the nations in him by concluding the temporary period in which the people of God lived under the custody and stewardship of the law.

Several considerations favour a restricted interpretation of the soteriological function of Christ's accursed death, the first two of which have already been noted. As I argued above, Paul's use of Deuteronomy in these verses is fully attentive to the literary and narrative context of chapters 28-30. When he speaks of 'the curse *of the law*', then, it is natural to suppose that he is thinking of the law *in terms of its applicability within Israel's covenant with YHWH at Sinai*, in which all who adopt 'the works of the law' involve themselves and in which they are not involved if they do not adopt them. Hence, in 4:24-25, law-observance belongs to the *covenant* (διαθήκη) that is 'from Sinai'; in the next verse, 'Mount Sinai in Arabia, which corresponds to the present Jerusalem'. To interpret the curse as applicable to all of humanity is to abstract it from the specific literary and historical context to which Paul himself appears fully attentive.

This perception of specificity is reinforced, second, by the argument of chapter 3 as a whole, which is concerned precisely with *limiting* the law's role to a particular time and place—to the people who, from 430 years after Abraham until the coming of Christ, lived 'under' its authority and temporary custody. The law was 'added for the sake of transgressions' (v.19)[145] so that the fulfilment of the promise would come through Christ (v. 22), the law functioning as 'our custodian' (παιδαγωγός ἡμῶν) whose role has now been fulfilled with Christ's arrival (vv. 23-24). It is particularly clear at this point that Paul is

144. For other restricted readings of v. 13, see e.g. Betz 1979, 144, 148-49; Hong 1993, 78-86; Leithart 2016, 199-204; Wright 1992b, 137-56; Wright 2013a, 863-67; note also other works cited below. As well as being widely attested in modern scholarship, Barclay notes that this reading 'was common in the Middle Ages', citing Aquinas among others. Barclay 2015, 419n70.

145. Syntactically, the phrase τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν ('for the sake of' or 'on account of transgressions') could refer either to the law's role in dealing with transgressions or to its role in occasioning them, and these options may be subdivided further into several nuances (see Das 2014, 359-61). Some form of the latter appears preferable, esp. in view of (1) Paul's argument about the law's inability to 'make alive' and the scripture's imprisonment of all things 'under sin' (Gal. 2:21; 3:21-22); (2) the apparent incoherence of understanding the law's introduction as a remedy to pre-existing transgressions that could not exist in its absence, a point that Paul himself makes in Rom. 4:15; 5:13.

referring to the Jews with his first-person plural reference: they are those who have existed 'under the law' (ὑπὸ νόμον, v. 23), whereas the Galatian Gentiles are those 'who *wish* to be under the law' (4:21).[146] The specificity of this phrase's meaning finds confirmation in 1 Corinthians 9:20, where Paul's statement that he became 'like one under the law to those under the law (not being under the law myself), in order to gain those under the law' is in apposition to 'I became like a Jew to Jews, in order to gain Jews', and in *contrast* with becoming 'to those without the law like one without the law (but subject to Christ's law), in order to gain those without the law' (v. 21; cf. 'the weak' in v. 22). Similarly, in 4:4-5, a text frequently paralleled with 3:13-14, Paul describes Christ as 'born under the law to redeem *those under the law*, so that we would receive adoption as sons'.[147]

Third, the structure of Galatians 3:13-14 itself suggests a more specific historical referent. As commentators have noted, Paul's statement, 'Christ redeemed *us* [ἡμᾶς]…in order that the blessing of Abraham would come to the *Gentiles* [τὰ ἔθνη]', emphatically juxtaposes the two parties, indicating that they are not the same.[148] Moreover, while pronominal shifts occur elsewhere in Galatians, there is no parallel shift from speaking in the first-person to referring to a third party in Paul's argument that would suggest he intends a continuity of reference throughout.[149] This juxtaposition between the two groups, which makes the Gentiles' reception of blessing dependent upon Israel's redemption, comports well with various scriptural and second-temple texts that understand the fate of the nations to be contingent upon Israel's restoration.[150] Moreover, although it is possible, now that both parties are in view, to see the referent widening at the end of verse 14 to both Jews and Gentiles ('in order

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146. Noted by Barclay 2015, 419n71. Consequently, Paul's shift from the first-person to the second-person in 3:25-26 should not be categorised with the others noted above; instead, one encounters a transition from Paul's reasoning regarding the existence of Jews under the law to his conclusion regarding the Gentiles as co-heirs with them (so e.g. Betz 1979, 185-86; Dunn 1993, 201).

147. Here it is possible that we encounter greater flexibility with Paul's pronouns, which shift back and forth between the first and second person (though, here too, Taylor 2012 argues that the eschatological interdependence of Jews and Gentiles is in view, with the sending of the Spirit into 'our' [i.e. Jews'] hearts conditional upon the Gentiles' acceptance as sons). The reference to 'those under the law' is disambiguated, however, by Paul's description of the Galatians in 4:21 and in his use of the phrase in 1 Cor. 9:20.

148. So e.g. Hong 1993, 78; Witherington 1998, 237. This reading may be further strengthened depending on how one interprets the chiastic structure of the pericope. See Cosgrove 1988, 48; Garlington 1997, 85n1; Lee 2013, 32; Silva 2002, 91; Trick 2016, 110-14.

149. For this objection, see Young 1998a; cf. Gal. 4:21-5:1. These pronominal shifts would appear to be a peculiarity of Paul's direct address, which frames Gal. 3:6-25 but does not intrude into it. Young adduces Gal. 4:4-7a as further evidence for these shifts, but this begs the question since the same difficulty in determining the referent applies in these verses as in 3:13-14.

150. See Donaldson 1986, 99-100; Witherington 1998, 237-38; cf. Is. 2:2-4 (//Mic. 4:1-4); 18:7; 25:6-10a; 45:20-23; 51:4; 56:6-8; 60:1-16; 66:18-21; Zech. 8:20-23; LXX Amos 9:12; Tob. 13:11 (v. 12 alludes to Gen. 12:3 and related promises); 14:4-7; 1 En. 90:30, 33; *Sib. Or.* 3.710-23, 772-75; 2 Bar. 72; *Pss. Sol.* 17:30-31, 34; *T. Levi* 18:9 (but noting possible Christian influence; cf. Morales 2010, 69-73).

that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith'), even this should not be assumed.[151] It is at least possible that Paul continues to presuppose the 'eschatological interdependence' of Jews and Gentiles: both parties stand in need, albeit in different ways, of the fulfilment of the divine promises that Christ's accursed death brings about.[152] As Wright argues:

> Paul is differentiating between the two different routes by which these groups came *into* the one, single family: Gentiles were brought in from the outside; Jews, already in a sense within the covenant, were renewed as such by the gift of the spirit, whose first evidence is faith. And he is thereby highlighting the things each group particularly needed: Gentiles, to inherit the Abrahamic blessing; Jews, to be renewed in covenant membership.[153]

Put differently, the new covenant that is the fulfilment of prophetic hopes for the outpouring of YHWH's Spirit on *Israel* simultaneously functions, in its extension beyond Israel to the *nations*, as the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham.

Finally, Paul specifically identifies '*as many as* [ὅσοι] are of works of the law' as the group that faces the threat of a curse for disobedience (v. 10). While this designation reveals a degree of indeterminacy regarding the number of people in this category (Paul is not concerned with exactly how many people belong to it), in another sense it communicates great specificity: *this* is the particular group that Paul wishes to identify, to whom the curse applies. To say that Paul's argument describes the universal plight of humanity at this point is to go far beyond what he actually says. Meanwhile, as Debbie Hunn observes, 'If [Paul] says that the Galatians stand under the curse even as Gentiles, he undercuts his own warning against law observance'.[154] His argument is premised on the assumption that the Galatians are not in the category described in these verses but, under the influence of the agitators, are now in danger of entering into that category *if* they accept circumcision and whatever other observances the agitators enjoin. This interpretation naturally fits with Paul's use of the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in the preceding chapter, where it accompanies the descriptor 'Jews by nature, and not Gentile sinners' (2:15-16). There is no reason, then, to suppose that this descriptor or its attending threat in verse 10 applies to all alike.

We are justified, then, in reading Galatians 3:13 as a reference specifically to Jews who, like Paul, have identified themselves with Christ (cf. 2:19-20) and thereby obtained freedom

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151. The pronominal consistency of Gal. 3:13-14 is not universally held even among those who favour a restricted reading; so e.g. Dumbrell 2000.
152. On 'eschatological interdependence', see Taylor 2012, who reads the ἵνα-clauses consecutively.
153. Wright 2013a, 864, emph. orig.
154. Hunn 2015, 256.

from the curses of the covenant outlined in Deuteronomy. And yet, we should note that this particularity in no way detracts from Paul's sense of the universal significance of what Christ has accomplished, inasmuch as (1) the Gentiles' enjoyment of the blessing of Abraham is dependant historically on Christ's resolution of the law's curse, as the first ἵνα clause in verse 14 shows, and (2) Paul also draws attention, later in his argument, to how Israel's plight under the law exemplifies the condition of humanity as a whole 'under the elements of the world' (4:3-11), making Christ's resolution to Israel's slavery under the curse equally a resolution of the universal slavery experienced by corruptible humanity in the present age. In the context of the immediate argument, however, Paul's main point is that Jews and Gentiles already stand together in possession of the promises to Abraham, and that the Galatians' entry into solidarity with Israel by means of the law would place them back in the past, in the period between Abraham and Christ in which the law and its curse held sway over Israel. This argument, in its immediate context, pertains specifically to Christ's salvation-historical role vis-a-vis Israel. With this in mind, we are now in a position to describe the specific soteriological function that Christ's death fulfils in this argument.

