

FAITH IN CHRIST: AN ANSWER TO THE ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ DEBATE

BY

AARON MICHAEL JENSEN

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PROF. STEPHEN H. GEIGER, ADVISOR

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

MEQUON, WISCONSIN

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1980s a major source of contention within New Testament scholarship has been the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. Paul teaches that our justification occurs ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Ro 3:22,26; Ga 2:16,20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Php 3:9) and so this debate concerns the interpretation of this Greek phrase. Does it refer, as traditionally understood, to faith *in* Christ, or, as has been more recently argued, to Christ's own faithfulness unto death? This thesis demonstrates on semantic, grammatical, and exegetical grounds that the phrase should be understood in the traditional manner, as containing an objective genitive and denoting our faith in Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

Sola fide, ‘by faith alone’, has been immortalized as the second of the three great Reformation shibboleths, a pithy yet precious truth on which our life and salvation stands. It is a truth which all of Scripture proclaims, which has Paul for its chief herald, and which trumpets its tune most clearly in Galatians and Romans. “[We] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified” (Ga 2:16). “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Ro 3:22). Justification is ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, translated by Luther as “durch den Glauben an Christum” and historically understood in the same manner: “by faith in Christ.”

The grammar itself, however, is more or less ambiguous, at least in theory. The genitive Χριστοῦ could hypothetically denote not the object of faith but instead its subject. In that case, Paul’s point, subsequently misunderstood by most of his interpreters including chiefly Luther, would be that we are justified not by faith in Jesus but by Jesus’ own faith or faithfulness. (Further ambiguity arises from the fact that the Greek πίστις has the flexibility to embrace both the English ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’.)

This alternative understanding has been spooking around New Testament scholarship for over a century, but it has greatly increased in popularity in concert with the New Perspective on Paul. Enough traction has been gained to raise this exegetical question to the status of debate, and an unofficially named debate at that—the ‘Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate’. Many, but not all, New Perspectivists interpret the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive, influenced mostly by its expediency for advancing their theology.¹ It is even more common with those advocating a “newer” perspective than the New Perspective in which we are saved by “participating” in Christ in some sense. However, unlike many exegetical controversies which might rage on, this is not a debate which breaks down along denominational lines. Some Catholic scholars have no problem integrating the subjective understanding into their thought. Some evangelicals as well, perhaps

¹ For a survey of and response to the New Perspective on Paul’s take on law and grace in Paul and the Judaizers, see Daniel W. Waldschmidt, “The Target Of Paul’s Polemic: A Dialogue With The New Perspective,” (Senior thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2012), www.wls.wels.net. In many ways this thesis is meant to go hand-in-hand with his. I will be addressing the specific matter of faith. He dealt more with broad and comprehensive issues of grace and works, and the critical phrase ἔργα νόμου, allowing time for only a brief direct reference to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate.

feeling that their own teachings on conversion, and consequently justification, are too anthropocentric, have appreciated this new understanding as a way to make salvation focus more decidedly on the work of Christ and not on the human act of believing.²

Unfortunately, Confessional Lutheranism, despite its healthy emphasis on justification by faith, has largely stayed on the sidelines of this debate. On encountering the question, Lutherans could feel themselves initially pulled in either direction. They might be immediately defensive or dismissive because of how fundamental justification by faith is and because Luther and historic Lutheranism clearly understood the genitive as objective.³ Or alternatively they might perhaps even be welcoming of the subjective view because it could give many key Pauline passages a more overtly objective-justification bent. Whatever theological inclinations one might have, this is not a topic which can simply be ignored. The passages in which Paul uses the phrase *πίστις Χριστοῦ*, or any of its variations, are too important:⁴

² A number of writers refer to the ‘human faith in Christ’ interpretation as the anthropological interpretation and the ‘Christ’s faith/faithfulness’ interpretation as the Christological interpretation. These designations are certainly understandable. However, I will not be using them. They seem at times to belie an assumption that the ‘faith/faithfulness of Christ’ interpretation is of a more Christ-centered theology than the ‘faith in Christ’ interpretation, which, as Appendices G and H show, is not only untrue, but in fact is the opposite of the truth. I will use the terms ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ as shorthand designations for the views, based on the respective grammatical classifications of the genitive. Perhaps someone might claim that repeatedly calling one’s own preferred interpretation ‘objective’ as opposed to ‘subjective’ is also a biased designation. I will not disagree with this except to note that, while the objective interpretation is a more objective interpretation and the subjective a more subjective one, I am using these terms as shorthand for the syntactical viewpoint espoused.

Also, it will often be advantageous to refer in this fashion to ‘human faith’ when discussing occurrences of *πίστις* without the trailing genitive. Regardless of this lack of a genitive these occurrences still lend considerable force to the objective interpretation because they have as their shared referent our faith directed towards God and Christ and not Christ’s faithfulness directed towards either God or us. This designation ‘human faith’, not original to me, has been called by Hays “unsettling, since it seems to suggest a view that Jesus was not human.” Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), xlviii. Hays’ charge is mere sensationalism. Christ’s humanity has, to my knowledge, never been consciously denied by any of those on the objective side, and is certainly not denied here. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus*” (1 Ti 2:5). The term ‘human faith’ is simply more expedient than would be the term, ‘the faith of humans who are not Christ’.

³ Chambers suggests that Luther’s language is “at least sympathetic toward a subjective understanding.” But none of the cases he cites (AE 25:242; 26:129; 27:221) show anything along the lines of such a sympathy. Steven L. Chambers, “‘Faith in Christ’ or ‘The Faith of Christ’?: Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul,” *Lutheran Theological Review* 12 (2000): 20-43, 21 n. 2.

⁴ \mathfrak{P}^{46} contains a variant on Galatians 3:26 which, if adopted, would be an additional case of the phrase. πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. This, however, is so unlikely to be the original reading that it is not typically even listed within the apparatus.

Ephesians 4:13 might perhaps be an additional case as well. It reads: μέχρι κατακτήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, The question is whether the genitive τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ is meant to limit both τῆς πίστεως and τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως or only τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως. Both of these passages will be discussed further later.

Romans 3:22 δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ **διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ** εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν διαστολή

Romans 3:26 ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα **τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ**.

Galatians 2:16 εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ **διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν **ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ** καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.

Galatians 2:20 ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, **ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ** τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

Galatians 3:22 ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφὴ τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία **ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ** δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

Ephesians 3:12 ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ προσαγωγὴν ἐν πεποιθήσει **διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ**.

Philippians 3:9 καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν **διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ**, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει

The critical nature of these passages cannot be overemphasized. Several of these verses use the phrase *πίστις Χριστοῦ* in the explicit context of justification. Our understanding of not only Pauline thought, but also how we are saved, will be in some matter dependent on how we respond to this debate.

Today's Bible reader cannot keep from encountering the issue. While the subjective reading has been incorporated only into less utilized translations such as ISV, CEB, and NET, it has been footnoted as an alternative in the more popular NRSV, HCSB, and NIV. Furthermore, a student of Paul doing work also in the contemporary secondary literature will invariably come across the subjective interpretation, and this interpretation will likely be advocated in detail. There does not, however, currently exist an adequate response to this which is both thorough and Confessionally Lutheran.⁵ Brenner calls on such Lutherans to take up this critical exegetical question:

⁵ Most Lutheran commentaries are either too old or too cursory to give adequate attention to the issue. Among those who do address it, Kuske correctly decides in favor of the objective understanding, but devotes little time to the matter. David P. Kuske, *A Commentary on Roman 1-8* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House,

Salvation by faith alone is certainly taught elsewhere in Scripture. The current controversy might seem to be a meaningless argument among grammarians and exegetes. This debate, however, is not merely an academic question. Hays' [a leading proponent of the subjective view] understanding of these texts in Romans and Galatians will ultimately result in a theological shift from the forensic nature of justification as God's verdict to a participatory understanding (a process in which we are saved by identifying with Jesus or through a transformation by which we return to a participation in the divine nature). Heirs of Luther will want to take note and find Scripture's answers to this current challenge to the central tenet of the Reformation.⁶

Justification by faith is the hallmark of Confessional Lutheranism and a subject about which Confessional Lutheranism has much worth contributing to modern New Testament scholarship. Therefore since the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate concerns both faith and justification, this thesis seeks to provide an in-depth response to the debate for Lutherans who might encounter it, as well as to share this Lutheran response with others struggling with the nature of faith's role in justification.

The interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ has become a many-faceted hermeneutical question, and these various facets will be best addressed individually. First, semantic issues concerning πίστις will be discussed, and then the syntactical possibilities allowed by the use of the genitive. Then, the Pauline texts will be walked through one at a time. This will sufficiently and systematically demonstrate that the objective understanding is correct and the subjective understanding is unviable. More peripheral issues and the theological implications will be reserved for the appendices.⁷ Throughout this all, it will be proven scripturally that it is both crucial and undeniably true that we are justified by faith in Christ Jesus.

2007). Likewise Brenner and Leyrer have each addressed the issue accurately but briefly. John M. Brenner, "Faith in Jesus Christ or Faith of Jesus Christ," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 95.1 (Winter 1998). Daniel P. Leyrer, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Faith in or Faithfulness of Christ," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 104.2 (Spring 2007): 152-154.

Where we find fuller treatments, however, we are left disappointed, as the recent Concordia Commentaries of Middendorf on Romans and Das on Galatians are unsatisfactory on this issue. Middendorf punts the question altogether and seeks an alternative by which both might be right. Michael P. Middendorf, *Romans 1-8* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013). Das expresses a preference for the objective understanding but does not consider the issue to have been settled conclusively. A. Andrew Das, *Galatians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014). What is most alarming is that Arthur Just, Jr., professor at Concordia-Fort Wayne, has advocated the subjective interpretation in writing. Arthur A. Just, Jr., "The Faith of Christ: A Lutheran Appropriation of Richard Hays' Proposal," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 70 (2006): 3-15.

⁶ "Faith," 56.

⁷ The present-day interpretive fight over Paul's gospel rests on a four-legged exegetical stool: 'law', 'faith', 'righteousness', and integrating his teaching on justification with apparent participatory elements of his soteriology. Waldschmidt's analysis has taken care of the first. This thesis will take care of the second. Appendices D and H will respectively show how these last two legs then fall into place, resolidifying the stool of the gospel on which the church stands.

LITERATURE REVIEW⁸

The subjective interpretation is, all things considered, a relatively recent innovation within New Testament scholarship. For the most part, it dates back only as far as the final years of the nineteenth century. Credit for bringing it into prominence, and in effect, igniting the debate, is often given to Johannes Haußleiter, who in 1891 proposed and argued for it. Stating his thesis negatively, he writes, “Ich behaupte, die Empfänger und ersten Leser des Briefes konnten die Worte unmöglich in dem Sinne verstehen ‘rechtfertigend den, der aus dem Glauben an Jesus ist’.”⁹

In the decades following, among respected scholars only Gerhard Kittel seems to have agreed with this interpretation.¹⁰ In the middle of the twentieth century, however, a revival of the subjective understanding was attempted. In 1955 Gabriel Hebert claimed Paul used πίστις not so much with its Greek meaning, ‘belief’, as with the meaning of the Hebrew אֱמוּנָה, ‘faithfulness’, which it typically glossed. Since אֱמוּנָה has at its root אָמַן, which in qal can have the sense of being firm, Hebert reasoned that אֱמוּנָה and therefore also πίστις means God’s firmness firming someone up: “The *pistis* is primarily not man’s act of ‘believing,’ but God’s ‘*emunah*’; and when man on his part ‘believes,’ what happens is that his frailty and instability are ‘made firm’ on the solid ground of God’s saving action.”¹¹ The genitive Χριστοῦ to him denoted that God’s faithfulness was “manifested in Christ.”¹² Two years later Thomas Torrance posited that as a Hebrew thinker, the Hebrew notion of אֱמוּנָה so greatly underlay Paul’s use of πίστις that

⁸ A fuller chart chronicling modern expositors and their respective views on πίστις Χριστοῦ is found in Appendix E. What the ancient expositors and versions had to say on this phrase is found in Appendix C.

⁹ “I maintain the recipients and first readers of the letter could not possibly have understood the words in the sense of ‘justifying him who is of faith in Jesus.’” Johannes Haußleiter, *Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der Christliche Glaube: Ein Beitrag zur Erklarung des Roemersbriefes*, in *Neuen Kirchlichen Zeitschrift* (1891); reprint (Erlangen: Andr. Deichert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1891), 109-145, 205-230. Haußleiter, drawing a distinction between ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’, only held this interpretation for πίστις Ἰησοῦ; πίστις Χριστοῦ he considered to be a genitive of authorship. Johannes Haußleiter, “Was Versteht Paulus unter Christlichen Glauben?: Eine Untersuchung Der Formel Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” in *Greifswalder Studien: Theologische Abhandlungen Hermann Cremer zum 25jährigen Professorenjubiläum dargebracht* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1895), 159-181.

¹⁰ Gerhard Kittel, “Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 79 (1906): 419-436.

¹¹ Gabriel Hebert, “‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith,’” *Reformed Theological Review* 14.2 (June 1955): 33-40, 39.

pistis Iesou Christou does not refer only either to the faithfulness of Christ or to the answering faithfulness of man, but is essentially a polarized expression denoting the faithfulness of Christ as its main ingredient but also involving or at least suggesting the answering faithfulness of man, and so his belief in Christ, but even within itself the faithfulness of Christ involves both the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of the man Jesus.¹³

The positions of Hebert and Torrance were soon thoroughly discredited by James Barr.¹⁴ He showed that these two were guilty of etymologizing, of making faulty assumptions about the Old Testament worldview based on the Hebrew language, and of mistaking theological truth for linguistic meaning.¹⁵ His arguments have proven so convincing that subsequent advocates of the subjective position typically acknowledge the accuracy of Barr's criticism of Hebert and Torrance and do not rehearse their evidence garnered from the sense of the Hebrew אֱמוּנָה.

The subjective interpretation was given new life in 1983 by Richard B. Hays in his work *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*.¹⁶ His argumentation for that understanding avoided several of the pitfalls of its previous advocates. He based his claim on contextual interpretation and a reconstruction of Paul's gospel story from his various allusions and partial expositions of it in Galatians, and limited his use of linguistic arguments largely to what he thought would demonstrate the semantic and grammatical possibility of his take on πίστις Χριστοῦ. His work has proven convincing to many. The popularity of the subjective interpretation has snowballed in the years since 1983. Hays can be credited (or perhaps blamed) for its prominence as well as the resultant debate.