5.2.3.3 Redemption from the Curse of the Law

With the narrative goal and scope of Christ's redemptive action now established (along with some of the crucial narrative dimensions to this action), we are now in a position to identify the specific soteriological function that Paul attributes to Christ's death. In what follows, I will argue that Paul understands Christ's death as an act of faith in God's promises, in which he underwent the full eventuation of the curses of God's covenant with Israel in order to fulfil Israel's eschatological destiny of mediating blessing to the nations. In other words, Jesus' obedient fidelity in death fulfils the narrative role of Israel's repentance in Deuteronomy 30, bringing covenant renewal and worldwide blessing in fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham.

My above criticisms of the traditional substitutionary reading of Galatians 3:13 observed that Paul's narrative appears to presuppose that the curse of the law is already active and not merely awaiting a future infliction (as the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement assumes). The preceding discussion of Paul's implied narrative has also served to confirm this understanding: redemption from the curse as a precondition for the fulfilment of God's promise, which brings to an end the former period of enslavement and imprisonment 'under the law' and 'under sin', presupposes that the curse was actually in force. Accordingly,

Christ's 'becoming a curse' must be understood to refer in part to his *identification* with the condition of those under the law whom he redeems. Paul's parallel statement in 4:4-5 reinforces this impression further: Christ was 'born under the law to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption'. Likewise in 3:13, Paul's statement that 'Christ redeemed us from the *curse* of the law by becoming a *curse* for us' serves to draw a comparison between the condition of those he redeems and the condition that he assumed in his redemptive act.[155] The question this raises (which will later inform our discussion of substitution in the verse) is whether this identificatory relationship exhausts Paul's meaning. Put differently, does Christ's identification with those experiencing the curse mean that his death entails *nothing* that goes beyond their present condition?

Several observations show that Christ's 'becoming a curse' in Galatians 3:13 involves not only his identification with the people he redeems, but an experience of the law's curse that surpasses theirs. First, as in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (where Paul's concrete use of the noun κατάρα here finds a parallel in his use of ἁμαρτία), Christ's identification with others does not diminish the sense in which his *death*—something that those who 'in him' become the righteousness of God have not yet experienced—constitutes an intensification of the condition in which he identifies with others. While the text that Paul cites in Galatians 3:13 (Deut. 27:26) *presupposes* the accursedness of the man hanged on a tree rather than according his execution an instrumental role, Paul's use of the citation as an explanation for Christ's crucifixion as the endpoint of his 'becoming [γενόμενος] a curse' indicates that, in Paul's mind at least, the curse involves an element of process that finds its culmination in his death. But if that is the case, it would suggest that Christ here encounters something *impending* against those he redeems from the curse—at least those who, like Paul, have not yet died.

This interpretation, second, fits well with our available scriptural and second-temple evidence for how curses were understood to function. In many cases, to be 'cursed' is to be located on a *trajectory* which, barring intervention of some kind, eventuates in final and utter destruction; the process by which this comes about may be protracted and gradual. Several examples from biblical and second-temple literature will suffice to illustrate the point: in cursing the serpent, YHWH consigns it to an existence of humiliation, moving about on its belly and eating dust until the seed of the woman strikes its head (Gen. 3:14). Meanwhile the

155. *pace* e.g. Streett 2015.

cursed ground imposes toil on Adam and rewards his labours with thorns and thistles until the time when he returns to it in death (v. 17).[156] In 1 Samuel, the curse that Saul rashly pronounces on any of his men who eats food keeps his army back from completely vanquishing the Philistines because its demand for Jonathan's death goes unfulfilled, requiring that the people ransom him.[157] In Zechariah's sixth vision, a flying scroll signifies 'the curse [Heb. הָאָלָה; Gk. ἡ ἀρά] that goes out over the face of the whole land' (Zech. 5:3), which promises 'cutting off' to thieves and false witnesses (LXX: they will be 'recompensed until death' [ἕως θανάτου ἐκδικηθήσεται]). But this is described, chillingly, as something that will happen over time: 'it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide [וְלָנָה] in that house and consume it, both timber and stones' (v. 4).[158] In Malachi 2, YHWH rebukes the priests for neglecting to honour him, threatening that 'I will send the curse on you and I will curse your blessings; indeed I have *already* cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and I will put you out of my presence' (vv. 2-3).

The same pattern can be observed in second-temple literature and in the NT. To provide several examples: ben Sira warns regarding the fate of the wicked that 'if you beget, you beget unto a curse [εἰς κατάραν], and if you die, unto a curse [εἰς κατάραν] you are apportioned. Whatever is from the earth goes into the earth; so the ungodly go *from a curse to destruction* [ἀπὸ κατάρας εἰς ἀπώλειαν]' (41:9-10).[159] In the Qumran Community Rule, the Levites curse 'the men of the lot of Belial', and the imprecations are accompanied by numerous iterations of their hoped-for destiny: to be handed over to those who seek vengeance and sentenced to eternal fire, and their spirits condemned to annihilation; this is what it means to have one's 'lot' with 'the cursed ones [ארורי]' (1QS II.4-18). In the gospel of Mark, Jesus tells a fig tree, 'May no one eat fruit from you ever again [μηκέτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα]!'; upon returning to it after his cleansing of the temple, the disciples observe that 'the fig tree, which you cursed [κατηράσω], has withered' (Mk. 11:21), in contrast with the Matthean parallel, in which the tree withers instantly.[160] Here it is worth noting that the

156. The LXX renders the Heb. ארר with ἐπικατάρατος in Gen. 3:14, 17.
157. Cf. 1 Sam. 14:24, 28; LXX ἐπικατάρατος translates ארר.
158. The LXX reads καταλύσει and συντελέσει, 'demolish' and 'bring it to an end'.
159. Author's trans.
160. Cf. Matt. 21:18-22. The Matthean parallel lacks explicit curse language, though this is probably insignificant.

framing of Jesus' action around the cleansing of the temple is meant to indicate something about the temple's present condition and the disaster awaiting it: the temple and its administration stand (like the fig tree) under judgment and are awaiting the impending outcome of this judgment, namely, the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.

It is true that curses do not always envisage a process that eventuates in destruction, but may simply result in a (negative) static state. For instance, Noah's curse on Canaan consigns him and descendants to servitude under the descendants of Ham's brothers; similarly, Joshua curses the Gibeonites who trick Israel into an alliance, making their people forced labourers.[161] In the case of Galatians 3:13, however, and notwithstanding Paul's use of the language of servitude to describe Israel's situation 'under the law', the Deuteronomic background suggests that he understands the curse in more negative and final terms than this. In Deuteronomy, the curses of the covenant describe an extended process of national calamity as the curse works itself out in Israel 'until you are destroyed'.[162] The blessings and curses of the covenant are equated with 'life and death' as the destiny of the nation and of individual Israelites. Moses concludes the address, 'I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you *life and death, blessings and curses*. Choose life so that you and your descendants ["seed"] may live' (Deut. 30:19). As several interpreters have noted, not only Deuteronomy's blessing and curse scheme, but also its association of these with *life and death* are important in Paul's argument.[163] Blessing and curse, life and death, both find their eschatological realisation in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, and the sequence (death followed by life, curse followed by blessing) is itself evocative of the historical pattern described in Deuteronomy: the full outworking of the curses in exile will be followed by repentance and restoration, accompanied by the heart-circumcision of Israel's 'seed' (σπέρμα; cf. Gal. 3:16, 19, 29) 'so that you may live' (Deut. 30:6).[164] In

161. Cf. Gen. 9:25; Josh. 9:23.

162. Cf. Deut. 28, esp. vv. 20-24, 36-37, 41, 45, 48-51, 61, 63-68; noting the repeated employment of עַד/ ἕως ἂν; cf. Lev. 26:15-39.

163. See Morales 2010, 86-114, esp. 105-9; Boakye 2017, 122-31.

164. So Lührmann 1992, 64. This would appear to stand in some tension with Lührmann's claim, shortly beforehand, that '[w]hat in Paul becomes a temporal sequence through Christ [law, curse, and death, followed by faith, blessing, and life] operates in the Old Testament as two simultaneous possibilities, whose realization is decided by one's behavior vis-à-vis the law: whoever accepts the life offered in the law, the promise of the covenant, stands under the blessing; whoever rejects the law stands under the curse, under death. Thus Paul tears apart what belongs together in the Old Testament, in which even faith or nonobservance can be inserted into the scheme as the life that, respectively, corresponds or does not correspond to the law and merits the promise of blessing or the threat of curse' (62). Here it is also important to recognise that Paul would not consider the blessings held forth in the law as 'promissory' in the sense that Lührmann frequently intends. By virtue of their very conditionality, the blessings described in the law, which depend upon obediently observing it, stand in contrast with the unconditionality of God's promise, which is simply to be trusted (Gal. 3:11-12, 18).

keeping with prophetic promises, Paul and other second-temple Jews associated this promise with the new covenant and outpouring of the eschatological Spirit, which in Galatians is accomplished through Christ's death and resurrection.