The other chief promulgator of the subjective position is Hays' colleague on the faculty of Duke Divinity School, Douglas A. Campbell, who has argued for it in a number of books and articles leading up to his magnum opus, *The Deliverance of God*.¹⁷ While Hays has made more of Galatians in his writings, Campbell's main battleground has been Paul's letter to the Romans.

¹² "'Faithfulness'," 36.

¹³ Thomas F. Torrance, "One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith," *The Expository Times* 68 (1957): 111-114, 221-222.

¹⁴ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

¹⁵ For example, just because God is the cause of faith, it does not mean that this truth is inherent in the meaning of the word πίστις itself. This is the difference between a word and a concept.

¹⁶ *Faith*.

¹⁷ Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009).

‘Battleground’ is an accurate description for the sphere in which Campbell operates. As opposed to Hays, Campbell is a more aggressive scholar, having no qualms about admitting his goal and supposed accomplishment of eliminating the justification-by-faith model of Pauline soteriology. The subjective interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ plays a major role in his recasting of Paul’s entire theology. Notable others who hold this subjective view are N. T. Wright and Luke Johnson.

In addition to the nearly unanimous history within the church of maintaining the objective interpretation, also since the onset of this debate the objective understanding has found no shortage of defenders. James Dunn has been its chief advocate. Perhaps its most skilled advocate has been R. Barry Matlock in a series of insightful articles. Other names worth mentioning would be C.E.B. Cranfield, Arland Hultgren, Moisés Silva, and Douglas Moo. Those familiar with some of the names on this list will observe that this debate has made for odd bedfellows. Expositors who have otherwise little in common theologically or hermeneutically find themselves on the same side of this issue.

While for the most part the debate is binary, some have attempted to find either alternative or mediating positions. David Hay defines πίστις as ‘ground for faith’ and interprets the genitive as appositional, understanding by the phrase that justification comes from Jesus, on whom our faith is based.¹⁸ Adolf Schlatter has suggested that the genitive is one of authorship, namely, that Jesus Christ is the one who creates human faith.¹⁹ Rejecting that πίστις is a verbal noun, Mark Seifrid likewise interprets it as a genitive of authorship or source.²⁰ Similar to this would be Benjamin Schliesser’s genitive of relationship, where Christ is the reason for faith and the one with whom faith places an individual into a relationship,²¹ and also Dennis Lindsay’s attributive genitive, in which case faith “has Christ as its unique point of reference” and “is fully consistent with the person and the message of Jesus Christ.”²² These are at least in partial

¹⁸ David M. Hay, “Pistis as ‘Ground for Faith’ in Hellenized Judaism and Paul,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108.3 (1989): 461-476.

¹⁹ Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God* [Gottes Gerechtigkeit: Ein Kommentar zum Römerbrief], trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

²⁰ Mark A. Seifrid, “The Faith of Christ,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 129-146.

²¹ Benjamin Schliesser, *Abraham’s Faith in Romans 4: Paul’s Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15:6* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

²² Dennis R. Lindsay, “Works of Law, Hearing of Faith and Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16-3:5,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 3 (Spring 2000): 79-88.

agreement with the objective understanding in that the faith mentioned is human faith, which is the question of greatest consequence in the debate.

A number of others seem to like the theology of both objective and subjective views and so they are attracted to a broader, more non-descript category of genitive which might embrace both senses. Adolf Deissmann first advanced this opinion, labelling it the ‘mystical genitive’.²³ Morna Hooker has the same view, and her explanation has given birth to the more standard designation of ‘concentric genitive’ and its often cited description: “I suggest that we should think of it not as a polarized expression, which suggests antithesis, but as a *concentric* expression, which begins, always, from the faith of Christ himself, but which includes, necessarily, the answering faith of believers, who claim that faith as their own.”²⁴ Sam Williams shares this view as well. While this mystical-concentric interpretation may seem to be a compromise position, it really could be placed squarely under the subjective label. Most who label the genitive as subjective advocate a participatory understanding of both that phrase and to some degree Paul’s entire soteriology. The resulting sense of πίστις is that it means both the faith Christ exercises and also secondarily the faith the Christian exercises like Christ and in Christ. The difference between the subjective and the mystical-concentric view is largely in name only.

Further complicating matters, there is another view, beyond the main two and distinct from all attempts to harmonize them, which is called the ‘third view’. With reservations of his own, Preston Sprinkle advances this view for further consideration, citing others, chiefly non-Americans (German or Japanese), who have held some variety of this opinion.²⁵ Characteristic of the third view is to view the phrase as designating “something objective—that is, something that is outside (though not wholly unrelated to) the realm of a person’s response to God—whether that person be a believer or Jesus.” That “something objective” may be variously construed as the “content of the gospel (the Christ-event),” “the preached gospel (the message about the Christ event),” or “the sphere of salvation created by the gospel (i.e., the church).”²⁶

²³ Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* [Paulus: En Kultur- och Religionshistorisk Skiss], trans. William B. Wilson (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), 163.

²⁴ Morna D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 321-342, 341.

²⁵ Preston M. Sprinkle, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 165-184.

²⁶ Sprinkle, “Eschatological,” 174-175.

THE SEMANTICS OF ΠΙΣΤΙΣ

The word *πίστις* has an undeniably large range of possible meanings. BDAG divides it into three meanings with a number of subdivisions beneath them,²⁷ while Louw-Nida separates its uses into six categories.²⁸ Neither of these even, being specialized for New Testament studies, encompasses the full spectrum of possible Greek usage recorded by LSJ.²⁹ The meanings ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’ are the meanings most commonly found in the New Testament and also those most commonly proposed as an interpretation of *πίστις Χριστοῦ*.

The objective position holds that in the disputed phrases *πίστις* refers to faith and not to faithfulness. This is, according to the lexicons, the most common use of *πίστις* within the New Testament and in Paul. However, this evidence has been directly challenged by Campbell:

Unfortunately—although also not surprisingly, in view of the widespread influence of the JF [justification-by-faith] model—a number of biases have infiltrated NT lexicography at this point. Semantic constriction, conflation, and anachronism are all evident in much discussion of the meaning of ‘faith’ in Paul. So we cannot simply pick up a dictionary and read what ‘faith’ would have meant to someone in Paul’s day, or to Paul himself. One of the best ways to expose these biases, and also to achieve a more accurate set of lexicographical options in the first instance, is to analyse *pistis* in Philo and Josephus (they supply over 350 instances along with abundant context; we will also nod in the direction of the LXX).³⁰

Campbell is not wrong when he says here that *πίστις* does not typically mean ‘faith’ in Philo or Josephus, Greek-speaking contemporaries of Paul who share his Jewish background, or in the Septuagint, which by Paul’s quotations and allusions often is seen to underlie his thought. Hay (not to be confused with Hays), after analyzing and categorizing all the occurrences of *πίστις* within Philo and Josephus, has concluded that ‘faith’ is a far from typical meaning. He finds that Philo uses *πίστις* 52.6% of the time in reference to evidence or proof and only 22.4% of the time

²⁷ W. Bauer et al, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2000), § *πίστις*.

²⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), § *πίστις*.

²⁹ Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), § *πίστις*.

³⁰ Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), 178.

in reference to trust or belief. 32.3% of Josephus' usages, on the other hand, are in reference to loyalty or faithfulness, 29.7% are in reference to a pledge, 10.3% are in reference to evidence or proof (comprising a total of 70.3% where the reference is the believed as opposed to the believer), and just 20% are in reference to trust or belief.³¹

The significance of this survey is easily overstated. What it shows is that within these two writers *πίστις* means 'faith' less than a quarter of the time. This information is misused, however, when used to suggest that Paul must follow suit. Philo and Josephus cannot really be considered detrimental to the objective position. Instead they serve to validate it. While it is not their most typical use of the word, they verify for us that *πίστις* can mean 'faith' or 'trust' to a first-century Greek-speaking Jew. Paul's variance with them over the statistical breakdown of respective meanings is easily accounted for by his different subject matter and theological perspective.

In the Septuagint *πίστις* means 'faithfulness' with perhaps only one exception within canonical books.³² This does help raise the possibility that Paul meant 'faithfulness' not 'faith'. It does not, however, eliminate 'faith' as a possible meaning of *πίστις*, for this says more about the vocabulary of the Hebrew source language than the Greek target language. Barr explains,

There is no word in the OT in Hebrew meaning 'faith' or 'belief'; that is to say, there is no noun form representing nominally the act indicated by the verb *he"emin* 'believe'—a fact which is widely known and acknowledged.³³

The LXX did not use it [*πίστις* in the sense of 'faith' or 'belief'] as such because it was translating a Hebrew text in which the nominal form did not exist.³⁴

Barr further points to 4 Maccabees, which has no Hebrew *Vorlage*, as using *πίστις* in the sense of 'faith' to strengthen his contention that the paucity of such uses in the Septuagint is a reflection of Hebrew and not Greek vocabulary, and also to demonstrate the acceptability of this meaning.³⁵ Simply put, there is no statistical evidence to suggest that the meaning 'faith' would have been unavailable, or even unlikely, for Paul. On the contrary, only one clear example of such a use would prove that Paul is capable of using the word this way. We have just that in 2

³¹ "Pistis," 463.

³² See Appendix A.

³³ *Semantics*, 173.

³⁴ *Semantics*, 201.

³⁵ *Semantics*, 201.

Corinthians 5:7, as there are no other possible interpretations which can maintain its antithesis: *διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἴδους.*³⁶

The question then becomes one of disambiguating between possible meanings. The primary evidence for the objective understanding is rightly adduced from the verb form of the same stem, *πιστεύω*. *πιστεύω* frequently means ‘to trust or believe’, and is semantically incapable of meaning ‘to be faithful’. In addition, in several passages in which the disputed phrase occurs (Ro 3:22; Ga 2:16; 3:22), the verb form is also present, and clearly in the sense of ‘believing’, further suggesting that Paul uses the words found within the same context in the same sense, which also must coincide with the narrower lexical range of *πιστεύω*.

This close correlation between the verb and the noun is challenged and denied by those who maintain the subjective position. Campbell attacks this connection the most fiercely:

Conversely, christological advocates detect a seam in the *πιστ-* data in Paul between the noun and the verb. For them these two signifiers mean two different things. Hence, *they do not deny the traditional reading of the verb*; that is, they agree that when Paul uses the verb *πιστεύειν* he is speaking generally of the Christian’s belief in the gospel (its most common “object”). For Paul it is a *sine qua non* that Christians should hold as true the propositions that Christ died and was resurrected bodily. One might say that the traditionalist reading of the entire word group is conceded in relation to the verb—probably because it is right! But because christological interpreters detect a seam in the word group, they also hold that the transfer of this meaning associated with the verb to substantives based on the same stem is *deeply problematic*. And as a result of this—and somewhat ironically—they will tend to give a far stronger reading of *πίστις* than traditionalists, who tend to view it as functioning conditionally or contractually in soteriology and hence as something essentially manageable. In short, christological interpreters are unconvinced that the verb *πιστεύειν* is the decisive interpretative criterion for *πίστις* in Paul (while one of the great merits of the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* dispute is to have begun to expose this fallacy, essentially because it is so difficult to carry the meaning of the verb through for this particular construction). Moreover, it is a major frustration among such advocates that traditionalists generally fail to perceive that their axiom here concerning semantic transfer *must be justified*.³⁷

Campbell declares, without justification, that he is able to “detect a seam in the word group,” and then demands that a correlation between the verb and the noun “must be justified.” While the

³⁶ We see this same antithesis found using verbs in John 20:29: λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, “Ὅτι ἐώρακάς με πεπίστευκας; μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες.

³⁷ Douglas A. Campbell, “False Presuppositions in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: A Response to Brian Dodd,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997): 713-719, 715-716.

onus of justification is really on those who advocate dissimilar meanings for similar words in the same context, justification for correlation and against the presence of a seam can be provided.

By charting Paul’s use of *πίστις* and *πιστεύω* (See Appendix B), we see an observable pattern. The uses of *πίστις* and *πιστεύω* “spike” in the same chapters, the very chapters which are most vital to justification by faith and this specific *Πίστις Χριστοῦ* debate (most notably Romans 4 and 10).³⁸ That these words tend to be used together suggests that they are used similarly and belong to the same topic. When Paul’s discussion comes to such a topic, both words become more frequently used because they are the noun and verb form of the same meaning. At times, then, *πίστις*, is used, and at other times *πιστεύω*, and, as Matlock notes, “surely what it signifies is that when you need a verb you use a verb . . . and when a noun, a noun.”³⁹

When used in such close proximity, for the noun and verb of the same root to have diverse meanings would require either that ‘faith’ is not an option for *πίστις* (which has already been demonstrated to be false) or that the context makes it sufficiently clear that *πίστις* means ‘faithfulness’ and that Paul is deliberately punning on the shared stem. Indeed, Campbell does label Paul’s language as “wordplay” and “pun” in both Galatians 3:22 and Romans 3:22.⁴⁰ Galatians 2:16 would have to be similarly labelled. Paul is, of course, no stranger to puns and wordplay. We must, however, assume that Paul, not only as an inspired author but also no different than other human communicators, wants to be understood as he writes. Would Paul be so much in love with a possible pun on *πιστ-* so as to employ it in every place he treats justification systematically—even at the expense of clarity of speech? In that case, centuries of Christian readers have misinterpreted Paul’s central thought because they failed to understand the punch-line of a not-very-funny joke.

There are several passages in which *πίστις* does unmistakably refer back to the action of *πιστεύω*. Romans 10:17, and much of Romans 4 where Paul applies Genesis 15:6 *καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ*, are excellent examples of this. Their discussion will be saved for their respective treatments below. For now, to demonstrate that the action of *πιστεύω* is the referent for *πίστις*, we

³⁸ The results are really more emphatic than the graph can indicate. It shows chapters as a whole, obscuring the fact that often the uses of *πίστις* and *πιστεύω* appear bunched within chapters, even in consecutive verses.

³⁹ R. Barry Matlock, “Detheologizing the *Πίστις Χριστοῦ* Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective,” *Novum Testamentum* 42.1 (2000): 1-23, 15.