These considerations suggest that, in Paul's understanding, Christ has personally attained to the dual fulfilment of the Deuteronomic blessings and curses through his death and resurrection, fulfilling Israel's national destiny as described in Deuteronomy. In doing so, he has *undergone the full outworking of the law's curse in death*.[165] Paul does not explicitly state why Christ's death has this redemptive result, as opposed to anyone else's experience of the law's curse. If Christ fulfils Israel's deuteronomic narrative role, however, then this suggests that something in the nature of his relation to Israel's God accounts for this reversal. In Deuteronomy, Israel's punishment is not *itself* the sufficient condition of the end of exile: rather, Moses promises restoration to Israel when they 'return' to YHWH and 'obey him with all [their] heart and with all [their] soul' (Deut. 30:1-5). Repentance, taking the form of *obedient fidelity to God*, results in the restoration of Israel's fortunes, their ingathering to the land and the heart-circumcision that enables Israel to love YHWH and therefore *live* (v. 6)—a concern central to Paul's argument in Galatians, not least in the verses immediately preceding Paul's soteriological statement.[166] If Paul has this background in mind (and the evidence considered in our discussion so far indicates that he does), Jesus' *obedient fidelity to God* in his death performs the narrative function of Israel's repentance from within the depths of curse and exile.[167]

This reading is all the more likely if, as many have argued (and as I argued in ch. 2), Christ's πίστις is integral to Paul's understanding of Christ's soteriological role. While many do not accept this reading, there are good reasons to adopt it in Galatians.[168] First, as noted above, Paul describes faith as something that arrived with Jesus Christ—despite having already argued that justifying faith is attested right from the beginning of God's covenant

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165. This interpretation is hinted at in Macaskill 2013, 236, who describes Christ's death as 'the final outworking' of the curse, so that those in Christ find that the 'curse has been borne for them in full'. Macaskill does not dwell on the specific problem of a realised vs. impending judgment, however.

166. Cf. Gal. 2:19-20; 3:11-12, 21; 5:25; 6:8; Boakye 2017.

167. Cf. Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8. It is therefore unnecessary to play off the redemptive instrumentality of Christ's resurrection in v. 14 against his death in v. 13, as Wakefield 2003, 182 does.

168. One possibility not explored here is that Christ's πίστις fits within Paul's Isaac-typology in connection with his possible use of Aqedah imagery in v. 13. The difficulty here, however, is that our knowledge of these traditions in Paul's time is too sparse for us to know whether the concept of πίστις figured prominently in them. On Aqedah traditions and their relevance for reading Paul, the classic discussions are Daly 1977; Davies and Chilton 1978; Segal 1984; Vermes 1983. More recently, see e.g. Hahn 2005; Levenson 1993; Noort and Tigchelaar 2002; Patillo 2011; Punt 2009; Ripley 2010.

dealings with his people, with Abraham. If God's promise, received by faith, is constitutive of the Abrahamic covenant, and if the Galatians' faith identifies them with Abraham and the covenant that God made with him, it makes little sense for him to speak of faith's *arrival* unless this refers specifically to the soteriologically and eschatologically instrumental enactment of *Christ's* faith as distinct from the faith of others.[169] Second, Paul twice refers Abraham's 'seed' as the recipient of the promise, together with Abraham. Here we must note that the seed is not said merely to be the intended recipient of *what was promised*; rather, Paul specifically identifies the seed (like Abraham) as one *to whom the promise was spoken* (3:16, 19). This suggests that faith in the promise is the characteristic response, not only of Abraham, but of his seed as well. Third, the identificatory relation that faith creates between believers and Christ, as in Romans, makes all the more sense if Christ himself is characterised by the same faith.[170] Faith, for Paul, is the means by which the eschatological Spirit is received (3:1-5, 14). Moreover, as our study of Romans and 2 Corinthians has shown, justification and the reception of eschatological life (by the Spirit) cannot be separated from each other in Paul's thought. If Christ, as the foremost recipient of the promise in Paul's understanding, mediates the Spirit to others through his own vivifying reception of the Spirit in being raised from the dead, this suggests that justifying faith is a form of participation in the *life* (Spirit) of Christ because it is a participation in the *faith* of Christ (2:20), whose faith is answered with the fulfilment of the promise of life in his resurrection from the dead.

Since Christ's soteriological role in Galatians 3:13 culminates in his mediation of the eschatological life and blessing that Paul says were promised to him, and since this focus aligns well with the narrative *telos* of Israel's history in Deuteronomy 30, it is appropriate to understand Christ's faith in the promise (climactically, in his faithful death) as the means by which Paul believes he has attained to the promise's fulfilment, and so become the person in whom Israel's eschatological destiny is realised on behalf of the nations. Christ's faith thus plays an instrumental role in the 'narrative substructure' (to borrow Richard Hays' language) of Paul's argument, which centrally concerns the divine purpose to bestow blessing on the Gentiles through the restoration of Israel.[171] To put it into the preferred terms of our study, Christ performs a twofold soteriological function in his death in Galatians 3:13: (1) *he*

169. So Choi 2005, 472-77.
170. Cf. Gal. 2:19-20; 3:14, 26-29.
171. See Hays 2002 (orig. 1983). Cf. also Longenecker 1998, 143-44, who argues that Gal. 2:16 functions as the premise of vv. 10 and 13.

undergoes the full eventuation of the curse in death and (2) *he enacts a faith in God's promise that brings deliverance from the curse and from death*.

5.2.3.4 Conclusion

In this section, we have seen that Paul's implied narrative in Galatians 3:13-14 is driven by the promise of blessing to Abraham's single seed, Christ. The fulfilment of this promise demands the resolution of the pre-eschatological condition of servitude that the law imposes on disobedient Israel in the form of the curse. By his death and resurrection, Christ thus becomes the soteriological agent who fulfils Israel's eschatological destiny as defined in Deuteronomy (filtered through prophetic writings concerning the new covenant), enduring the full eventuation of the curse while also turning in faith to God to receive deliverance from the curse and circumcision of the heart by the Spirit. For this reason, he becomes the mediator of Israel's eschatological blessing, both to Jews and to Gentiles. As we also saw, the scope of Christ's soteriological function in verse 13 is confined specifically to Israel, whose curse under the law he assumes and resolves for Jews who are identified with him. To state it in a single sentence, Christ's soteriological function is *to obtain and mediate eschatological life to Israel and the nations by faithfully undergoing the full eventuation of the law's curse in death*. In the next section, I will assess the value of substitutionary and participatory language for describing Christ's soteriological role within this implied narrative.

5.3 Substitution and Participation in Galatians 3:10-14

With the soteriological function that Christ fulfils in these verses now established, we turn to the question of substitution and participation. Understood especially against the backdrop of the larger argument of which it is a part, it is evident that Christ's death in verse 13, together with his risen life in verse 14, fulfil a soteriological function that the language of substitution and of participation accurately describe. As in previous chapters, these motifs not only do not stand in contradiction with each other, but mutually depend upon each other in order for Christ's soteriological role to attain its purpose. Specifically, the substitutionary potential of Christ's death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life becomes actual through believing participation in Christ, in which Christ is joined to believers in such a way that his death, resurrection and life function *as* theirs, *in place of* their own. Accordingly, participation in Christ does not, in Galatians, entail the believer's soteriologically instrumental recapitulation of Christ's redemptive actions in his or her own experience.

5.3.1 Christ as a Redemptive Replacement for Believing Jews and Gentiles in Galatians 3:13-14

In this section, we will first consider the substitutionary dimensions of the soteriological role that Paul attributes to Christ in these verses, some of which become apparent especially in view of the larger argument of Galatians 2–3. As I will show, Christ's death fulfils a substitutionary function (in this text, specifically for Jews) both in reference to the fatal outworking of the curse that it sustains and in reference to the faith that Christ enacts in so doing. Second, I will also show that Paul assumes the eschatological life that Christ's death makes available to be mediated through his ongoing substitutionary relation to believers (both Jew and Gentile), a relation that enables him to construe the eschatological relationship of Jews and Gentiles in such a way as to place them on equal footing as regards divine sonship and Abrahamic kinship.

5.3.1.1 Christ's Substitutionary Death

Christ's redemptive death in Galatians 3:13 may be described as substitutionary in two respects, which correspond to its dual function as identified above: first, in carrying out his redemptive act, Christ undergoes the full eventuation of the law's curse in death in such a way that those he redeems are spared this fatal outworking. Consequently, his death replaces theirs in sustaining the law's curse in full. Second, Christ's obedient fidelity to God, climactically realised in this curse-sustaining death, replaces the agency of those he redeems in bringing about the eschatological and covenantal renewal that is prophesied in Deuteronomy and that fulfils the divine promises to Abraham. In what follows, I will address each of these in order.

As we have noted, the claim that Christ's death replaces the deaths of others in sustaining the full outworking of the curse normally encounters the participationist objection that Paul's statement envisages an identificatory relationship between Christ and those he redeems, whereas substitution presupposes the differentiation of the two parties. de Boer puts this objection most clearly and forcefully:

> The sense…is not "Christ redeemed us from the law's curse by having allowed himself to become accursed in our place"…but rather "Christ redeemed us from the law's curse by having allowed himself to become accursed for our benefit." The substitutionary meaning ("in our place" or "in our stead") would imply that Christ took upon himself a penalty that *ought* to be imposed on human beings. For Paul, however, human beings apart from Christ are *already* under a curse (v. 10a); the issue is redemption from this already-existing situation…. [Christ] went so far as to share "our" predicament of being under the law and its curse…. The idea is not that Christ became a curse from which "we" are then granted an exemption, but that Christ shared "our" predicament in order to liberate "us" from that

> predicament, along with himself[.][172]

As I have shown above, however, such a strict either/or between the curse's actuality and its impending realisation is unwarranted in Galatians 3:13. Paul assumes that those whom Christ redeems from the curse were formerly experiencing its activity *and* that Christ's assumption of the curse involved its intensification and full eventuation in his death. In other words, Christ's experience of the curse's full trajectory liberates those who stand on that trajectory from its fatal terminus.

This suggests that de Boer and other participationist readings are right to rule out *certain constructions* of Christ's substitutionary role in this text, namely those that present the impending penalty as discontinuous with the law-cursed existence that preceded it, the external interruption of an externally-imposed penalty rather than an internal eventuation of the accursedness under the law that already belongs to those who are 'of works of the law'. Paul does not describe Christ as the alternate object of an external and entirely unrealised penalty that is merely threatened against others but actually imposed upon one; rather, he experiences the *impending* outcome of the *present* accursedness of all who are 'under the law' and 'of works of the law', in order to deliver them from that imminent destiny into eschatological life. Thus, while de Boer is right to state that 'the issue is redemption from this already-existing situation', the 'situation' in question anticipates the outworking of a destructive process, one which Christ undergoes and by his death completes. For those who belong to Christ, then, his body, rather than their own, is the site of the curse's full eventuation, as well as the termination of the law's governing authority over them. They have been delivered from the deadly process of the law's curse because another, Christ, has undergone its full consequences for them and posited his bodily death in place of their own as the agent of their redemption from the curse. Regardless of what Paul and other Jewish believers now 'live in the flesh' (2:20)—including, apparently, the prospect of their own physical death—they are freed from the law and its curse because of the accursed bodily death of another.

A further observation regarding de Boer's objection brings us to the second aspect of Christ's substitutionary role in this text, noted above. Even if de Boer were correct in understanding the curse from which Christ redeems others as being already fully in effect, such that nothing of the curse yet impends upon its sufferers, and correct as well in

172. de Boer 2011, 211-12, emph. added.

understanding Christ's redemptive act to be purely one of identification, this would not negate the sense in which his death is a functional replacement for the deaths of others in the capacity of accomplishing their redemption. It would only mean that his death does not sustain the curse's outworking in place of theirs. It would nonetheless remain the case that, *functionally*, his becoming a curse redeems them from the curse, such that his experience of the curse fulfils a redemptive function for them in a way that their own experience of the same curse does not. In this regard, at least, it should not be controversial *that* Christ's redemptive action in Galatians 3:13 involves a substitution, even if how this is so is a matter of debate.

Another way of putting this is to say that Christ's *agency*—as I have argued, his faith and obedience to God in his death—replaces the agency of believers in bringing Paul's implied narrative to its redemptive fulfilment. He himself, in Paul's eyes, is Israel's turning to God within the depths of exile, who thereby brings about their restoration and the outpouring of the eschatological Spirit. Were it not for this, Jews under the law (and any Gentiles who join them through circumcision) would be back in the impossible situation that Paul describes in verses 10-12 and 19-22 (and in which he locates those who still cling to the Sinai covenant in 4:21-31), in need of the promised blessing but incapable of attaining it through obedience to a law that, of itself, cannot 'make alive' (3:21; cf. 2:21). We may thus compare the situation of those whom Christ redeems to that described in Rom. 8:3: fleshly weakness prevents the law from functioning as a path to life, but God's intervention in Christ confers the intended blessing in such a way that Christ's soteriological agency replaces the weakness and incapacity of flesh.

5.3.1.2 Christ's Substitutionary Life

While discussions of substitution in Galatians have revolved exclusively around Christ's death in 3:13, a consideration of the stated goal of this redemptive action in verse 14 and its role in Paul's larger argument shows that, as in the other letters we have considered, the language of substitution finds broader application in Paul's portrayal of Christ's soteriological role. Despite McLean's assertion to the contrary, Christ's resurrection plays a vital role (albeit an implicit one) in the narrative movement of verses 13-14: if Christ is the mediator of Israel's eschatological blessings—that is, if 'the blessing of Abraham…come[s] to the nations in Christ Jesus', as Paul says—then this presupposes his deliverance from the

accursed state in which he died and his ongoing life as the risen Lord.[173] Far from belonging to a different soteriological 'paradigm' in Paul's thought, Christ's resurrection and life are the only reasons that Paul can speak of his death as redemptive, as they are the result of his fulfilment of Israel's deuteronomic narrative role. In what follows, I will highlight their substitutionary character in Paul's argument.

In order to appreciate what Paul means in locating the blessing 'in Christ Jesus', it is important to consider his use of this same language elsewhere in the same argument. I have already noted how verse 14 looks ahead to the end of chapter 3: through faith and in Christ, all are sons of God, constituted as one in Christ, Abraham's single seed. Equally, however, verse 14 (as well as Paul's description of Christ's death in v. 13) looks back to the end of chapter 2 (vv. 17-21), where Paul describes his own involvement in Christ's death and resurrection through faith. Both texts concern the bestowal of eschatological life through the death and resurrection of Christ—a death that was 'for me'/'for us' (ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ/ἡμῶν), with the resulting blessing of eschatological life that is now found 'in' Christ (vv. 17, 20). Furthermore, Christ's death effects a break from the law which, in both cases, comes about through the law's own instrumentality and reveals its obsolescence now that eschatological life has arrived through Christ (v. 19). It would therefore be natural to read Galatians 3:13-14 as the salvation-historical concomitant of what Paul describes in 2:19-20.

One would never receive this impression from current discussions of substitution in Paul, but Galatians 2:20 arguably constitutes *the* single clearest instance of substitution in all of the apostle's writings. Through his identification with Christ, Paul's 'living' in the natural, fleshly sense has been relegated to a place of insignificance next to the eschatological function of the one who now lives pneumatically in him in his stead. Here the King James rendering ('nevertheless I live, yet not I') helpfully captures something of Paul's word order in verse 20, which seems intended to convey the complexity of what he is saying with its prioritisation of the main verb and its separation from the subject (ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ); or, as most modern translations render it, 'It is no longer *I* who live: *Christ* lives in me'.[174] Of the two persons, Paul and Christ, *Christ* is the one who is doing the living, even though he is doing so *in* Paul.[175] Put differently, the presence of Christ's own eschatological life in Paul—

173. See McLean 1996, 125; as noted in previous chs., McLean makes the same (equally erroneous) claim regarding Rom. 8:3 and 2 Cor. 5:21.

174. See NRSV, ESV, NASB, NET; NIV and HCSB simply say 'I no longer live'.

175. This offers a more nuanced reading of Paul's statement than the claim on finds among some interpreters that Paul's 'self' has been annihilated (through crucifixion with Christ) and replaced with Christ as a new subject. So e.g. Martyn 1997, 258; de Boer 2011, 160-61. de Boer writes: Paul's 'nomistically determined

here we may assume Paul is thinking of the Spirit, in view of the Spirit's importance and link with faith in the subsequent argument—has deprived Paul's natural life of significance *qua* living. Being 'alive' is no longer a matter of biological vitality, but an eschatological characteristic that one can possess *only if Christ, the mediator of eschatological blessing, takes up residence in oneself.* Consequently, in the capacity of 'living to God' (v. 19), Christ's pneumatic, eschatological life functions as a soteriological replacement for Paul's sarkic, non-eschatological life.

This up-close and autobiographical portrayal of how Christ mediates eschatological life to Paul forms the background to his claim in 3:14 that the goal of Christ's redemptive action was that Christ himself would become the mediator of Israel's eschatological blessings to the world. Not only Paul and other redeemed Jews who receive the Spirit through faith (as in 2:15-21), but equally the Gentiles as well, now enjoy eschatological life through Christ. But Paul's preceding discussion shows that this in no way diminishes the sense in which this life, even as others participate in it, properly belongs to *Christ* and not to them. We can conclude, then, that Paul's argument in Galatians 3:13-14 presupposes that Christ is the unique bearer of the blessing that he mediates to Jews and Gentiles, because his eschatological life replaces their fleshly life as the means of their living to God in freedom from the flesh and the elements of the world. This is why it is possible for Jews and Gentiles, still living amid the conditions of 'the present evil age' (1:4), already to be considered partakers in Israel's promised eschatological blessings, a 'new creation' (καινὴ κτίσις) in which circumcision or uncircumcision are irrelevant as regards inheritance rights (6:15).