⁴⁰ *Quest*, 221.

can cite two additional passages from Paul's letters to the Corinthians. ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν in 1 Corinthians 15:14 must refer back to the ἐπιστεύσατε of verse 11. Even more clearly, τῆς πίστεως in 2 Corinthians 4:13 correlates with both the Ἐπίστευσα and πιστεύομεν later in the same verse.

Even in Philo, who, as mentioned above, uses πίστις in the sense of 'faith' less than one-fourth of the time, this same correlation is apparent when he uses the word in proximity with πιστεύω. Schliesser has noted Philo's use of πίστις while expositing Abraham's act of believing in Genesis 15:6.^{41, 42} This further corroborates the naturalness of using the noun to refer to the action of the verb, sharing its meaning. Like Paul, Philo does so in reference to Genesis 15:6.

The possibility of alternative meanings does not confirm the presence of Campbell's seam between πίστις and πιστεύω. These two words of the same stem can be used with the same meaning, one nominal, one verbalized. The noun can and at times does refer back to the action of the noun. Campbell's charging the objective understanding with fallacy is baseless. The close correlation between the noun and the verb which undergirds it is not drawn from theoretical assumptions about a common stem but from the common way in which the words of the same stem are utilized, particularly when employed in tandem. Matlock puts it well: "πίστις is never by itself, and in our contexts πιστεύω is a significant part of the company it keeps."⁴³ Furthermore, as Dunn notes, because the subjective case requires distinct meanings for every use

⁴¹ *Abraham's*, 205-207. The following quotations from Schliesser demonstrate the point under discussion: *Abr* 262, 268, 273: "he believed God. . . . Faith towards God, then, is the one sure and infallible good. . . . That God marveling at Abraham's faith in him, repaid him with faithfulness."

Virt 216: "He [*sc.* Abraham] is the first person spoken of as believing in God, since he first grasped a firm and unswerving conception of the truth And having gained faith, the most sure and certain of the virtues, he gained with it all the other virtues."

Migr 43-44: "[Gen 12:1is] a testimony to the faith with which the soul believed God, exhibiting its thankfulness not as called out by accomplished facts, but by expectation of what was to be. . . it [*sc.* The soul] found as reward faith, a perfect good. For it says a little later: 'Abraham believed God.'"

Mut 94: "And it is well said that his faith was counted to him as righteous, for nothing is so righteous than to have a faith towards God which is pure and unalloyed."

⁴² The first quotation in the previous note, in which 'faith' and 'faithfulness' are translations of πίστεις and πίστιν, has been cited by Hays to show that "If Philo can pivot about in this way in a single sentence, we should hardly be surprised that Paul can similarly speak in the same breath both of our faith in God (καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν) and of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ . . . Ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ; Gal 2:16)." Hays, *Faith*, xlvi. All Hays has shown is another case of these words used in senses exclusive of each other and that they can be used together in the purpose of wordplay. Philo is making a pun, as is shown by the close proximity in which he juxtaposes obviously different meanings of the word.

⁴³ "Detheologizing," 16.

of πίστις as opposed to every use of πιστεύω, it would result in the odd situation where Paul never speaks of our faith nominally or of Christ's faithfulness verbally, despite having the linguistic ability to do so.⁴⁴

Campbell is not the only one to decry the meaning 'faith' on supposed linguistic grounds. Hays makes against the objective position the same allegations of fallacy:

Indeed, Dunn's whole argument depends on making a clear distinction between "faith" and "faithfulness." I challenge him, however, to show that it was semantically possible in Hellenistic Greek to make such a conceptual distinction. The single word πίστις carries both connotations. Therefore, Dunn's distinction is anachronistic, a semantic fallacy.⁴⁵

So the question is: are 'faith' and 'faithfulness' two different meanings of πίστις or are they merely different connotations to the same meaning? Would a Greek speaker have known that he was using πίστις in two different ways or is this just an English distinction that we would be imposing on him? When it comes to πίστις, are 'faith' and 'faithfulness' speaking of noticeably different things or do they express basically the same attribute, one viewed more from the perspective of trust and the other viewed more from the perspective of ethical action? Are there two distinct concepts in Greek or just one concept which is so big that we need to use multiple words in English to cover it? Does 'faithful' just mean that a person is so 'full of faith' that they live their faith or is the relationship between the two something else? If Hays is correct and 'faith' and 'faithfulness' are really the same one meaning of πίστις, it would free him of the charge of defining πίστις in a different way than πιστεύω. In this case they would still at least share a common general sense.⁴⁶

Stepping back from the particular word πίστις, what Hays suggests is a common phenomenon in language. Words in different languages do not perfectly correspond with each other. Their relation may best be seen as an infinite vortex of semantic spheres, overlapping with

⁴⁴ James D.G. Dunn, "Once More, Πίστις Χριστοῦ," In *Pauline Theology, Vol IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, ed. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 61-81, 71.

⁴⁵ Richard B. Hays, "Πίστις and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake?," In *Pauline Theology, Vol. IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, ed. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 35-60, 58.

⁴⁶ They would, however, still have different referents—the verb always referring to people's πίστις and the noun always referring to Christ's—meaning that even if Hays were to be correct he has not actually integrated Paul's uses of πίστις and πιστεύω.

words of other languages much like the circles of a Venn diagram. At times words overlap considerably, at other times barely, and, very rarely, entirely perfectly. It is normal for a word to embrace a nuance or connotation which makes it too big of a sphere for a word in another language to adequately cover. In that case, we are perhaps dealing with a word whose single meaning is so semantically broad as to warrant different translations based on nuances, connotations, and contexts, but without necessarily a conscious distinction being made in the original vocabulary.

It is simply impossible, however, for that to be the case with *πίστις*. *πίστις* does not have one wide-reaching meaning covering both ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’.⁴⁷ It has two meanings: the one, ‘faith’; the other, ‘faithfulness’. We will see that there is a definite connection between these two meanings—we are not speaking about homonyms. Yet there is also a definite distinction between them in Greek usage such that we can say that when *πίστις* is used, it is used with one meaning or the other, and not both. To use our picture from the previous paragraph, *πίστις* would more accurately thought of as having two etymologically related but completely separate semantic spheres than just one giant one. This can be demonstrated both theoretically and practically.

To begin, it is necessary to move beyond the English glosses ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’, which are, as Matlock finds, a source of confusion,⁴⁸ for they obscure the relationship between the two meanings. More suitable glosses for this purpose would be ‘trustfulness’ and ‘trustiness/trustworthiness’. These reflect the real relationship between the two meanings of

⁴⁷ Robinson claims to have found the underlying meaning for all the various meanings of *πίστις*: “The one word **pistis** will do for all these things because it means something like ‘firmness’ in each case.” D.W.B. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ’—A New Testament Debate,” *The Reformed Theological Review* 29.3 (1970): 71-81, 81. This is a textbook example of erroneously assuming that all words have a single basic meaning which manifests itself variously but also overtly in all its different senses. Such an opinion could be accurately included under the first exegetical fallacy which Carson chronicles, “The Root Fallacy.” D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 28-33.

⁴⁸ “But then we have noticed a certain reluctance to regard these as two distinct senses, which leads us to ask just what we mean by ‘faithfulness’. Perhaps some simply mean something like ‘full of faith’, where, indeed, ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’ would appear to be alternative English-language glosses for the same general sense of *πίστις*. The confusion arising from the failure to attend in a disciplined way to sense distinctions is made worse by the tendency to rely on glosses—‘faith, faithfulness, firmness’—rather than actual definitions. This is not just a matter for lexicographers, but for conceptual clarity in exegesis. The *πίστις* Χριστοῦ debate helps one appreciate L-N’s principled employment of proper definitions, followed by translation equivalents: *πίστις*^c [the third of six meanings Louw-Nida lists for *πίστις*] is defined clearly, as ‘the state of being someone in whom complete confidence can be placed,’ thus, again, as a personal characteristic or quality, hence, ‘trustworthiness, dependability, faithfulness.’” Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 10-11.

πίστις—they are opposites, not in the sense of antonyms but in that the trust and faith moves in the opposite direction. In the first case it speaks of one who trusts; in the second it speaks of one who is trusted. It is wrong to assume that πίστις has the basic meaning of ‘faith’ which can take on the connotation of either believing and trusting in or of acting in faithfulness and fidelity towards.⁴⁹ πίστις can mean ‘trustiness/trustworthiness’, which is not the same thing as ‘trustfulness’ or ‘trust’, which it can also mean.

Both meanings of πίστις do quite visibly relate to the verb. The verb is the act of trusting. One meaning of the noun relates the act of the one who trusts; the other relates the quality of the one trusted. To demonstrate this exegetically, all that is necessary are cases in which πίστις explicitly bears the meaning of being able to be trusted. The Septuagint rendering of Proverbs 12:22 contrasts someone who does πίστις with lying lips. A trustworthy person, a person you can trust, most naturally preserves the parallelism. Titus 2:10 contrasts showing πίστις with stealing from one’s master. The most natural contrast here would be being trustworthy. We could add here the other options for the meaning of πίστις that were seen as predominating in Philo and Josephus, meanings such as ‘pledge’ or ‘proof’ or ‘evidence’, as well as the times πίστις denotes *fides quae*. These too relate to the verb in that they designate either something which is trusty or that which demonstrates or guarantees something’s trustworthiness.

We see the same phenomenon with the adjective πιστός. It can be used in the sense of ‘trustful’ as when the referent is Abraham (Ga 3:9). It can also, however, be used in the sense of ‘trusty/trustworthy’.⁵⁰ Again, the distinction is not one of a nuance but of the difference between one who believes and one who either is or should be believed in.⁵¹ Like πίστις in Proverbs 12:22, a number of proverbs use πιστός to describe a witness which can be trusted (11:13; 13:17; 14:5,25; 17:7; 25:13). The same happens in the New Testament, Revelation in particular (1:5; 2:13; 3:14; 21:5; 22:6). Additionally, in the parable of the talents, the servants are ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ because they proved trustworthy when they were trusted, as in, they were the objects of

⁴⁹ This is essentially Campbell’s argument: “Trust in God, exercised over time, and especially in the face of adverse circumstances, elides into the meaning ‘faithfulness.’” Campbell, *Quest*, 222 n. 20.

⁵⁰ BDAG even labels this as the “pass. aspect of πιστεύω” as opposed to the former which it labels as the “act. aspect of πιστεύω.” BDAG, § πιστός.

⁵¹ Hays, operating on shaky linguistic grounds, fails to appreciate this. “Dunn contends that Paul wants ‘to argue that Abraham’s πίστις meant his faith . . . and therefore *not* his “faithfulness”’ If that is the case, why does he refer to Abraham in Gal 3:9 as ὁ πιστὸς Ἀβραάμ (“the faithful Abraham”)?” Hays, “Stake,” 57.

trust and proved themselves commendable as objects of trust. Paul's use is consistent with this. He says his advice should be listened to, i.e., trusted, because by the Lord's mercy he is πιστός (1 Co 7:25). He elsewhere writes that God considered him πιστόν (1 Ti 1:12). Certainly he does not mean that God thought Paul was a believer or a generally reliable person before his conversion. He means God treated him as if he were trustworthy—he entrusted him with the gospel. 'Trustworthy' is an entirely separate meaning than 'trusting'. This was articulated already by the native Greek-speaking Athanasius.⁵²

It is true that often for the passive meaning of both πίστις and πιστός the sense of trust has faded into the background, just as in English calling someone 'trusty' can be a reference to their steadfastness, reliability, and fidelity without any explicit connotation of placing trust in that individual. It is also true that at times the demonstrably diverse meanings of πίστις and πιστός do overlap with each other.⁵³ But neither of these truths negate the fact that a word is being used which has multiple and distinct meanings. This means that every time πίστις is used, it is used with one of those meanings and not the other. Words are always used with one specific meaning, regardless of whether the possible meaning is rightly deciphered by the audience. To use a word with multiple meanings is to make a pun, a torturous idea which has already been addressed. To attempt to slide between meanings of a word as if no real change has happened is no less torturous, and a significantly more arbitrary method of exegesis. Any interpretation which relies on downplaying the distinctions between the separate meanings of πίστις is patently false.⁵⁴ Contrary to what Hays believes,⁵⁵ the Greek mind could conceptually distinguish between 'faith' and 'faithfulness' and meant exactly one of the two when it said, "πίστις."

⁵²*Contra Arianos*, 2.6. This quotation is printed in full in Appendix C.

⁵³ See Appendix F.

⁵⁴ For a fuller exposition of the linguistic basis of this argument, see Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1989). They write,

Whereas most words are polysemous [having multiple meanings], it cannot be emphasized too strongly that this should not be taken to mean that a word is normally capable of a full range of meanings in its use in any one utterance. The context of the utterance usually singles out (and perhaps modulates) the *one* sense, which is intended, from amongst the various senses of which the word is potentially capable. Of course occasionally we come across accidental, or even deliberate, ambiguity; and occasionally we get deliberate *double entendre*, or word-play as in the familiar pun (for example the use of *pneuma* in John 3.8 to denote both 'wind' and 'the Spirit'). But these are the exception, not the rule. They are more common to some genre of literature than to others (to poetry more than to prose narrative) and there are usually contextual markers for what is happening (cf. the 'in the same way' of John 3.8b). When an interpreter tells us his author could be using such-and-such a word with sense *a*, or he could be using it with sense *b*, and then sits

Both Campbell and Hays seem to have fallen into what I might call a “fallacy fallacy.” They know of linguistic fallacies such as etymologizing and maintaining that words have basic meanings underlying all their uses, and so when they see anything which remotely resembles these they are quick to accuse others of fallacies. They fail to realize, however, the substantive differences between such unforgiveable hermeneutical sins and legitimate connections and distinctions, and so they fallaciously label them as fallacious. Recognizing that words of the same stem found nearby are part of the word’s determining context is not the same as etymologizing, and recognizing a legitimate case of a word having multiple meanings is not the same as imposing non-native distinctions. On the other hand, their own failure to make lexical distinctions borders on trying to make a word always mean what it might ever mean, a type of fallacy which Carson describes as an “unwarranted adoption of an expanded semantic field” and “illegitimate totality transfer.”⁵⁶ The semantic background of πίστις shows two principle alternatives, ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’, one of which (i.e., the former) fits the general context placed on it within Paul.