This brings us, secondly, to Galatians 3:26-29. As we saw earlier, Paul restricts the status of 'seed' to Christ as the single individual heir of Abraham before proceeding to attribute this status to everyone who is 'in' him, regardless of their own fleshly condition (Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female). The oneness of the Galatians and all believers is predicated on the fact that, through baptism, they are all 'clothed' in the one seed of Abraham, on whom their Abrahamic kinship, divine sonship and status as heir to the promises thus depends. As with Jews such as Paul, the Gentiles presently enjoy a new status that is expressly based on their

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"I" was destroyed in the crucifixion of Christ…. The death of Paul's nomistic "I" had left him, as it were, an empty container, which Christ subsequently filled, creating a new "I"'. In contrast, I argue, it is preferable to see continuity in the 'self' (which fits Paul's use of 'I' in the surrounding verses), and discontinuity in the *means* of the self's 'life'. In other words, the *death* of the 'I' should be distinguished conceptually from the *annihilation* of the 'I', which continues to exist but now finds the source of its life elsewhere, in Christ. On this point, the description of Lührmann 1992, 49 is preferable: 'The law itself killed this *I* but in the process forfeited its power over the dead (cf. Rom. 7:1-2, 6).... The new life of the murdered *I* is now no longer one's own life; it is life for God. And one's own *I* no longer lives; the place of this *I* is taken by Christ' (emph. orig.).

identification with *another* who, superimposed over them like clothing through baptism, determines their status on the basis of what *he* is rather than what *they* are. As Richard Hays puts it, 'Because Gentile believers have "put on Christ" in baptism (Gal. 3:27), they have become united with him in a way that allows them to participate—vicariously—in his inheritance and his destiny'.[176] For Gentiles no less than Jews, then, Christ is a redemptive replacement for all who identify with him in baptism, and this replacement is the basis on which believers can be assured of their eschatological inheritance. In other words, the divine and Abrahamic sonship of Christ replaces the fleshly and pre-eschatological distinctions of those who belong to him in the capacity of bestowing the status of heir to the promised eschatological inheritance. *They* will inherit because *Christ* clothes them through their union with him.

A consideration of Galatians 3:13-14 in the context of the larger argument of Galatians 2–3 therefore shows that he understands Christ to be the unique bearer of Israel's eschatological blessings, in which Jews and Gentiles participate. That the blessing comes to the Gentiles 'in Christ Jesus' is in part for Paul a way of identifying his own 'person' as constitutive of the status that he mediates to others. To possess the Spirit of Christ in fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham, as in Romans and 2 Corinthians, is to possess Christ himself, the vicarious bearer of divine sonship and eschatological Abrahamic kinship. This is vital to the argument Paul is making because of how it reconstructs the relationship of Jew and Gentile (as well as other marks of distinction) in light of the gospel. Christ's redemptive replacement makes the status of 'seed of Abraham' (the bone of contention in Galatia) attributable to Jews and Gentiles *on exclusively christological grounds* that equally relativise their claims to Abrahamic kinship or their lack of such claims, based on fleshly marks of distinction. Christ *himself* is constitutive of eschatological Abrahamic kinship 'according to Isaac', because he is himself the single seed promised to Abraham of which Isaac (rather than Ishmael) was a type. Consequently, being a free Jewish male confers no more claim to Abrahamic kinship than does being an enslaved Gentile woman. What matters is that one is joined to Christ himself, the only seed of Abraham and son of God, and being personally indwelt by him through his eschatological life, and thereby 'clothed' with him—endued with the attributes that properly belong to him as regards sonship and eschatological inheritance. By making his argument in this way, Paul does not simply make theological 'space' for Gentiles within the

176. Hays 1989, 121.

eschatological people of God: he localises the identity of God's people *as a whole* within Christ, who inhabits them pneumatically through faith and not the works of the law.[177]

5.3.1.3 Conclusion

As I have shown in this section, the language of substitution helpfully and accurately describes not only Paul's description of Christ's death in Galatians 3:13, but also his resurrection and ongoing life in verse 14. As Israel's redeemer, Christ's faithful obedience to God amid the curse's full eventuation in death replaces that of believing Jews whom he redeems from the curse. As the unique bearer and mediator of Israel's eschatological blessings, Christ's divine sonship and Abrahamic kinship are constitutive of the status of believers (both Jews and Gentiles), replacing their pre-eschatological fleshly condition as the basis of this status and their reception of its attendant blessings. In his death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life, then, Christ is a substitute for the people of God.

5.3.2 Participation in Christ as a Means of Replacement

The preceding discussion has already highlighted the importance of participation in Paul's understanding of Christ's soteriological role in the argument of Galatians 2–3.[178] The eschatological *telos* of Christ's redemptive action is explicitly participatory, as it finds its realisation for others 'in Christ Jesus' and in the reception of the Spirit through faith. This claim refers back to Paul's strongly participatory statements at the end of chapter 2, where he identifies justification as something to be sought 'in Christ', and speaks of Christ's personal presence in him, which reveals itself in a life characterised by 'the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me' (2:17, 19-20). Likewise, as we have seen, it looks ahead to Paul's claim that those who are baptised 'into Christ' are clothed with him and reconstituted as sons of God and Abraham's single seed 'in Christ Jesus'. In this section, I will extend these observations regarding the participatory means of Christ's substitution in Paul's argument, while also addressing the question of 'recapitulative participationism'. I will show that, while there is clear evidence in Paul's argument that participation in Christ

177. The observation that Paul bases Abrahamic kinship on Christ's *personal presence* challenges the reading of Thiessen 2016, 129-60, who argues that Paul thinks the Spirit bestows Abrahamic kinship on believers because it is a material entity made up of the same 'stuff' as Abraham's seed (Christ). But for Paul, it is Christ himself—Christ in his personal immanence to the believer—who is the constitutive basis of Abrahamic kinship, and the believer's possession of this kinship is the result of his replacing role. On the question of a material πνεῦμα in Paul, see Rabens 2013, 25-120.

178. On this theme in Gal., see Longenecker 1998, 63-67.

underlies his substitutionary relation to believers, there is no evidence (as Dunn argues) that participation requires a recapitulation of Christ's death and resurrection as a basis for sharing fully in the eschatological blessings he bestows.

5.3.2.1 Participation in Christ's Death and Life in the Argument of Galatians

To the above observations, we may add that 2:19-20 establishes a participatory background for understanding Paul's claims, not only regarding the risen Christ's mediation of eschatological life in 3:14, but equally regarding Christ's death in verse 13. Paul's identification with Christ extends equally to the latter: through the law he 'died to the law', having been 'crucified with Christ' (v. 19)—despite the fact that he continues 'in the flesh' that once placed him under the law's curse (v. 20). Redemption from the negative state determined by the law, then, comes to Paul through his identification with Christ, by which the bodily death and resurrection of Christ into pneumatic eschatological life become functionally *his own*. Consequently, *he* no longer lives (for he belongs to the crucified Christ), and the 'life' that he could be said to live is really Christ's life, lived within him through the Spirit and faith.

Paul's later argument in Galatians dwells at greater length on the participatory relationship that 2:19-20 and 3:14 envisage, while also making it clear that removal from the one's participatory situation in Christ places one outside the sphere of his redemptive replacement (one indication that such participation can appropriately be called the *means* of this replacement). Those who, in Christ, are filled with the Spirit encounter an eschatological duality between the realms of 'the Spirit' and 'the flesh', which produce contrary and conflicting desires (5:17). Nevertheless, despite the ongoing conflict between the two, believers are assured that their relation to the old existence has already been decisively ended: 'walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out [fut. τελέσητε] the desire of the flesh' (vv. 16-17).[179] This is possible because 'those who belong to Christ Jesus [οἵ…τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ[180]] crucified [ἐσταύρωσαν] the flesh with the passions and the desires' (v. 24). They are, in turn, to adopt the same mindset as Paul, who boasts only in 'the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which [or 'through whom'] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world' and recognise, as he does, that the worldly dichotomy of circumcision and

179. On these verses, see Wakefield 2003, 199-204.
180. Cf. Gal. 3:29.

foreskin belongs to the present age and is irrelevant next to the 'new creation' (6:14-15).[181]

That believers have *already* crucified the flesh is a remarkable claim in view of the quite real conflict they experience with it—like Paul, they still live 'in the flesh' (2:20). But as with Paul's reference to his and the world's crucifixion vis-a-vis each other in chapter 6, the point is that from where the Galatian believers are located ('in' the crucified and raised Christ), these relations have been definitively severed.[182] Here too Paul's implicit assumption is clear: what happened to the body of Christ in its death and resurrection constitutes believers in a new situation of being dead to the law and alive to God regardless of whatever may be said about their own fleshly bodies and the ongoing presence of sin and corruption in them. Identified with Christ and following the leading of the eschatological Spirit, by which they 'live' (5:16, 18, 25), they are now in a situation in which the body of Christ has taken the place of their own in the capacity of accomplishing their deliverance 'from the present evil age'. Christ's death and resurrection form the hinge on which the ages turn, because in his own existence, through his bodily death and resurrection, he has brought it about for all who belong to him and possess his Spirit.