In many ways, the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate is not really about the syntax of the genitive. Hypothetically, Paul could have left it off all of his expressions and they still would have had the same meaning, as is further shown from all the times πίστις is found unmodified in the same prepositional phrase and functioning in the same manner. Since the subjective and not the objective interpretation almost seems to demand the inclusion of the genitive to be readable contextually, as Χριστοῦ would provide the only textual marker that this is Christ’s πίστις, this

on the fence claiming perhaps the author means *both*, we should not too easily be discouraged from the suspicion that the interpreter is simply fudging the exegesis. He may of course be right, but while *we* may *often* not be sure which of several possible meanings an author intends, it is less regularly the case that *the author himself* was uncertain. Often more patient exegesis resolves what at first appears to be an ambiguity. (175-176)

In any utterance, each occasion of a word will *normally* only carry one of its possible senses, and that sense is the one determined by the linguistic and extra-linguistic context. (178)

⁵⁵ Hays’ idea seems to resemble an extreme form of the (now largely discredited) Sapir-Worf hypothesis, where distinctions can only be made mentally when one possesses the vocabulary to verbalize them. Just because the same word is used for two concepts, however, it does not mean a speaker cannot tell the difference between these two concepts or that both must be implied. Take, for instance, the sentence, “Peter is mad.” This either means that he is angry or that he is crazy. Barring a pun, it does not mean both. It also certainly does not imply that anger and insanity are the same concept in the English mind. It could be argued that this example is unfair since English also has words such as ‘angry’ or ‘crazy’ to allow this distinction to be formed mentally. The same, however, is true in Greek. For ‘faith’ Greek also has πεποιθήσις and ἀποδοχή; for ‘faithfulness’ ἀλήθεια. They also were capable of using πιστεύω with both a subject and a direct object.

⁵⁶ *Fallacies*, 60-61.

correlation between ἐκ πίστεως and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is already a major strike against said subjective interpretation. Additionally, Watson says the subjective view

would seem to allow the two unemphasized πίστεις Χριστοῦ passages (3:22, 26) too much weight in the interpretation of the other Habakkuk-inspired formulations, occurring not just in Romans 3 but also in chapters 1, 4, 9, and 10. It is more plausible to suppose that the ten or so πίστεις passages that lack a reference to Christ should determine the sense of the two passages that include one.⁵⁷

If the meaning and the referent of πίστεις can be identified, the syntax of the genitive, if it is even included in a given passage, becomes a moot point. Porter and Pitts explain, “Oblique cases restrict the meaning of the head term but they do not determine it. . . . if possible, the lexis of the head term should be disambiguated before asking how the genitive modifies its head term.”⁵⁸ They further point out how the genitive serves only to “restrict the meaning of the head term through specification” and does not typically pick which possible meaning is meant.⁵⁹ There would, perhaps, be times which, by identifying the referent, a genitive might give the audience a clue for deciphering the meaning, but this does not mean that from the perspective of the speaker the genitive can be determinate for the meaning of the word.⁶⁰

Pitts and Porter’s semantic study, proceeding on these linguistic grounds, produces some notable results. They conclude:

A significant conclusion that must be noted is that in all 33 instances of the anarthrous usage of πίστεις as a head term with a prepositional specifier (a parallel structure to that found in the theologically debated instances), and in all 14 clear instances of the anarthrous use of πίστεις as a relator, the abstract meaning is invoked. This abstract sense,

⁵⁷ Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007, 240-241.

⁵⁸ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, “Πίστεις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the Πίστεις Χριστοῦ Discussion,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 33-53, 47.

⁵⁹ “Πίστεις,” 48.

⁶⁰ Take, for example, the sentence: “Over there is the bat of the first-baseman.” The addition of “of the first-baseman” might, if there were not already sufficient contextual determinators, help signal to the *hearer* that the speaker meant a wooden stick and not a flying mammal, but only in rare circumstances would “of the first-baseman” be meant from the *speaker’s* perspective to positively disambiguate which meaning is being used. The speaker was speaking of a wooden stick, and would have meant the same even without tacking on the trailing modifier, which serves only to further specify *whose* wooden stick it is, not whether or not it is a wooden stick or instead some different meaning of ‘bat’.

furthermore, is never stated in direct connection with a participant in the discourse (the faith of *x* or *x*'s faith), but always as an abstract conceptual notion unconnected to a particular individual. When a connection with an individual needs to be established, an article is typically employed to establish a referential connection. According to the collocation criterion for disambiguating semantic senses based upon consistently occurring grammatical structures, there seems to be good lexical semantic grounds for understanding the collocation of a prepositional specifier with πίστις as an indicator of the abstract function of the lexeme. When an author wants to add to this a referential relation or specify a larger body of tradition, he employs the article to focus the meaning further.⁶¹

Following this pattern of usage, an anarthrous reference to the faithfulness of a particular individual, namely, Christ, would be an atypical expression. Regular New Testament speaking configurations would present 'faith' as the most likely option.

The above semantic discussion has shown the relative likelihood of 'faith' and unlikelihood of 'faithfulness'. These leanings will have to be tested and confirmed exegetically. However, first some syntactical issues concerning the genitive case must be addressed.

⁶¹ "Πίστις," 50-51.

THE IMPORT OF THE GENITIVE

The genitive case primarily establishes a relationship between two nouns.⁶² The genitive noun limits the other noun in some manner. In this sense we could say that all such uses of the genitive case could be broadly considered as adjectival. The genitive modifies the head noun.

Just as when an English speaker uses the preposition ‘of’ to express a similar grammatical relationship,⁶³ a Greek speaker would not consciously be thinking in terms of ‘subjective’, ‘objective’, ‘possessive’, ‘authorship’, or ‘partitive’ when he chose the genitive as the best syntactical method available to him to communicate his intended meaning, even if he were educated in such terminology of classification. That does not, however, mean that he was unaware of the relationship between the genitive and the noun that it limits. When we later stamp a syntactic label on a genitive we are not saying that the author said to himself, “I want to mean this, so I will use a genitive of ____.” We are saying that the genitive establishes a relationship between two nouns where the genitive one limits the other, and the author used this construction because in his mind there was such a limiting relationship. A syntactical label is merely a contextual judgment call of what limiting relationship was intended to be communicated.

Some have argued that this whole debate proceeds on faulty linguistic grounds, imagining that Paul was not at all concerned about what kind of genitive he was using or how later exegetes would attempt to pigeon-hole him syntactically. This is true in a sense, but the point is entirely false. While Paul, like any other speaker or writer, was not thinking in terms of conscious grammatical categories, he was using the words *πίστις* and *Χριστοῦ* in a particular

⁶² It also can be used as an object of certain prepositions, as the object of certain verbs, and in some adverbial constructions such as the genitive absolute. While numerically these uses might exceed the use of the genitive with a noun, this textbook use of the genitive to link two nouns is the most common use of the genitive not dependent on external syntactical constraints.

⁶³ This does not mean, however, that the genitive means ‘of’. Cases do not bear any semantic freight (and neither do proper prepositions). But like the English word ‘of’ which we use not with any real content meaning but instead to mark another word syntactically, it denotes a relationship, authorial intent of which is already present and must be determined by the reader contextually. Silva explains, “Case endings are little more than grammatical markers: they have very little intrinsic semantic content and serve simply to establish the relationship between two or more words. The value of that relationship will fluctuate drastically, depending on various factors, such as subject matter and lexical distribution (that is, terms tend to fall into specific patterns)” Moisés Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 65. In English we also can place the modifying noun ahead of the head noun to create a sort of separated compound noun phrase, which at times become stock expressions. For example, garage sale, lawn mower, and baby blanket. That these expressions happen with no additional word but purely by word order again help to demonstrate that ‘of’ is a relational marker and has no semantic content of its own.

limiting relationship, and was aware of what that relationship was, even if he would have perhaps lacked the grammatical training to label it. His first audience, based on context and their command of their own native Greek language, would have understood the relation subconsciously as well, and the thought likely never would have occurred to them that there was a hypothetical alternative way to construe the phrase.⁶⁴

The relationship which we call a subjective genitive would be that it is the faith or faithfulness which Christ “faiths” or “faithfulnesses,” so to speak. It gets this name because we can then paraphrase “faith of Christ” as “Christ faiths,” whereby ‘Christ’ is the subject of the verbal noun rendered in verbal form. The relationship which we call an objective genitive would be that it is the faith by which one “faiths” Christ. It gets this name because we can then paraphrase “faith of Christ” as “Someone faiths Christ,” whereby ‘Christ’ is the object of the verbal noun rendered in verbal form.

If we keep this in mind, we will remember, as Pitts and Porter taught us above, that the referent of *πίστις* is already clear in Paul’s mind before he adds a genitive to it. The *πίστις* is either Christ’s or someone else’s directed towards Christ before Christ is explicitly mentioned. That is what we wish to express by these labels ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’.⁶⁵ Whose *πίστις* does Paul say we are justified by? What these grammatical terms attempt to communicate is the central issue of the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* debate: Whose *πίστις*? And *πίστις* towards whom?

In many cases disambiguating the possible limiting relationships of a genitive can only be done on contextual grounds. Most who have waded into this debate have despaired of proving a solution grammatically altogether. Hooker has stated, “If any kind of conclusion has been reached, it is that the question is one which cannot be settled on the basis of appeals to

⁶⁴ In English the phrase from the previous note, ‘garage sale’, could mean that I am selling garages, but when we hear the phrase we know what it means without even being aware of this alternative possibility. Context, both narrow and the wider one of all our experience with the language, tells us intuitively which sense is meant. If a different sense is meant, we would expect the speaker to find a way to make that explicit.

⁶⁵ Seifrid objects to such classification on the grounds that *πίστις* is not a verbal noun, i.e., it is inappropriate to speak of it having either a subject or an object. Seifrid, “Faith,” 130-135. The fact that it is often used by Paul in tandem with *πιστεύω* shows that he is incorrect. Seifrid’s evidence is drawn chiefly from Philo and Josephus, who, as related above, use *πίστις* less often in the sense of ‘faith’. He also argues that because faith means more than just believing, i.e., it has embedded within it that this faith has a certain content, it is not a verbal noun. While we can appreciate Seifrid’s reminder that this faith is not just a general faith but is a certain faith in a certain thing, this does not negate the linguistic observation that we are talking about a noun which relates the action of a verb.

grammatical construction alone. The issue can be settled only by exegesis.”⁶⁶ One grammatical argument, however, does seem to persevere. It stems from an observation of Burton⁶⁷ and became part of the objective argumentation with Hultgren, who writes:

Whenever Paul uses the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* formulation, the article is lacking before both nouns. Never does he have *ἡ πίστις τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Elsewhere, however, when Paul uses the term *πίστις* followed by a genitive which is clearly to be understood as subjective, the article is invariably present before *πίστις*. Twice the genitive is a noun: Rom. iii 3 (*τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ*); iv 12 (*τῆς πίστεως τοῦ Ἀβραάμ*). Much more frequently the genitive is a pronoun, and the standard formulation is *ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν*, etc.; these occur in Rom. i 8, 12; iv 5; I Cor. ii 5; xv 14, 17; 2 Cor. i 24; x 15; Phil. ii 17; 1 Thes. i 8; iii 2, 5, 6, 7, 10; Philemon 6.⁶⁸

In short, in all undisputed cases of *πίστις* with the subjective genitive, *πίστις* is articularized. As Williams and Campbell have shown,⁶⁹ this cannot decisively prove anything about Paul’s syntax, but it does at least raise questions about the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* phrases and why they are all anarthrous (outside of Ephesians where the article is included). Perhaps the reason is because Paul conceptualizes a different relationship in these cases than a subjective one.

⁶⁶ “Πίστις,” 321.

⁶⁷ Burton categorizes among the possible constructions used with *πίστις* “those in which *πίστις* is accompanied by a subjective genitive or equivalent phrase indicating by whom the faith is exercised. The article is in this case almost invariably present” Ernst De Witt Burton, *A Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1971), 482.

⁶⁸ Arland J. Hultgren, “The Pistis Christou Formulation in Paul,” *Novum Testamentum* 22.3 (July 1980): 248-263, 253.

⁶⁹ Williams suggests that in many of Hultgren’s example of the subjective genitive the article is present because the genitive is a personal pronoun. Sam K. Williams, “Again Pistis Christou,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 431-447, 432-433. This would account for many but not for all of the examples. Note, however, that all the other references to faith which are articularized and with a personal pronominal genitive all have the article because they are speaking with a definite referent, i.e., the faith of specific individuals. In the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* phrases we have not a reference to specific instances of faith but to the general idea of faith by which justification is received. This is the most likely explanation for the presence of the article or lack thereof, and it is squarely supports the objective reading. Campbell suggests that the disputed phrases might be missing an article because they are used as the objects of prepositions, unlike Hultgren’s examples. Douglas A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992), 214. This cannot, however, account for why the article would be omitted when used in a prepositional phrase. It is not uncommon for Paul or any other Greek writer to have articularized objects of prepositions. It would also seem more natural for Paul to have used an article before *πίστις* if he meant by it what Campbell claims he does. In that case *πίστις* is not a general reference to the faith of anyone or even a generic reference to Christ’s faithfulness toward us but a specific reference to Christ’s faithfulness unto death. There would be no reason for Paul to in every circumstance (outside of Ephesians) omit the article.

There is only one grammatical argument which is ever made on behalf of the subjective interpretation, and it serves only to highlight the faulty linguistic assumptions by which some of its adherents are influenced. It also may account for why the subjective view seems to have been steadily growing in popularity among people who speak English. The argument is that the subjective genitive is a natural reading of the Greek and the objective genitive is an unnatural or forced understanding. Take the words of Hays: “‘Faith *in* Jesus Christ’ is not the most natural translation of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; once the question has been raised, it is understandable that critics should seek a more satisfying interpretation.”⁷⁰ This is an argument drawn entirely from English renderings. Since the subjective interpretation would render the genitive with ‘of’, as the genitive is typically glossed, and the objective interpretation would render the genitive with ‘in’, as is less common of a gloss for the genitive, one could get the impression, based solely on English translation conventions, that the objective interpretation would be imposing an atypical sense on the genitival construction.⁷¹ The illegitimacy of this argument hardly merits demonstration. The manner in which a construction must be rendered in a target language says nothing as to its syntactical viability in the source language. The objective genitive remains a grammatically feasible option for understanding πίστις Χριστοῦ.

The objective genitive is also not odd either for Paul or for Greek in general. Harrisville has located cases of πίστις with an objective genitive within the writings of Aeschines, Euripedes, Demosthenes, Plato, Thucydides, and Hyperides.⁷² Matlock notes thirteen examples within the *Lives* of Plutarch, a rough contemporary of Paul.⁷³ Smyth writes that that the objective genitive “is very common with substantives denoting a frame of mind or an emotion.”⁷⁴ We see an example of this in Philippians 3:8, one verse before an occurrence of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Paul considers everything a loss διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου.

⁷⁰ *Faith*, 147.

⁷¹ Silva “wonder[s] if doubts about the objective interpretation of *pistis Iēsou Cristou* could have occurred only to a modern Western speaker who had identified the Greek genitive with the meaning ‘of.’” Moisés Silva, *God, Language, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 107.

⁷² Roy A. Harrisville III, “Before Πίστις Χριστοῦ: The Objective Genitive as Good Greek,” *Novum Testamentum* 48.4 (2006): 353-358.

⁷³ R. Barry Matlock, “‘Even the Demons Believe’: Paul and Πίστις Χριστοῦ.” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64 (2002): 300-318, 304.

⁷⁴ Herbert Weir Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York: American Book Company, 1920), § 1331.

Lending further support for the objective genitive interpretation is when Scripture uses *πίστις* with a genitive which is an impersonal noun. Under such circumstances the objective sense of the genitive is apparent and a subjective sense would be incongruous. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul writes *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας*.⁷⁵ Luke records Peter using a similar construction to speak of faith in Jesus in Acts 3:16: *ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ*. In neither case could the genitive be the acting agent of faith. Perhaps stronger evidence than either of these are the words of Jesus recorded in Mark 11:22, *Ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ*, whose grammar (objective genitive) and meaning (‘Have faith in God’) are both transparent enough.⁷⁶ The objective genitive is both syntactically and biblically normal.

There are also a number of times where *πίστις* is followed not by a genitive but by a prepositional phrase designating the object of faith⁷⁷ (Ac 3:16; 20:21; 24:24; 26:18; Eph 1:15;

⁷⁵ Many would include here Colossians 2:12: *διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ*. An objective genitive is indeed a possible understanding, and a popular one as well, judging by the frequency of its adoption in translations. However, contextually this does not seem to be preferable. Following Zell, I take the phrase to mean that the faith *τῆς πίστεως* is worked *τῆς ἐνεργείας* by God *τοῦ θεοῦ*. (For the sake of clarity within this present work, I would classify the syntax here as being an attributive genitive, instead of the labels of subjective, source, or producer which he proposes there. The way we are using the word ‘subjective’ in our current discussion would mean that the working is the subject doing the believing, while Zell applies it in a more general sense.) For a fuller discussion on the exegetical advantages and also theological implications of this interpretation, see Paul E. Zell, “Exegetical Brief: Colossians 2:11-13: In Baptism God Works Faith and Makes Us Alive, Joining Us to Christ,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 111.4 (Fall 2014): 279-284.

⁷⁶ Most adherents even of the subjective interpretation admit that Mark 11:22 is an example of *πίστις* with an objective genitive. Some, however, want to erase any biblical evidence that an objective genitive was even a possible construction with *πίστις* and so they have tried to reinterpret this passage also. Most notable would be the interpretation “Be firm as God is firm” of Robinson, who proceeds to make similarly desperate attempts to avoid an objective genitive in Acts 3:16 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13, “Faith,” 78-79; and the interpretation “You have God’s faithfulness” of Bolt, whose argument is equally unconvincing. Peter G. Bolt, “The Faith of Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 209-222, 210-212. His argument seems to be merely that the language could theoretically be construed as such and the resulting meaning would make for a nice thought. However, this is not only an unnatural expression; it fails to adequately take the context into account. In the two verses immediately following verse 22, the verb *πιστεύω* is used, apparently stating what will happen if one has the *πίστις* Jesus calls for. Furthermore, Cirafesi has demonstrated that *ἔχειν πίστιν* is equivalent in meaning to *πιστεύω*, including within the New Testament, leaving the objective genitive as the only syntactical option for the genitive as it functions as if the direct object of *πιστεύω*. Wally V. Cirafesi, “Ἔχειν Πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek and its Contribution to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 1 (2012): 5-37. There really is just one possible way to take Mark 11:22 and it confirms the viability of the objective genitive.

⁷⁷ In the case of *ἐν* it seems to designate the sphere of faith and not strictly its object, but the theological difference is negligible—we still have human faith directed towards God.

Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Th 1:8; 1 Ti 1:14; 3:13; 2 Ti 1:13; 3:14; Phm 5).⁷⁸ These passages, while not strict grammatical parallels, do at least provide thematic parallels. Jesus is seen as the object, content, and sphere of faith. What in some cases was communicated via a prepositional phrase was also natural enough to express by the genitive.⁷⁹ Smyth confirms the commonality of such variation between prepositional phrase and objective genitive, writing, “The objective genitive is often used when a prepositional expression, giving greater precision, is more usual.”⁸⁰ When Wallis, in advocating the subjective view, points to these and like expressions as what Paul *should* have said had he wanted to speak of faith in Christ, as opposed to the genitive construction which would have been more naturally subjective,⁸¹ Moo suggests the genitive construction is employed to match ἔργων νόμου,⁸² and Peterman turns the question back on Wallis himself: Why, if the faith/faithfulness of Christ was the all-important theme of Paul, was it never specified by a prepositional phrase instead of merely by the genitive, as an attributive prepositional phrase can be demonstrated as an acceptable manner of expressing source or subject in Greek?⁸³ In either case, modern English speakers are not really in position to determine that in Koine Greek the prepositional phrase would be a more natural way to express the object than a genitive. πιστεύω can take an object, and so πίστις can and does take an objective genitive. It seems that, all other things being equal, the genitive may have even been Paul’s preferred way of expressing an object for πίστις.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Of the Acts passages below, only 3:16 and 24:24 are not reporting Paul’s speech. For all these passages, the time spent together by Paul and Luke would have us expect some of Paul’s theological jargon to have rubbed off on Luke.

⁷⁹ Meyer already noted this is the case here in parallel situation with ἀγάπη: “It is with πίστις as with ἀγάπη, in which the object is likewise expressed as well by the genitive as by εἰς.” Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. John C. Moore, Edwin Johnson, and William P. Dickson (T. & T. Clark, 1884, Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1983), 129 n. 2.

⁸⁰ Smyth, *Grammar*, §1333.

⁸¹ Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 70.

⁸² Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 45 n. 55.

⁸³ G. W. Peterman, “Δικαιωθῆναι διὰ τῆς ἐκ Χριστοῦ Πίστεως: Notes on a Neglected Greek Construction,” *New Testament Studies* 56 (2009): 163-168. In addition to many examples from the Septuagint, Josephus, and secular Greek writers, Peterman identifies such a construction in Mark 5:30, Acts 23:21, Romans 11:27, 2 Corinthians 8:7, and Philippians 3:9.

⁸⁴ If we eliminate those occurrences which are not directly Pauline and also those which express sphere and not object, most of these remaining prepositional expressions have some other additional modifier designating the subject of πίστις, in many cases the genitive personal pronoun ὑμῶν. The grammar would be clumsy to use a second

While many have tried to suggest such, there really are no further options beyond the subjective and objective categories of genitive (as we use them in this discussion) which can stand up to analysis. All other proposed classifications either do not fit contextually or are impossible semantically. The genitive of source or authorship will prove awkward, particularly in Galatians 2:16. This interpretation, having already recognized that the faith is human faith, seems in its syntactical analysis to be further motivated by a hesitancy to view Christ as the object of faith and so it seeks refuge in a less likely classification of the genitive.

More interpreters have resorted to a catch-all category of genitive whereby both subjective and objective meaning might be umbrellaed together under a single syntax. This is simply not how language works. As was shown above, Paul meant either that Christ was the subject of faith or its object. The only circumstance in which both could be meant is if Paul were to contextually establish both meanings to be under discussion and then use a single genitive to emphatically tie them together. Or the order could be reversed, but in this case the overloaded genitive would require subsequent explication. Nowhere does Paul have any language surrounding the disputed phrases which might establish the subjective meaning (the objective meaning, however, is well established by πιστεύω). Such a twofold sense is simply too complicated to be what was intended. Just because an exegete struggles to pick between two meanings, it does not mean that Paul meant both.⁸⁵ Language does not work this way.

genitival expression, and so a prepositional phrase is used instead. Consider the example often used for its ambiguity, 'the love of God'. It could mean either God's love or love for God. If I mean the latter, I can use 'the love of God' repeatedly, and assuming the context was sufficiently established, the objective sense would be clear. If, however, I want to specify the subject of such love as being 'people', I cannot say, "the love of people of God." Even in English I would be forced to alter my expression to "the love of people for God" (or in English I could alternately say, "people's love of/for God"). In either case, the grammatical constructions available to me are limited by trying to include both phrases. The same appears to be true in Greek, accounting for the transition in certain circumstances from a genitive to a prepositional phrase. In English we can easily enough circumvent this because we have two genitival constructions which we might employ: the Saxon '-s' and the Norman 'of'. In languages such as Greek which have only one grammatically genitival morpheme, the option is not there to simultaneously modify a single noun with both a subjective and an objective genitive. One must be expressed in an alternate manner, namely, a prepositional phrase. For this same phenomenon in other languages, see Bernard Comrie and Sandra A. Thompson, "Lexical Nominalization," In *Language Typology and Syntactic Description, Volume III: Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon*, 2nd ed, ed. Timothy Shopen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 334-381, 353-368. However, when there is no such other grammatical restraint, Paul then, at least statistically, seems to prefer the genitive construction.

⁸⁵ Silva offers another, more sobering explanation for what we are really saying if both meanings are included. "It is important to appreciate that, if we do so, we are not really saying that the apostle, because of his rich thought, had both grammatical ideas in mind. Rather, we would be suggesting that he did *not* have any specific syntactical connection in view; that is, imprecision, rather than fullness, characterizes the expression." Silva, *Explorations*, 68.

PAULINE PASSAGES

This is where the rubber meets the road—the passages themselves. This portion of the paper is in no way designed to be an exhaustive exegesis, but rather an exegetical argument, treating the relevant texts in Paul insofar as necessary to demonstrate the legitimacy of the objective position and the unviability of the subjective position. Many sections of Scripture must be analyzed which do not contain the disputed phrase *πίστις Χριστοῦ*, because, assuming Paul has some measure of consistency as well as a desire to be understood, all occurrences of *πίστις* within the same context are relevant even if they do not share the genitive modifier.⁸⁶

The Epistle to the Romans

As it is Paul's fullest presentation of his gospel and the one whose form and phraseology show virtually no signs of being influenced by controversy or any other constraining circumstance, Romans is the primary battlefield in this debate and in all contemporary debates in Pauline scholarship. It also, with its little sister Galatians, is the heart of the Reformation. All are agreed that Paul had not yet visited the church in Rome at the time of its writing. This last fact is one to keep in mind throughout the study of various passages. Without having personally instructed the Christians there, could Paul have expected them to decipher as loaded and unexplained a term as 'faithfulness of Christ' would be? Or would they be able to understand without explanation Paul's messianic interpretation of an Old Testament text traditionally interpreted generally of God's people?

Romans 1:5

In Paul's extended theology-crammed address we find the phrase *εἰς ὑπακοήν πίστεως*. Those who hold to the subjective understanding point to this phrase as evidence that to Paul *ὑπακοή* and *πίστις* are related—if not synonymous—ideas in light of the fact that they are linked here, and therefore *πίστις* to Paul means faithful obedience. Campbell writes, "The overlap

⁸⁶ Hunn notes that "Some scholars on both sides of the *pistis Christou* debate are coming to recognise that defending *πίστις Χριστοῦ* as a subjective genitive requires hoovering up every relevant reference to 'faith' in Galatians—and that it is just as necessary in defending the objective genitive view." Debbie Hunn, "Pistis Christou in Galatians: The Connection to Habakkuk 2:4," *Tyndale Bulletin* 63.1 (2012): 75-91, 77.

between these two semantic fields in Paul is possibly indicated by Rom. 1.5 and 16.26, where a genitive links *pistis* and *hupakoē*, and also by 9.30-10.4 and 10.14-21, where the cognate verbs interchange (cf. the same phenomenon in 2 Thess. 1.8 and 10).⁸⁷

First, it should go without saying that linking two words together in a genitival relationship is not always, or even often, tantamount to equating the two. Second, Campbell has even pointed us in the direction of the evidence by which his argument unravels. In Romans 10:16 ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ corresponds with ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν, as Campbell says, “where the cognate verbs interchange.” However, the verb πιστεύω cannot mean ‘to be faithful’, and, even if it could, context makes plain that it means ‘to believe’. There is a semantic domain shared by both ὑπακούω and πιστεύω, and likewise ὑπακοή and πίστις, but in Paul’s usage it is not the domain of ‘faithful obedience’—it is the domain of ‘faith-listening’.⁸⁸

Returning to 1:5 with the recognition of where ὑπακοή and πίστις really overlap, the meaning of the prepositional phrase becomes clear. Paul is specifying (perhaps appositionally, perhaps descriptively—it matters little either way) what kind of obedience, or listening, his apostolate would serve among the gentiles: they would faith-listen to God’s gospel message. The first mention of πίστις found within Romans refers to human faith.

Romans 1:17

Before skipping ahead to treat this key passage, we note that in the intervening verses Paul twice uses πίστις (1:8,12), both times meaning ‘faith’, both times with the referent being that of human beings. Furthermore, verse 16 speaks of salvation coming παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. This helps us establish the linguistic context Paul was operating under while speaking this next verse.

⁸⁷ *Quest*, 187.