To embrace circumcision and Torah observance as conditions of justification, on the other hand, is to pretend that one still lives in the world of the flesh that the Son of God has assumed, embodied, and nailed to the cross. Here the crucial role of participation in Christ becomes most evident: if anyone accepts circumcision as a condition of justification, Paul says, then that person is not only obligated to observe the law in its entirety, but also is 'annulled' or 'discharged from Christ' (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ) and has 'fallen away from grace' (5:4); this stands in express *contrast* to the situation of those who, 'by the Spirit, from faith, eagerly await the hope of righteousness' and who know that, 'in Christ Jesus', the division of circumcision and foreskin as the basis for determining the covenant people has been replaced by 'faith working through love' (v. 6). Similarly, in chapter 3, Paul's warning regarding 'as many as are of the works of the law' presupposes that the law's curse remains a real danger for those who, by accepting circumcision, sever themselves from Christ. Only *in Christ*, then, has the curse been nullified through his death and resurrection. Put differently, only those who participate in Christ find that his accursed and resurrected body has freed them from the conditions of 'the present evil age' (cf. 1:4).

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181. On 'new creation' in Galatians, see Jackson 2010, 83-114.

182. Jackson 2010, 105: 'Paul's identification with Christ had meant severing all ties to the old world to the extent that he was completely removed from its sphere of influence. But the old world died, too, when Christ's body, a representative part of that old world, died on the cross'.

It is worth noting, before we turn to the issue of recapitulative participationism, that this analysis problematises an evaluation of the mechanism of Christ's substitution in terms of transfer, as in McLean's 'scapegoat' reading.[183] While one could speak of the curse as being 'transferred' from those in Christ to Christ himself in the sense that his redemptive action effectively 'removes' their condition, this ignores the more fundamental transfer that Paul's argument presupposes—namely, the transfer of *believers* from the present evil age to the age to come through their identification and solidarity with the substitutionary body of Jesus Christ. This transfer, as I have shown, crucially involves both Christ's death and his risen life, which (as in the other texts we have considered) replace the agency and natural capacities of believers precisely by functioning as their own. Consequently, we can agree with the observation of Ridderbos, noted earlier in our discussion:

> The thought is that God in His grace made the punishment accomplished in Christ valid for His own, and so brought reconciliation through Christ's death. Such a redemption (ransoming, redeeming) has not, therefore, the character of a transaction, a nice balance of the active and passive, but is a mystery of salvation in which is manifested the integrity of God's justice and His grace, and the deep bonds of unity between Christ and His own.[184]

Precisely in substituting himself for them, Christ is united to the people of God and thereby becomes the 'content' (so to speak) of their eschatological identity. Moreover, when we recognise that the Spirit, even as the mode of Christ's personal presence in believers, is equally *God's* Spirit, so that their sharing in Christ's Spirit-mediated sonship makes them heirs 'through God' (3:5; 4:6-7; cf. 1 Thess. 4:8), it becomes apparent that the language of substitution and participation *together* describe the heart of the relation that exists between God and his people in Paul's understanding. Through Christ and the Spirit, God has become the life that his creatures live, and he has done so by making the death, resurrection and life of his Son *theirs, in place of their own*. This construal of participation differs from that of the 'recapitulative' paradigm we have considered throughout this dissertation, to which we now turn.

5.3.2.2 Recapitulative Participationism in Galatians?

In this final section, it remains for us to consider the exegetical viability of the alternative paradigm for understanding Paul's participatory language with which the preceding chapters have repeatedly engaged. This 'recapitulative participationism', best represented in the work

183. See McLean 1996, 124; cf. 113-40.
184. Ridderbos 1953, 127.

of James Dunn, supposes that participation in Christ entails the recurrence of his death's soteriological function in the suffering and death of the believer, whose identification with Christ assures him or her that the end result of this process will be sharing in Christ's resurrection. Of Galatians 3:13 (which Dunn interprets in levitical sacrificial terms, as with Rom. 8:3 and 2 Cor. 5:21), Dunn writes, '[Christ's] death was the end of fallen man, the destruction of man as sinner. But only those who, like the offerer of old, identify themselves with the sacrifice may know the other half of the chiasmus and interchange, the life of Christ beyond the death of sin, the righteousness of God in Christ'.[185] The argument of the preceding chapter already constitutes a strong challenge to such a view by implication, but it will be helpful to make explicit precisely how our findings undermine this reading of Paul's soteriology.

We may note, first, that none of the texts we have considered above offers any indication that the believer's own suffering and/or death is understood to effect his or her redemption in Christ through a repetition or recapitulation of Christ's death and resurrection. Instead, stress consistently falls upon believers' present enjoyment of eschatological life, which Paul identifies as the condition of their future experience of full glorification.[186] Paul himself no longer faces condemnation, especially in the eyes of the law; it is only if he re-institutes the law that he proves himself a transgressor (Gal. 2:18). In Galatians 3:13, the supposition that benefiting from Christ's death entails the recapitulation of the curse in oneself completely ignores the point of Paul's assertion: Christ's accursed death *has redeemed 'us' from the curse of the law*. Moreover, if participation in Christ entails a recapitulative process of experiencing the curse for oneself, then Paul's warning concerning 'as many as are of works of the law' in 3:10 is beside the point since, on this reading, one does not escape the fatal outworking of the curse, but merely undergoes it in a different manner (in solidarity with Christ) and with a different final outcome (resurrection).

Most fundamentally, as I have observed above, the very meaning of believers' ongoing fleshly existence has been changed by virtue of the Christ event: their 'life' is now the presence of Christ, and the flesh has ceased to be the place where one's being dead or alive is

185. Dunn 1991, 47. Dunn does say, however, that Gal. 3:13 is not as clearly sacrificial as the other texts he cites.

186. So Lull 1980, 174: 'Paul offers...the assurance that their life in the Spirit had already united them with these gifts of the future' (namely, 'righteousness and eternal life in the "last age"'). None of this need contradict the argument of Kwon 2004 that Paul's pastoral concern for the Galatians has a future, 'not yet' orientation: it is precisely because of what the Galatians possess 'already' (the Spirit, sonship, heirship, eschatological Abrahamic kinship) that they can expect the future blessings he describes, and accordingly need not alter their present condition (e.g. through circumcision).

determined (this has happened already in the crucified and raised body of Christ). All of this runs directly contrary to Dunn's interpretation of Paul's statement 'I have been crucified with Christ' (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι), which takes the perfect tense of the verb to mean that Paul sees himself as nailed to the cross but not yet dead—that is, still in the process of identifying with Christ's death, in the hope of sharing his resurrection.[187] Even if we are to follow Dunn in according the verb's tense such great significance in this instance, it is no less likely and, indeed, arguably more so that the state of completion intended by the verb is not simply the penultimate result of being affixed to the cross, but the final result of *being dead*, which is the intended goal of the action. This makes far better sense of the immediately preceding statement 'I died to the law' than does Dunn's reading, which should rather have followed from 'I am dying to the law, that I might live to God'.[188] Contrary to the impression one receives from such a reading, Paul's emphasis in Galatians falls on what believers have *already* received through Christ, even if this is the anticipation of more to come: already dead and raised with Christ and already Abraham's seed and heirs, the children of the free woman born according to the Spirit have already crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Accordingly, insofar as Paul identifies a condition on which the believer can expect the final, bodily experience of resurrection, it is the present possession of the Spirit that comes into view, and not a requisite process of suffering and death the body supposedly must undergo in order to attain to life. The whole argument of chapters 3–4 is meant to demonstrate that possession of the Spirit and righteousness through faith establishes one as an heir. In the later chapters of the letter, Paul's statement that 'we by the Spirit, from faith, await the hope of righteousness' indicates that the present possession of the Spirit is integrally connected with one's final eschatological destiny (5:5), an impression further confirmed in Paul's insistence that 'the one who sows into the Spirit will, from the Spirit, reap eternal life' (6:8). That the Spirit should be the basis of eschatological hope makes sense if, as we have seen, it is the risen life and personal presence of Christ himself, living in believers. Paul assumes that eschatological hope concerns the arrival in full of what is already being experienced in the present—the fulness of Christ's pneumatic life—and not the believers' own recapitulation of Christ's death and resurrection for themselves in order to experience salvation. The need of those in Christ is not for their flesh to die in order to be

187. Dunn 1993, 144-45; cf. also Das 2014, 268-69.

188. Moreover, in 5:24 Paul does use the aorist (ἐσταύρωσαν) to describe the believer's relation to the flesh by virtue of sharing in Christ's crucifixion.

given life, but for their already-dead (i.e. mortal, pre-eschatological) flesh to be brought into final conformity with what they already are 'in Christ'. Whether they are physically dead or alive when this happens is not clearly relevant to the claims Paul is making.

In conclusion, and granted the limitations of our evidence in Galatians for how Paul regards the physical deaths of believers (since this is not apropos to his argument in the letter), it does not appear warranted to extend the redemptive function of Christ's death and resurrection into the subsequent experiences of believers, even if a qualitative similarity between their 'experiences' may be identified (this is especially clear in Romans and 2 Corinthians, as we have seen). Rather than a process of fulfilling the redemptive functions of an archetypal death and resurrection exhibited in Christ, Paul's portrayal of participation in Christ in Galatians depends simply on their reception of the Spirit through baptism and faith, as well as on their continued life of 'walking according to the Spirit'. This participation in Christ's eschatological life makes his death and resurrection functionally the believer's *own*, and not a soteriological process yet to be repeated. Paul's argument depends upon the uniqueness and exclusivity of Christ's redemptive function, whatever is then to be said regarding the symmetry of his experiences with those of believers.

With the evaluation of this alternative view of participation in Christ complete, we may now conclude this chapter's discussion

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have offered an account of Christ's soteriological function and substitutionary role in Galatians 3:13-14 which, granted certain differences owing to the specific concerns of his argument in the letter, is basically consistent with the findings of previous chapters. The implied narrative that establishes the plausibility structures within which Christ's redemptive action and its sequel make sense revolves centrally around the divine promise to Abraham and its fulfilment in light of the historical situation of sinful Israel. As the seed of Abraham and intended mediator of Israel's eschatological blessings to the nations, Christ fulfils Israel's national destiny as described in Deuteronomy by entering fully into the law's curse and, by his faith in the promise and obedience to God in death, nullifying and replacing it with eschatological life, the promised Spirit in which the blessing of Abraham consists. In fulfilling this role, Christ acts as a substitute for Israel under the curse in that (1) his faithful agency replaces the agency of disobedient Israel in accomplishing their promised restoration and (2) his death under the curse's full and fatal

eventuation spares Jewish believers from experiencing the full outworking of the curse in themselves. (This dual substitutionary function that Christ fulfils in his death, as I noted at several points, also addresses the plight of all humanity enslaved under the 'elements of the world', though this is not Paul's immediate point in 3:13.) As in previous chapters, however, Christ's substitutionary role is not limited to his death: in his resurrection and ongoing life, Christ becomes a substitute for both Jews and Gentiles. His eschatological life and presence replaces their flesh as the basis of their divine sonship and Abrahamic kinship, such that Jews and Gentiles (as well as the enslaved, the free, the male and female) stand on equal footing by virtue of Christ's unique and exclusive claim on this status, which becomes theirs only insofar as Christ himself lives in them, in their stead, by the Spirit. Participation in Christ is therefore the very means of Christ's substitution: by virtue of his pneumatic presence in believers, his death, resurrection and ongoing life function *as* theirs, *in place of* their own. Accordingly, believing participation in Christ (at least in these redemptive capacities) does not entail the believer's functional recapitulation of the Christ-event through his or her own experience of suffering, death and resurrection.

With our study of Galatians complete, we are now able to summarise the findings of this dissertation, highlighting in particular the relationship between the construal of Christ's substitutionary role in Paul for which I have argued and the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement espoused in many contemporary evangelical circles.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

The primary objective of this dissertation has been to provide greater semantic clarity and methodological precision in the debate over substitution in Pauline scholarship. Despite its ostensibly exegetical aims, scholarly debate on this topic has tended to employ the language of substitution in ways that underestimate its exegetical utility—mainly because this language is treated as a technical term for some form of an evangelical theory of penal substitutionary atonement, whose presence or absence in Paul is then confirmed through a study of the texts, rather than being used to construct a model from the ground up on the basis of the texts themselves. Pursuing the latter aim requires the adoption of a methodology that does two things: first, it must account precisely for the descriptive potential of the language of substitution in the exegesis of Paul's soteriological statements, as well as its much-debated conceptual relation to the language of participation. Second, it must give primacy to the texts rather than a particular 'theology of atonement' in determining our assessment of what this language may or may not helpfully describe.

For the purposes of our discussion (and since this is the concern of the present debate), I confined the focus of this study to the description of substitutionary and participatory motifs in certain of Paul's soteriological statements (Rom. 3:25; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13), rather than evaluating the applicability of this language more universally in Paul's writings (e.g. the function of a Pauline letter as a 'substitute for personal presence'). Throughout the

discussion, I have sought to employ the language of substitution with a sensitivity to its meaning potential in normal English usage, in which it typically denotes the functional replacement of one party with another—or, as I have elsewhere put it, *replacement in a functional capacity*. Substitutionary relationships can be analysed in terms of three basic elements: the *content* of the replacement (i.e. what replaces what), its *function* (i.e. what the replacement does in the other's stead) and its *means* (how the replacement comes about). Furthermore, a substitution usually occurs within a certain narrative (often implied) that explains why such a functional replacement is necessary: a teacher became sick, a player was injured, a curse befell the heirs of the promise.

This language, I argued, is potentially incompatible with the language of 'participation'—understood in terms of one's party's *sharing* or *taking part* in the action, situation or experience of another—specifically at the point of *function*. If two parties share together in the fulfilment of a certain function, then one cannot be said to replace or be a substitute for the other. Among the various participationist objectors to substitutionary readings of Paul, the model of James Dunn (to which I have referred throughout with the shorthand of 'recapitulative participationism') stood out as the most inherently incompatible with a substitutionary understanding of Christ's soteriological role for believers. On this understanding, the soteriological function that Christ fulfils (particularly in his suffering and death) must be repeated or recapitulated in the experience of believers through their own suffering and death in solidarity with Christ, which terminates sin in a manner analogous to Christ's death and results in their sharing in a resurrection analogous to his.

While giving critical attention to the predominant substitutionary readings of these texts, the main goal in each chapter has been to model an exegetical approach to the question of substitution in Paul's texts and its relation to participation in Christ that gives primacy to the texts themselves in determining (1) whether the language of substitution may helpfully describe their phenomena, (2) if so, what the content, function, means and implied narrative of Christ's substitutionary role might be and (3) what sort of logical relation exists between substitutionary and participatory motifs contained in the same texts and arguments, keeping in view the aforementioned question of the latter's 'recapitulative' value. Attaining this goal led us to proceed in the order of *function* (in implied narrative) → *content* → *means*, as this allowed us to establish the nature of Christ's soteriological role in the relevant texts while leaving open the question of replacement. In what follows, I will summarise the findings of each chapter before proceeding to a synthetic comparison with the heuristic, 'typical' model

of penal substitutionary atonement outlined in the introduction.

I will begin by summarising the specific soteriological functions that Christ fulfils in each of the texts considered in the dissertation. In Romans 3:25, Paul represents the crucified and raised Christ as a divinely-provided, blood-cleansed 'mercy seat' (ἱλαστήριον) for the people of God, in whom the glorious divine presence that sinful humanity forfeited has now returned. Through his faithful and sacrificial death, Christ has attained to the purification of the corruptible human condition that he assumed, making his body the fitting permanent abode of God's glory. In mediating the divine glory to others, Christ fulfils a substitutionary role: his faithful death and resulting resurrection remove the cultic barrier to God's glory for those who are identified with him in baptism, accomplishing their justification despite their continuance in bodily mortality, while also providing them with the assurance of salvation from the coming eschatological wrath. Moreover, as 4:25a makes clear, Christ's sacrificial role coincides (but is arguably not confused) with a penal element: Christ's death sustains the condemnation that falls upon 'our offences' in place of believers' deaths.

In Romans 8:3-4, Paul describes Christ as the divinely-sent agent through whose obedient death sin is condemned in the flesh and through whose vindicating resurrection the decree of the law is fulfilled in believers. Christ's death removes the anthropological incapacity (sinful flesh) that formerly made the law's ultimate aim of bestowing life unfulfillable. As in Romans 3, Christ's sacrificial offering through his faithful death results in the availability of eschatological life to those who are identified with him through participation. Because they already share, through the Spirit, in the freedom from sin that Christ has obtained, believers can live in assurance that they no longer stand under condemnation, but are the Spirit-led children of God and heirs of the new creation. This is true, despite their own ongoing mortality and experience of sin's presence in their own bodies: because Christ provides them with an alternative anthropological basis for freedom from sin and condemnation, and because he continues, by the Spirit and by his presence at the right hand of God, to intercede on behalf of believers, they can eagerly await the arrival of the coming age in hope rather than fear.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul represents Christ as the one in whom the new creation and covenant have arrived and because of whom believers must adopt a new way of regarding and evaluating each other. Through Christ's death and resurrection, the anthropological barrier to the new covenant and new creation (namely, sin) has been removed, and the righteousness of God manifested in the arrival of the eschatological life and deliverance

promised to Israel through the prophets. In union with Christ, believers in general and the apostles in particular are made participants in the new creation and covenant who reflect God's glory and righteousness into the world, despite continuing bodily within the conditions of the old creation and its patterns of entropy. The perception that Christ's death and resurrection functionally replace the bodily incapacity of those who are 'in him' animates Paul's ministry, which disregards 'the flesh' as a reliable criterion of evaluative judgment. Likewise, he insists, it must determine the Corinthians' perception of him as a divinely-appointed envoy who mediates these realities to others through his own continual embodiment of Christ's death and resurrection.

In Galatians 3:13-14, Paul identifies Christ as the agent and embodiment of Israel's eschatological restoration, in whose death and resurrection the curse of the law has been exhausted and eschatological life made available to believing Jews and Gentiles. Christ's redemptive action through his death brings an end to the law's curse that fell upon Israel by undergoing its full eventuation in death and enacting a faith and obedience that result in the restoration promised to Israel in Deuteronomy. In his resurrection and ongoing life, Christ continues as the unique bearer of divine sonship and eschatological Abrahamic kinship, which he mediates to Jews and Gentiles through the indwelling Spirit. This places Jews and Gentiles on equal footing as regards present membership in the covenant people and future eschatological inheritance.