⁸⁸ If we assume from the very beginning that these words denote ‘obedience’, as in, compliance to a command, we have wrongly allowed a narrow gloss to color our understanding of their broader possibilities for usage. We must start with meaning and then search for the proper contextual gloss. Both classical Greek and Septuagintal usage shows that the verb can be used with the broader sense of ‘listening to’. LSJ, § ὑπακούω; and Middendorf, Romans, 60. When the listening happens to take place directed to a command, then ‘obey’ is an accurate gloss. When the object of such listening is someone telling a story or, as is the case in the New Testament, the good news message of the gospel, then ‘listen to’ is a more accurate understanding and, consequently, translation for the phrase. For confirmation of this, see 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and 1 Peter 1:22; 4:17 where the gospel is shown to be the object of this kind of so-called ‘obedience’.

Romans 1:17, more than any other verse in Scripture not containing *πίστις Χριστοῦ* or its variation, has found its way to the center of the *Πίστις Χριστοῦ* debate. Campbell has gone so far as to label it, in his title, “A Crux Interpretum for the *Πίστις Χριστοῦ* Debate.”⁸⁹ Its wording so closely resembles that of 3:21-22, which has *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, that the passages must be interpreted in harmony or one’s opinion on the issue has forfeited all claims of internal coherence. We will need to reach ahead into chapter 3 to help interpret this verse with certainty.

The subjective position must adopt a novel interpretation in 1:17. For the first example of *ἐκ πίστεως* within the verse to be a reference to Christ’s faith, so must the second example found within the Habakkuk quotation. Their contention then becomes that *ὁ δίκαιος* is a messianic title. Paul would then be citing the passage as saying, “The Righteous One (Christ) will attain life by his faithfulness.” That this interpretation is adopted for its theological necessity and expediency and not its exegetical soundness is clear from the fact that it does not seem to have ever been suggested prior to the twentieth century and has attracted adherents recently only from those who already maintain the subjective interpretation. Campbell admits, “Our suggestion concerning 17a [to take *ἐκ πίστεως* as a reference to Christ’s faithfulness unto death] therefore necessarily involves reading Hab 2:4 as a messianic proof-text. Certainly, if it cannot be so read, this would falsify our suggested reading of v. 17a,”⁹⁰ which would cast further doubt on all his proposals in various passages to take *ἐκ πίστεως* and *ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ* in reference to Christ’s faithfulness.

A number of bad assumptions are found in Campbell’s proposal. First, it is highly unlikely that the Habakkuk quotation understood itself as messianic or that any of its interpreters prior to Paul did either.⁹¹ If Paul is the one who is making use of a novel understanding of the prophecy, we would expect him to be more explicit in doing so, especially since he could not rely on any past personal instruction among them. He would presumably know that this was not the way the Roman Christians would naturally hear these words, and so more clarity would be necessary. As it stands in the text, there is nothing making this plain.

There is also no evidence to suggest that *ὁ δίκαιος* was understood as a messianic designation by Paul. Hays has cobbled together examples from 1 Enoch, Acts, and the Catholic

⁸⁹ Douglas A. Campbell, “Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum for the *Πίστις Χριστοῦ* Debate,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113.2 (1994): 265-285.

⁹⁰ “Crux,” 281.

⁹¹ See Appendix A.

Epistles, but none from the direct words of Paul.⁹² Certainly it would be appropriate to entitle Jesus ‘The Righteous One’, but *δίκαιος* is used frequently throughout the New Testament, and in Paul specifically, as a designation for us in our relationship with God. That is Paul’s typical way of speaking of ‘righteous’.

Schreiner further points out the contextual strain which Campbell’s conclusion would put on the connection between verses 16 and 17:

Nor is it persuasive to see a reference to the faithfulness of Christ in the Habakkuk citation. . . . In both instances the nerve of the argument joining verses 16 and 17 is cut, for the purpose of verse 16 is to assert that salvation is now actualized for every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, through the gospel. Paul's concern in this context is not whether God or Christ “shall live” (*ζήσεται, zēsetai*), but the basis on which human beings experience the saving righteousness of God. Indeed, to say that God or Christ would “live” by his own faithfulness seems foreign not only to the context but also to Pauline theology. Where else does Paul say that Christ (or God) would gain eschatological life for himself by his faithfulness or obedience?⁹³

The salvation of all who believe in verse 16, however, would be nicely paralleled by life being given by faith in verse 17.

Campbell’s attack on the traditional objective understanding of this verse relies chiefly on the meaning of *ἀποκαλύπτεται* ‘is revealed’ and its connection to faith:

But what the conventional reading cannot explain is a “faith” that discloses or reveals the “righteousness of God” in instrumental terms. “Faith” simply does not function as the means by which something moves from a position of invisibility to one of visibility, from the unknown to the known, and to affirm that it does is to make a basic semantic error—to assert something meaningless or ungrammatical.⁹⁴

⁹² Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 122-136. It also should be noted that certainly in some of these cases, and possibly in others, *δίκαιος* does not so much function as a title for a righteous deliverer but simply as an adjective meaning ‘innocent’ (Cf. 1 Pe 3:18). Since the notion of messianic innocence cannot be carried all the way through Romans 1:17 as a meaning for *δικαιοσύνη*, the parallel support passages Hays cites to legitimize the supposed presence of a messianic title are at least an inflated list, and perhaps even less than sufficient to establish it even as a possibility.

⁹³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 74.

⁹⁴ Douglas A. Campbell, “The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Romans 3:22,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 57-71, 67-68. Repeated in Campbell, *Deliverance*, 379.

Campbell's conclusion that this reading would be incomprehensible is correct. Believing does not reveal.⁹⁵ Yet his conclusion is of little significance because he is the one who is imposing this syntactical configuration on those who hold the objective opinion. This is not what we maintain.

The best understanding takes *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* with not *ἀποκαλύπτεται* but *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. This is a case of hyperbaton.⁹⁶ There are several compelling reasons to make this claim. First is *ἐν αὐτῷ*, whose antecedent is *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* in the previous verse. This prepositional phrase, which would be superfluous if adjectival, is adverbial, and so already modifies *ἀποκαλύπτεται* in an instrumental manner.⁹⁷ Already this passage tells us the means by which the revealing takes place. Another such instrumental phrase not only is unnecessary but would serve to disjoint the sentence, leaving it without clear direction. Furthermore, since this prepositional phrase, by its pronominal reference, is what ties this verse back to the main thought of the previous verse (not being ashamed of the *gospel*), the best interpretation of the verse is one which utilizes and even highlights its contextual connection and not one which must minimize its emphasis.

Furthermore, Campbell's observation of the unintelligibility of faith revealing something would apply equally to things being revealed *to* faith, the *εἰς πίστιν*. One cannot believe something until it has already been revealed. If at this point it would be claimed that this is to be understood as 'for the purpose of faith or faithfulness', again, the parallel breaks down not only with the previous verse but also, more importantly, with Romans 3:22, where *εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας* can in no way be massaged into meaning 'so that everyone believes'.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ One could perhaps in a sense say that our faith reveals what God has done for us, but here Paul is speaking of the revelation which is Jesus and his work, so such a construal would admittedly be somewhat constrained.

⁹⁶ We could alternatively label these prepositional phrases as being detached and modifying the entire previous part of the sentence. But then we would still want to be careful as to note that conceptually they modify not the revealing of the righteousness but the righteousness which has been revealed, otherwise the same difficulties would occur. Functionally, then, we can still say that these phrases are meant to shape our understanding of what kind of righteousness this is we are talking about here.

⁹⁷ Whether we understand it more instrumentally ("by the gospel") or more locally ("in the gospel"), in either case, it shows the means of revealing.

⁹⁸ Campbell does in fact interpret the phrase in this way, and does not even seem to recognize how unusual such an understanding would be, to say nothing of its grammatical impossibility. "Paul's *εἰς* clause in v. 22c is generally understood to be purposive; the goal of the revelation of God's righteousness through Christ is 'that everyone might believe', and presumably become ongoing believers." Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 62.

Romans 3:22 gives us confirmation of the hyperbatonic interpretation of 1:17. Paul, after interjecting within his thought *μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν* in verse 21, resumptively restates the subject *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. Paul is no stranger to convoluted sentences where adverbial modifiers appear far removed from what they modify. He finds it useful here, however, to restate *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* but not *πεφανέρωται*. This is because, despite the fact that *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας* is not articularized (neither is *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*), he intends this to be understood attributively. The righteousness Paul says in 1:17 that the Gospel reveals is this: a righteousness by faith and for faith.⁹⁹

This still leaves the difficult, and much debated,¹⁰⁰ question of what exactly Paul means with his concise pair of prepositional phrases, *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν*. We can assume that, since Paul confirms his statement here with the Habakkuk quotation in the second half of the verse, the first *ἐκ πίστεως* and the second *ἐκ πίστεως* must be interpreted in the same way. This rules out any sense of this entire expression denoting motion or growth, as that expression requires both the ‘from’ and the ‘to’ to be intelligible and cannot stand in isolation. *ἐκ πίστεως* simply means ‘by faith’ as it does every other time it appears.¹⁰¹ *εἰς πίστιν* shows what the righteousness is

⁹⁹ This also frees us from Campbell’s charge that we have shifted the focus of the text from something cosmic and eschatological to something individual and faith-based. Campbell, “Crux,” 274. If *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* is taken to modify *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* we have much more than just appropriation happening here. We have a cosmic revelation—the revelation of the right status all believers have before God because of Jesus without any of their own law-works.

¹⁰⁰ Cranfield lists eleven different proposed meanings for this phrase: 1) OT to NT (Tertullian and Origen), 2) Preachers to Hearers (Augustine), 3) One article to another (Aquinas mentioned), 4) Present to future (Aquinas mentioned), 5) Words to realities (Augustine), 6) God to man (Ambrosiaster, Barth, Manson), 7) Growth in faith (Sanday and Headlan, Lagrange), 8) By faith to believers (Cornely, Hill), 9) Ground to goal (Lightfoot), 10) Simply emphatic (Lietzmann), 11) Requires emendation (Pallis). C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Vol 1. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1975), 99-100.

¹⁰¹ Sometimes the way we accentuate things as we read them can affect the way we interpret them (or in turn, may already reflect interpretive assumptions). For example, compare the following two English inflected translations:

1. A righteousness from *faith* to *faith*
2. A righteousness from *faith*, to *faith*

On the single idiom which the first option of emphasis would be suggesting, John Taylor writes based on his search of *TLG*, “The idiom *ἐκ + A + εἰς + A* has three main functions. It indicates movement, extended time, and progression or increase.” John W. Taylor, “From Faith to Faith: Romans 1:17 in the Light of Greek Idiom,” *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 337-348, 342. His evidence for the notion of progression or increase is unconvincing, however. They all can be taken in the more general sense, “from one *x* to another,” without necessarily indicating any advancement in magnitude. None of these meanings can be massaged to fit suitably with either the idea of righteousness or that of revealing. Furthermore, as the dual prepositional phrases would really form a stock expression, meaningless if found only in part, the Habakkuk quotation could not then use *ἐκ πίστεως* in like manner.

intended for.¹⁰² Righteousness is by faith and for faith. In both cases πίστις has the same meaning and referent, as we would expect:¹⁰³ faith, the faith of people.

It is also worth noting that, in contrast to what those of the subjective interpretation advocate, Taylor finds that while the two uses of the same words often—and really, we should say always—have different referents, in no case do they ever have different meanings. Taylor, “Idiom,” 347. The second of the above options for inflection is really stating two separate things about this righteousness and its relationship to faith. This further allows ἐκ πίστεως to follow both Habakkuk and its usage elsewhere.

For these reasons NIV’s translation, “a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,” is not really viable. It tries to combine both the ‘by faith’ meaning of above emphasis two as well as the durative meaning of above emphasis one—an ingenious attempt, but hard to justify grammatically. The durative sense would be more along the lines of “a righteousness which begins and ends with faith.” This is grammatically possible but the parallel with the Habakkuk quotation has been severed. (To arrive at this same general interpretation in an alternative manner, Cranfield says, and many agree, that it is an emphatic equivalent of ἐκ πίστεως, the εἰς πίστιν having much the same effect as the ‘sola’ of ‘sola fide.’ Cranfield, *Romans*, 100. This is perhaps possible, and would fit contextually, but one would like to see evidence supporting such a syntactical construction before adopting it.) NIV’s conflation of the possibilities translates it as if it said ἐκ τοῦ ἐκ πίστεως εἰς τὸ ἐκ πίστεως, “from ‘by faith’ to ‘by faith’.” In his commentary on Romans 1-8, Kuske likewise rejects this translation:

The problem with translating this way in Romans 1:17 is that the one phrase ἐκ πίστεως is translated twice in two different ways (“by” and “from”) to get this interpretation to make sense: *by* faith *from* first to last (literally: by faith from faith to faith). Another problem is that this translation introduces a thought that is not in verse 16. As a result, verse 17 does not explain verse 16 as γὰρ indicates it should; at least the explanation is not as obvious as the interpretation which follows. And this interpretation does not end up making verse 17a the equivalent of verse 17b, as καθὼς at the beginning of verse 17b indicates it should. (51)

¹⁰² As to the precise nuance of this prepositional phrase, which we might broadly categorize as telic or even that of advantage, it is admittedly difficult to speak with dogmatic exactness. Paul leaves the phrase general here and gives no explicit indication of what he intends, so cautious exegesis will leave our interpretation equally unspecified. We do, however, note with curiosity one possibility. In light of the phrase’s potential parallel with εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας in 3:22, it may denote what/who the intended recipient/beneficiary of the righteousness is (even if the nuance would differ somewhat between these phrases, this in no way undermines the overall parallel nature of these two verses). While this makes perfect sense theologically as well as within Paul’s overall argument in Romans, this limiting of the meaning of the prepositional phrase would require contextual justification. The question then becomes whether the immediate context contains enough information to lead a hearer to that conclusion. (However, it is quite possible that since Paul is pronouncing a bold theme only to be fully taken up awhile later, he does not necessarily intend for his readers to immediately grasp yet the full import of each phrase.) I think there is enough to maintain it as a possibility, but probably not enough to make any certain claims. The previous verse talks about salvation for παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, and so it is conceivable that εἰς πίστιν functions very similarly.