In each of the above texts, Christ *replaces* others in the fulfilment of his soteriological functions; what is more, he does so precisely in and through their participation in him by the Spirit. The resulting substitutionary relationship can be summarised, in broadly synthetic terms, as follows:

- ***Content*:** Jesus Christ, in his death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life, in the place of believers

- ***Function*:** to obtain and sustain their eschatological freedom from sin and for life to God in righteousness, as his people

- ***Means*:** their participatory union with him, by the Spirit

One succinct way of putting this is to say that, for Paul, Jesus Christ *is* salvation: he is himself the realisation of eschatological judgment and vindication, who embodies the turn of the ages and, by his death and resurrection, enacts the transition from the old covenant and

creation to the new. Or, as Lyle Dabney puts it, 'The story of Christ, therefore, is not simply the story of the means by which we are saved, it is the revelation of the very substance of God's salvation itself in the eschatological personage of the Son of God, the re-creation of creation in the new creation of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection'.[1] Here the language of Christ's 'vicarious humanity', noted in the introduction, proves especially helpful in describing the soteriological role that Paul accords him.[2] For Paul, the soteriological benefits that Christ bestows upon others inhere in his person, such that he is the content of the salvation that he mediates to others. This is why substitution and participation are inseparable from each other, and why the latter is logically prior to the former: only in possessing and being identified with Christ can one receive freedom from sin and for eschatological life, because he is the true possessor of this freedom.

As the argument of the preceding chapters has repeatedly shown, this participatory relationship between believers and Christ does not confer salvation on them by causing them to *recapitulate* his suffering, death and resurrection in their own experience. Though believers do experience suffering and death (if Christ does not return first) and, though they are promised final bodily conformity to him in his resurrection; moreover, though their present experiences and actions do exhibit conformity to Christ's death and resurrection, none of them *take part* (i.e. participate) in his fulfilment of the soteriological role described above. The physical deaths of those 'in Christ' do not discharge the penalty of sin or remove the anthropological barrier to eschatological life (which they have already received in Christ). Believers are already freed from sin and condemnation, already counted righteous and enabled to live in obedience to God as people 'alive from the dead' and already assured of final deliverance from the wrath of God because they share in the Spirit of the crucified and raised Christ. While this entails their conformity to him, it does not entail a functional parity in his and their experiences.

Finally, the preceding study has noted points of difference and similarity between Paul's description of Christ's soteriological role for believers and the typical model of penal substitutionary atonement that most of the participants in current debates presuppose,[3] which

1. Dabney 2001, 56.
2. See esp. Kettler 2011; Radcliff 2016; Torrance 1981; 2008; 2009. Additional space would also allow the discussion of some notable differences (e.g. whether this view's Barthian construal of election suits the evidence discussed in the preceding chapters).
3. This, of course, leaves aside the question of whether biblical scholars' assumptions in this regard reflect the true theological and exegetical potential of various western traditions on this point (the topic of another study). Cf. e.g. the analysis of Luther's theology of union with Christ in Chester 2014, which overlaps in certain respects with the reading I have offered in this dissertation.

I heuristically defined in the introductory chapter as follows:

- ***Content*:** Christ's death in the place of sinners' deaths
- ***Function*:** to sustain the penalty that sin is due, in order to satisfy God's justice, propitiating him and legitimating his forgiveness of sinners
- ***Means*:** a dual forensic imputation, in which sinners' penal liability is attributed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is attributed to those who believe in and are united to him

As I also observed (and as consideration of various substitutionary readings of the texts in question has borne out), this model relies upon an implied narrative that is centrally concerned with the coherence of certain divine attributes (e.g. justice and mercy) in relation to the problem of human forensic *guilt*, a coherence that Christ's penal death establishes by enabling the forgiveness of sinners while still discharging the penalty of their sin. In the critical evaluation that I have offered of this view, the main purpose has not been to consider this view's merits *per se*, but to assess its value as an analysis of the specific issues that Paul's soteriological statements address.

Along these lines, I argued that the narrative and theological background that is evident in the argument of each of the four texts considered in this dissertation is rooted in *the divine covenantal promises contained in Israel's scriptures*, which Paul believes have found their eschatological fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Christ. As we have seen, this lends Paul's discussions a different focus than that of the typical model of penal substitution: he is chiefly concerned with how Christ's death and resurrection disclose God's fidelity to his promises, and how their fulfilment of those promises produce a new eschatological 'space' in which believers can participate, despite naturally belonging still to the old, pre-eschatological order in which sin and death are dominant, the flesh is an acceptable ground for knowing and one's status as Jew or Gentile still determines one's standing in relation to God's covenant. In the arguments we have considered, Paul is not primarily concerned with the general problem of the situation that human guilt produces in the divine economy, and how the death of Christ functions to establish the coherence of divine justice and mercy by a retributive means. This is not to say that such concerns are entirely irrelevant to what Paul does say, but it must be appreciated that Paul constructs the plausibility of 'atonement' primarily in terms of the themes of covenant and promise (and so the divine attributes of faithfulness and truthfulness),

rather than more abstract conceptions of 'justice'.[4]

In addition to these points of comparison and contrast at the level of narrative and theology, our study has also noted significant differences, as well as degrees of approximation, in the particular soteriological functions that Christ fulfils in the texts we have considered. Paul's description of Christ's death in these texts introduces elements that would temper the typical model's more exclusively forensic understanding of salvation with an equal emphasis on the dynamic quality of God's intervention in Christ, addressing sin's guilt precisely in addressing sin's power over humanity. (As our engagement with substitutionary readings—particularly in 2 Corinthians—has noted, more recent interpretations have shown some openness to this more nuanced understanding.) Penal substitution and divine victory over sin coalesce in Paul, such that (1) Christ's achievement appears neither legally fictive on the one hand, nor mythological on the other, and (2) God's retributive punishment of sin is of a piece with his liberative intent for humanity in Christ.[5] This is particularly evident in our discussions of Romans 3 and 8, where I argued that deliverance from the coming eschatological wrath depends upon the Spirit's emancipation of believers, in Christ, from the mastery of sin. This poses some challenges for the traditional reading of Romans 1–5, which makes the cessation of divine wrath logically prior to freedom from enslavement. While it can be shown that Christ's death and resurrection likely fulfil a propitiatory function in Paul's inaugurated eschatology, Paul's own emphasis falls on the abolition of corruption and enslavement to sin through Christ's death and resurrection, which produce a new situation in which believers *will* be saved from the coming wrath of God, if they continue to live according to the Spirit.

Another area of difference between the typical model and the reading for which I have argued in this dissertation is the scope of the substitutionary relationship itself. The substitutionary reading outlined in the preceding chapters is *more comprehensive* than that of the typical model: the death, resurrection and ongoing eschatological life of Christ's body function redemptively in place of the believer's, conferring on him or her a wider array of blessings than are normally associated with Christ's substitutionary role. These blessings are not concerned only with freedom from guilt, but also with Abrahamic kinship and divine sonship, a changed relation to the power of sin, the law and bodily passions, and a

4. See Vidu 2014.
5. For a recent work arguing for an integration of the themes of substitution and victory, see Wright 2016b.

transformed outlook on reality based on the dawn of a new creation in the midst of the old. Similarly, Christ's substitution is *more radical*: in this ongoing relationship of redemptive replacement, *all* that is natural to the believer is drastically relativised to Christ ('It is no longer *I* who live: Christ lives in me'). Life itself has been redefined around the one who has died and risen and therefore lives in freedom from the conditions of the present age. While this life is *inclusive* of the believer—Christ's Spirit is given to believers, and this makes his death and resurrection functionally *theirs*—it is also radically *exclusive* in that it assigns a redemptive role and agency to Christ, and to Christ alone. Nothing that befalls the mortal bodies of believers within the present overlap of the ages has any bearing on their present freedom from sin, death and the law, from curse and condemnation, from the enslaving forces of the present evil age; this is because someone *else*, whose life has been made theirs, has bestowed all of these blessings on them already, even as they await the final transformation of their mortal existence into the perfect likeness of his.

Precisely in this exclusivity, however, we can discern substantial overlap and continuity between Paul's understanding of Christ's death and resurrection (particularly, his death) and the typical model of substitution. Even as an inclusive replacement, Christ's relation to believers involves a radical exclusivity to which traditional articulations of substitutionary atonement have been attentive. Christ's bestowal of his death and resurrection on believers by the Spirit preserves the fact that, at a basic level, the death and resurrection are properly *his* and not theirs, something that *he*, rather than they, did and experienced. His body, and not theirs, was nailed to the cross, became a curse and sin, underwent God's definitive condemnation of sin in the flesh and inaugurated an eschatological new covenant in a new creation by its resurrection from the dead. And because his did so, theirs need not, but can instead be presented to God as already alive from the dead, in the hope that when Christ returns, they will be fully and perfectly conformed to its glory. Participatory identification with Christ through the Spirit thus preserves the fundamental insight that, in Gathercole's words, 'he did something, underwent something, so that we did not and would never have to do so',[6] while also demanding we see Christ's substitution as radical and ongoing, reaching into the depths of believers' present existence, making them people who can say, with Paul, 'It is no longer I who live: Christ lives in me'.

6. Gathercole 2015, 15.

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