This understanding is not susceptible to Campbell’s complaint that “It is more than a little awkward to suggest that one reaches the goal or end of faith through faith itself—in fact, it is nonsense: if one goes through something, one already has it, and if one has yet to get there, one does not have it. Thus, Paul’s prepositional progression is not merely redundant—it is a semantic garble.” Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 62. But it would not be so much a matter of means and goal but of means and beneficiary. It is a semantically coherent as (though theologically somewhat dissimilar than) a statement such as, “The ribbons are for all the runners just for running.” If a different nuance—or no nuance at all—would prove to be a wiser option, we have still demonstrated here that such an interpretation need not be the “semantic garble” Campbell alleges. He is the one who has unnecessarily restricted what we are allowed to mean by almost making ἐκ πίστεως and εἰς πίστιν modify each other under these circumstances instead of both individually modifying δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. Stating that faith is the goal does not have to mean that the goal is the creation of faith. It could be the strengthening of faith, or it could be that the righteousness is the kind which is simply meant for faith. Here again Campbell’s attempts to paint his opponents into a corner prove somewhat hollow.

Romans 3:1-20¹⁰⁴

In the verses preceding Paul's first use of a πίστις Χριστοῦ formula in Romans, words from the πιστ- stem appear several times, all clustered in verses 2 and 3. In verse 2 we have a rare transitive use of πιστεύω. God (en)trusted his oracles to the Jewish people. In verse 3 we have ascribed to some of the Jewish people both the verb ἀπιστέω and the noun ἀπιστία. Both of these can mean either 'not trusting' or 'not being trustworthy'.¹⁰⁵ Since they were just (en)trusted, 'trustworthy' is the better option.¹⁰⁶ Their unfaithfulness is contrasted with God's faithfulness.

τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ in verse 3 is a commonly cited proof for the subjective position. Obviously this phrase speaks of God's faithfulness. It speaks not of faith, and not of faithfulness towards God. The genitive entity is the one exercising the faithfulness. However, in demonstrating the grammatical viability of a subjective genitive with πίστις this passage proves for the subjective proponents only what was never being challenged. It is not debated if such a phrase *could* potentially function in this way. The question is if it *is* functioning in this way.

It would be drawing too much from this single phrase to assume that this is indicative of Paul's every use of πίστις with the genitive. First of all, this phrase is articularized while all the occurrences of πίστις Χριστοῦ outside of Ephesians are anarthrous. This is sufficient reason to doubt that the phrases must function the same way grammatically. More importantly, since the context is noticeably different, there is no reason to think that Paul's use of a subjective genitive

¹⁰³ With two prepositional phrases used in tandem, it would be odd to switch meanings. (It would be a pun were it to happen and there is nothing to imply that Paul is trying to pun.) Consider a famous English quotation with some degree of syntactic parallelism. The last line of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (a climactic statement no loftier than Paul's thematic proclamation in Romans 1:17) reads, "and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Not only does 'people' have the same meaning in each case, but also the same referent.

¹⁰⁴ Campbell considers Romans 1:18-3:20 to be not Paul's own thought but his speaking in the voice of an opponent "a position that he intends to savage." By "discovering" this manner of speech, which none of Paul's interpreters have understood, Campbell is able to dismiss tenets expressed in these chapters supporting justification, namely the tenets of law. Campbell, *Quest*, 246-247. Campbell mistakes the rhetorical form of diatribe for dialogue and has created a reading of Paul which is so opaque that Paul's first hearers would have struggled to pick up on it.

¹⁰⁵ The reason ἀπιστέω can take both these senses while its antonym πιστεύω cannot is because ἀπιστέω is not directly built off of πιστεύω (note that there is no upsilon). It is simply a verbalized form of ἄπιστος (so LSJ, § ἀπιστέω), which is itself used as the opposite of both sense of πιστός.

¹⁰⁶ This also fits with ψεύστης in verse 4. A liar is someone who cannot be trusted, not one who cannot trust.

in verse 3 would lock him into the same in verse 22 or that this would have posed any difficulty for his readers to follow.¹⁰⁷

Romans 3:21-22

We have already had to reach ahead into these great verses for assistance in 1:17, but there are still many more things we can and should say here. In verse 21 Paul interjects into his basic sentence structure the phrase *μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν*. In verse 22, then, he repeats the phrase *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* but not the main verb *πεφανέρωται*. In his efforts to back the objective interpretation into a corner by forcing *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* to modify ‘reveal’ and not ‘righteous’, Campbell argues,

We really ought to supply the verb of revelation found in verse 21 to 3:22 unless strong reasons to the contrary are adduced (and I know of none that are cogent), at which point the original difficulty faced by the anthropocentric approach remains—the instrumentality in the data that is correlated with a process of revelation.¹⁰⁸

This, however, rests on the more-than-questionable assumption that a verb must be supplied at all.¹⁰⁹ Paul is not in the habit of leaving verbs to be implied, especially a non-copulative (an implicit copulative would make the prepositional phrases adjectival anyways). An implicit verb means two choppy sentences to make one point instead of one smooth and articulate one.

Furthermore, if Paul considered verse 22 a new sentence we would expect *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* to be articularized indicating its previous reference. However, as a resumptive reference it remains as anarthrous as its previous mention. Most tellingly, we see an identical construction several other times in Paul, where he repeats a noun so that he might expand it adjectivally using what I might call an epexegetical *δέ*.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ It is not as if in when Paul said, *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, that his readers would have thought, “Oh, that must be the faithfulness which Christ has because two minutes ago he said *τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ* and that time he meant the faithfulness which God has.”

¹⁰⁸ “Faithfulness”, 69-70.

¹⁰⁹ Matlock aptly states that Campbell’s argument “could as well be an argument *against* taking *πίστις Χριστοῦ* with *φανερῶ* rather than *δικαιοσύνη*.” Matlock, “Demons”, 308.

¹¹⁰ See 1 Corinthians 2:6, Philippians 2:8, and especially Romans 9:30, which has the phrase *κατέλαβεν δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως*.

Campbell dismisses offhand the possibility that the prepositional phrases could function adjectivally, saying that the “attributive suggestion is also undermined by the function of the many parallel *πίστις* phrases elsewhere in Paul adverbially (and specifically instrumentally)—see esp. 1:17a.”¹¹¹ This rejection focuses on grammatical parallels to the exclusion of content-based parallels. It is true that the parallel phrases function adverbial (though not in 1:17—see above), but the reason that they function adverbially is because they are modifying the verb *δικαιόω*. It is the idea of justification which is modified by ‘by faith’ in those cases. The same is true here. Since in verse 22 we have *δικαιοσύνη* and not *δικαιόω*—a noun and not a verb—the prepositional phrase is used to occupy the same position in the argument Paul is building if taken here attributively with *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*.

Picking up on the tense of *πεφανερωται*, Campbell argues against Moo that his

additions, moreover, now fail to complete what Paul *does* say—that an extraordinary soteriological disclosure has already taken place. ‘Where?’ one is tempted to ask, since the focus of the text has been interpretively shifted toward the question of how to appropriate or apply this disclosure.¹¹²

But the matter, as actually maintained by adherents of the objective position, is not how one appropriates the disclosure. The disclosure *is* that righteousness comes by faith and not by works. This concept of righteousness by faith, although previously witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets, has been definitively revealed in the coming of Christ.

Here in verse 22 we may take up the charge of redundancy. Since *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* is immediately followed by *εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας*, some would say that the first phrase being a reference to faith would render the second superfluous. This is untrue, and for several reasons. First, Paul is not above employing redundancy to emphatically make his point. His consecutive use of *δωρεάν* and *τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι* in verse 24 show as much. Silva has shown on linguistic grounds that redundancy is a necessary feature of effective communication,¹¹³ and

¹¹¹ “Faithfulness,” 69 n. 33.

¹¹² “Faithfulness,” 69.

¹¹³ Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983). Several quotations from his work seem particularly relevant here:

Some interpreters may even argue that such an approach is its own best confirmation—the fuller the meaning, the more valid the interpretation is likely to be. As we have seen, however, language works differently—context serves to *eliminate* multiple meanings. (150)

Campbell has even admitted that the subjective view's "argument in terms of redundancy ought to be abandoned completely."¹¹⁴ Second, the two phrases, while both speaking of faith, are not simply synonymous. The first phrase shows the way in which the righteousness comes, the second the people to whom it comes. The answer in both cases is faith. The first phrase sufficiently stated how we are justified, but Paul's programmatic purpose in Romans goes beyond just stating the how. He wants to stress the who—not just Jew, not just Gentile, but all. Johnson's complaint that the addition of 'all' is not sufficient to warrant the repetition of 'faith' is unconvincing.¹¹⁵ *πάντας* and not *πιστεύοντας* is the word Paul's explanatory (*γάρ*) clauses key off of at the end of this verse and the following one (note the *πάντες* at the head of verse 23), showing where the emphasis in *εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας* lies. Paul also could not have made *πάντας* more emphatic. He would have risked being understood as preaching universalism had he not clarified with *τοὺς πιστεύοντας* that he meant all people regardless of ethnic distinctions and not regardless of faith. It is not an issue of redundancy. It is an issue of emphatically stating that righteousness which comes by faith means that all who have faith do have righteousness.

Research into communication engineering has had considerable impact on our understanding of language. In particular, we have become aware of the *need* for redundancy in communication. When any piece of information is transmitted, considerable interference and distortion (*noise*) cannot be avoided; if the means of communication is one hundred percent efficient, the slightest interference will obliterate the information. (154)

We are then [concerning Galatians 3:4] at an exegetical impasse; no resolution is perhaps possible. However, there is an additional consideration that may throw light on our problem. In 1953 the prominent linguist Martin Joos delivered a paper, "Towards a First Theorem in Semantics." In it he suggested the rule of maximal redundancy, "The best meaning is the least meaning," as the explicator's and defining lexicographer's rule of thumb for deciding what a hapax legomenon most probably means: he defines it in such fashion as *to make it contribute least to the total message derivable from the passage where it is at home*, rather than, e.g., defining it according to some presumed etymology or semantic history. (153-154)

Now while Joos's article addressed the problem of *hapax legomenon* and other words whose meaning may be unknown, the principle is readily applicable to polysemy. (155)

¹¹⁴ *Deliverance*, 610 n. 15.

¹¹⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, "Rom 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982): 77-90, 79.

Romans 3:25

Few take the consecutive prepositional phrases διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι¹¹⁶ together to designate ‘faith in his blood’. This is because πίστις ἐν is a less frequent idiom and because the thought of Christ’s blood being the object of faith has no exact parallel. However, even without including Galatians 3:26 where this same discussion takes place, this construction of πίστις ἐν does occur a number of other times in Paul (Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; 1 Ti 3:13; 2 Ti 1:13; 3:15). The fact that outside of ἐν Paul has other ways, both prepositionally and genitively, of expressing the object of faith really does nothing to prove that these phrases must be disconnected. Jesus connects to faith not just as its object, but also as the sphere in which faith is located, and that could be the sense here. The idea of having faith which is located in Jesus’ blood is also a theologically transparent and doctrinally acceptable enough thought. This interpretation also faces no questions about word order. In short, I know of no way to prove that this is the way to take these phrases or even to tip the scales to show this to be the more preferable option. However, it should not be written off as an impossibility, and if this is the correct interpretation we have human faith being expressed by πίστις and Christ relating to it not as its acting agent but as its sphere and basis.

If what we have here is, as most assume and as may be correct, two independent prepositional phrases, we will still only be able to satisfactorily account for all the features of the text by seeing πίστις as a reference to human faith in keeping with the objective interpretation. διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως certainly is a difficult phrase. Its unusual placement between ἰλαστήριον and ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι usually gets most of the attention from expositors. What is harder to explain, and is in fact the more important interpretive question, is how it could connect to the main verb. The subject of προέθετο is ὁ θεός. If we take in isolation the thought, “God set him forth as a mercy seat through πίστις,” it might seem that the most natural referent for πίστις would be God’s, but this cannot be reconciled with the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases. If we would follow the subjective opinion, the passage would be saying, “God set forth Jesus as a mercy seat through Jesus’ faithfulness.” While this can be understood theologically, it is certainly an awkward way to express the thought. Unless πίστις has already in church terminology become a technical term

¹¹⁶ The evidence for the bracketed [τῆς] is mixed and indecisive but leans towards its inclusion. Regardless, we do not need to settle the issue conclusively for our purposes. If it is original, it would simply make explicit what is already apparent, namely, that the πίστις of this phrase is identical to that of verse 22.

for Christ's obedience unto death (which seems unlikely as it would be found only in Paul, who had never met his audience here), it is unthinkable. Yet even if the possibility is granted, it still does not read naturally. There would certainly be a clearer way for Paul to say that Jesus became a *ἱλαστήριον* by his death (which, if you think about it, actually could go without saying).¹¹⁷ In this verse the Father sets the Son forth as a *ἱλαστήριον*, a place of atonement. The focus is not on how Jesus did this by his obedience to death. Here he is portrayed (metonymically) as altar (or sacrifice) not priest. Even if one could be satisfied by this forced expression, *ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι* will still have to be contended with. If both *διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως* and *ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι* designate Christ's obedient death, why use both (if any)? And why did Paul find it necessary to specify by an added pronominal reference that the blood is Christ's but not that the *πίστις* is his? It is obvious that he is talking about Christ's blood, but if it is Christ's *πίστις* then this is so unclear that this fact has eluded many of his interpreters. Why would Paul have made explicit what was already apparent and left the obscure unspecified?

The awkwardness is greatly reduced by seeing *διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως* as a reference to human faith. It still does not work well to take it adverbially with *προέθετο* but it does work well to take it adjectivally with the anarthrous *ἱλαστήριον*. Since *ἱλαστήριον*, 'place of atonement', is used as a predicate accusative for Christ Jesus, it must be a metonymy of concrete for abstract, designating Jesus as the means by which God atones.¹¹⁸ *διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως* modifies this idea of atonement quite well in an instrumental sense (a lower manner of instrumentation than that of Christ, of course). Atonement is made through Christ, and received through faith. The following prepositional phrase *ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι* 'by virtue of his blood' modifies *προέθετο* adverbially, explaining the way in which God has set forth Jesus as a *ἱλαστήριον*.

¹¹⁷ For the same reason, it would be odd to take *διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως* as adjectivally with *ἱλαστήριον* if we constrain ourselves to the subjective interpretation.

¹¹⁸ A similar transferred use of *ἱλαστήριον* from location to means can be seen in 4 Maccabees 17:22. Of course, all this discussion of place and means could be side-stepped if what we really have here is not the noun meaning 'mercy seat' but the adjective *ἱλαστήριος* meaning, according to LSJ, 'propitiatory, offered in propitiation'. Either an adjectival or a substantival meaning would fit in context, and could be translated as 'propitiatory sacrifice' or 'propitiation'. Note that under such circumstances the subjective construal still fares no better.

Romans 3:26

This verse closes with one of the disputed phrases. In this case the exact expression is τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.¹¹⁹ Hays gloats over this, saying, “The parallelism between 3:26 and 4:16 is a fatal embarrassment for all interpreters who seek to treat Ἰησοῦ as an objective genitive.”¹²⁰ He means that the formal symmetry between τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ and τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ make laughable an interpretation which would require different syntaxes for the two phrases. Surely 4:16 speaks not of people who have faith *in* Abraham. It also cannot be implying that there are people who have the very self-same faith Abraham has, or that they rely on Abraham’s faithfulness. It must be speaking of the one who seeks to be justified by the same kind of faith by which Abraham did also. This is then alleged to be the nature of the πίστις mentioned in 3:26.

This is hardly the lynch-pin argument Hays assumes it to be. The point has already been made concerning grammatical parallels: grammatical parallels are valuable chiefly for establishing the syntactical possibilities available to an author; conceptual parallels, however, are much stronger evidences than grammatical parallels for what an author is likely to be communicating. τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, like all other unambiguous uses of ἐκ πίστεως, as well as the majority of other uses of πίστις within Paul, speaks of human faith directed towards God.

If 3:26 speaks of individuals who exercise a Jesus-like πίστις, not only has the subjective interpretation *increased* the role of human agency in salvation (the very thing they set out remove), but it also has introduced the embarrassing question of what that πίστις is we are to have. πίστις in the context of Abraham is ‘faith’. According to the subjective position, πίστις in the context of Jesus means ‘faithfulness’. That breakdown of the parallelism alone should call the use of this formal similarity as a trump card into question, as Dunn has done.¹²¹

There is, however, even further complication to this view. To make the other passages work, the subjective position must hold that πίστις Χριστοῦ is primarily Jesus’ faithfulness unto

¹¹⁹ Before proceeding, we note and reject Campbell’s claim that the genitive is here epexegetical. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 675. Epexegetical genitives, while also called appositional genitives, are not able to be used in every case in which a same-case appositional construction can be. The epexegetical genitive narrows and defines its head term. It does not simply rename it as an appositive might. For example, one could not say ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ to refer to the Savior Jesus. The appositional designation would in that case have to remain in the nominative. Other than adopting the minority reading τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦν there is no way to make this phrase refer to Jesus and not some other person or class of person, and the evidence for that reading is scant.

¹²⁰ “Stake,” 47.

¹²¹ “Once More,” 75.

death. Dunn has asked about τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in this verse, “To what would he be referring, since a reference to Christ’s faithfulness to death (the more natural parallel if parallel was sought) seems to be excluded?”¹²² Assuming (rightfully so) that Paul is not saying that justification is earned by our crucifixion or martyrdom, what real similarity could Paul be intending between Christ’s πίστις and ours? The vagueness and ambiguity of this interpretation makes it unlikely. While it does not make for the smoothest translation, the best understanding of this phrase is that it speaks of God justifying the by-faith-in-Jesus person.

Romans 3:31

Paul asks if we are nullifying the law by this faith. It is unclear how *we* would be the ones nullifying the law by Jesus’ faithful death. Even if an explanation could be devised, the grammar here would seem forced with the subject and the instrumental referent being diverse.

This verse, the last of chapter 3, again has πίστις, continuing a chain of verses with this word with no apparent seam or shift in subject. The first verse of chapter 4 (οὖν) shows the argument of this new chapter is thematically tight with the previous chapter. The observations for πίστις in chapter 4 must be allowed to contextually permeate all of chapter 3 as well.

Romans 4

All of Romans 4 is meant to support Paul’s contention in chapter 3 that justification is by faith and not by works. This is apparent from verse 2. In verse 3 Paul quotes Genesis 15:6: Ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. What follows is Paul explaining it and applying it, weaving together uses of πίστις and πιστεύω. In all cases he makes much of Abraham’s example as being not a faithful but a believing individual.¹²³ It is not possible to bring a subjective interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ into chapter 4 and maintain coherence. Schreiner admits,

¹²² “Once More,” 75.

¹²³ Campbell’s inventive attempt to blur the distinction between faith and faithfulness on the grounds that Abraham’s resolute exercise of faith over many years constitutes faithfulness is linguistically and contextually indefensible. Campbell, *Quest*, 185; and *Deliverance*, 385-394. While such perseverance could be labelled faithfulness, its correlation with ‘believing’ shows which meaning of πίστις is meant.

I conducted an experiment in which I assumed that every mention of πίστις in this text refers to the faithfulness of Christ. In 3:21-31 such a reading made good sense. But when I came to Rom. 4 the proposal began to encounter heavy resistance. . . . My point is this: it seems hard to believe that πίστις in 3:21-31 is Christ's faithfulness but that in Rom. 4 it denotes the faith of believers. The Romans would have had a terrible time reading Paul if he switched the meaning of πίστις so violently from chapter to chapter.¹²⁴

Since, as already mentioned, chapter 4 is an outgrowth of chapter 3, we would be on shaky ground to posit such a sharp break between them, especially since both chapters not only make use of the key term πίστις but also frequently employ it in formulaic manner as ἐκ πίστεως.

Romans 4:5

Verse 5 contains by itself enough evidence to prove the objective interpretation over against the subjective interpretation.¹²⁵ First, Paul contrasts the participles ἐργαζομένω and πιστεύοντι. Not only are these the verbal forms of Paul's commonly contrasted nouns ἔργον and πίστις, but ἐξ ἔργων appears several verses earlier at the heading of the currently developing argument, and χωρὶς ἔργων appears in the following verse. πίστις itself is found later in this same verse. The correspondence of this antithesis of the verbs with the frequent antithesis of the nouns signals a correspondence of the meanings: of the possible meanings available to Paul for πίστις, he had to be using one which was also available for πιστεύω. Just as believing is the opposite of doing, 'by faith'—and not 'by faithfulness'—is the proper opposite of 'by works'.¹²⁶ 'Faithfulness' is an option neither here for the verb nor for any time which Paul contrasts 'works' and 'faith',¹²⁷ including several of our cases of πίστις Χριστοῦ.

Second, the end of this verse features a Pauline paraphrase of the Genesis quotation. He has substituted ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ for ἐπίστευσεν as the subject of ἐλογίσθη (here in the present

¹²⁴ *Romans*, 185-186.

¹²⁵ We could perhaps follow the titular labels of Longenecker, Matlock, Choi, and Whintont, and call this verse "Neglected Evidence" for the objective interpretation.

¹²⁶ While not so much our purpose, we could say the same concerning the meaning of 'works' in Paul. The issue with works of Law is not just that these are of exclusive Jewish laws. The issue is that they are things you do.

¹²⁷ This contrast also discredits Campbell's attempt to separate 'works of law' and 'faith of Christ' as separate gospels whose meanings are not linguistically or theologically antithetical to each other so he can ignore the working-believing contrast and give πίστις whatever meaning he wants. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 527. As this passage shows, however, works is the opposite of faith not merely because it is a different religion. These are directly contrary concepts and so meanings for the words which maintain such an explicit contrast have a strong degree of probability.

λογίζεται to state a general truth). Paul not only can but does use πίστις to represent the action of πιστεύω. The subjective assumption that Paul uses the noun and verb in dissimilar ways—the noun never in the manner of the verb—is baseless. The same happens again in verse 9.

Romans 4:11-13

There is some grammatical ambiguity here as to whether τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ in verse 11 modifies τῆς δικαιοσύνης or τῆς πίστεως. Preference must be given to the latter in light of τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως in the next verse. In either case, a reference to Jesus' faithfulness does not fit here. The reference must be to Abraham's faith, to preserve the symmetry of Paul's thought in this verse—Abraham received circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith he had while uncircumcised so that he might be the father of all who believe while uncircumcised—a symmetry which requires that his faith is meant to parallel the gentile act of believing.

The connection in this verse and in verse 13 between τῆς δικαιοσύνης and τῆς πίστεως, here genitival, again underscores that the faith by which we are justified is our faith, a fact which should be allowed to bear upon the times Paul says we are justified by πίστις Χριστοῦ.

Romans 4:19

It would not make sense to speak of the possibility of someone being weakened in Jesus' faithfulness unto death. The referent here is clearly to Abraham's own trust, as it has been throughout the whole chapter. Since 'trust' does not correspond with 'trustworthiness' and since there is nothing to imply a comparison between Abraham and Christ but everything which makes explicit the comparison between Abraham and us, Romans 4 is unanimous in its conformity with the objective understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ even if the precise phrase is not used.

Romans 5

Romans 5 marks a transition in the letter. Picking up on this, Hays has claimed that

One of the liabilities of the traditional interpretation of justification through believing in Jesus, as Schweitzer perceptively noted, is its inability to explain how Romans 5-8 are related to Romans 1-4. . . . I would suggest that the difficulty lies in the "objective genitive" (i.e., *anthropological*) misinterpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ—hence, more in Luther than in Paul. A great strength of the subjective genitive (i.e., *Christological*)

construal is that it allows us to read Romans 1-8 as a theologically coherent discussion in which Paul's Christology and soteriology are correlated in such a way that "justification by faith" and "participation in Christ" are virtually synonymous.¹²⁸

The relationship between "justification by faith" and "participation in Christ" will be saved for Appendix H. For now we need only address the relationship between Romans 4 and 5. Romans 4, like Romans 3 before it, discusses how we, whether Jew or Gentile, have a right status before God. Romans 5 presumes this argument and builds upon it, discussing how life is for someone who has that right status before God by faith. Hence the opening verse: *δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

Perhaps it is because of Paul's return to the topic of justification as he compares Adam and Christ that this smooth yet clear-cut transition between chapters 4 and 5 has been obscured. It is important here to recognize the shape of Paul's thought. The comparison he begins in verse 12 is interrupted by a digression which extends from verse 13 through 17 before it is resumed in verse 18. Paul seems unable to keep from talking about justification (it is that important to him), but starting in chapter five that is no longer his main point—its results now occupy center stage.

The talk of Christ's *ὑπακοή* 'obedience' in Romans 5 has been pointed to as explication of Paul's notion of Christ's faithful obedience to death, so as to lend support to the subjective interpretation of *πίστις* Χριστοῦ. We have shown above that this is not Paul's typical lexical overlapping of *πίστις* and *ὑπακοή*. It is also worth mentioning here that in chapters 3 and 4 *πίστις* is used exclusively and *ὑπακοή* is not mentioned except here in chapter 5, suggesting that they belong to somewhat different topics. Finally, if Paul meant the same thing by these two words, that would make this digression no more than an Adam-flavored rehashing of 3:21-26. For as much as the subjective adherents seem to deplore redundancy, they would be the ones preventing Paul from making any progress or advancing his train of thought from one chapter to the next.

Romans 9:30-33

Several chapters later Paul again speaks of righteousness and faith with language reminiscent of chapter 3. 9:32 has our familiar works-faith antithesis, in confirmation of which

¹²⁸ "Stake," 49-50.

Paul appeals to a messianic prophecy from Isaiah. Charting the lines of contrast will help us see how again πίστις and πιστεύω are used in parallel in verses 32-33.¹²⁹

οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως

How Israel should have pursued and would have had righteousness

ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων· προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος,

How they did pursue it, so instead of getting it they were all tripped up.

καθὼς γέγραπται,

Citation to verify what was just said:

Ἴδου τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου,

God established Jesus, but they trip over him (implied: by pursuing it by works)

καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυθήσεται.

But the one who does trust in him is saved.

The overall arrangement of Paul's thought in these verses again shows that πίστις is faith. The messianic prophecy he quotes shows that not only does Paul consider Christ to be the object of faith (contrary to what has been alleged by some), but also that he is considered the implied object of faith in the repeated contrast between ἐκ πίστεως and ἐξ ἔργων. When the genitive Χριστοῦ is in other places explicitly added to this formula, it is safe to say that Paul intends it to be the object of faith.

Romans 10

Many times in these verses forms of the verb πιστεύω are used. They all lead up to the conclusion of this subsection (ἄρα) in verse 17, where now the grammar calls for a noun, ἡ πίστις, to bear the same meaning. Since chapter 9 closes and chapter 10 opens also discussing δικαιοσύνη, it is more than reasonable that the same meaning of πίστις is in play here throughout. Paul ends his discussion of πίστις in the doctrinal portion of Romans using it the way he always has: with reference to the divinely-worked human trust by which justification is appropriated.

Romans 14:23

The context is somewhat different here than in the other places where Paul uses πίστις, but it is at least worth mentioning that here again Paul uses his customary formula ἐκ πίστεως,

¹²⁹ That the overarching structure of these verses reflects Paul's thought process is even more likely in light of the fact that he has amalgamated Isaiah 8:14 and Isaiah 28:16 to present the quotation in the form he does here.

and he leaves no question that the meaning here his human faith as it is contrasted with διακρίνω ‘to doubt’.

The Epistle to the Galatians

Galatians is far more polemical in tone than Romans, but there is considerable overlap in subject matter between the two. Both treat the matter of justification by faith far more deliberately and extensively than any other of Paul’s epistles or the rest of Scripture in general.

Galatians 2:15-16

The ἐὰν μή of 16a¹³⁰ is problematic. It is most typically glossed as ‘except’ or ‘unless’, taken to be exceptive of the entire previous clause and stating that the previous statement is only true under the condition of this additional clause or phrase. This will not work here. Paul cannot be saying that one can be justified by works through faith in 16a because 16c and 16d emphatically deny that either ‘we’ or ‘any flesh at all’ is justified by works.¹³¹ ἐὰν μή can function as excepting only one element of the preceding clause, in this case the verb, and context tells us that this is the sense here.¹³² English would translate this using the more general

¹³⁰ For ease of reference, like others I will divide verse 16 into four subparts according to its clauses:

16a: εἰδότες [δέ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

16b: καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν

16c: ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου

16d: ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ

¹³¹ The suggestion that Paul leaves it open to works in 16a to garner support by establishing common ground only to eliminate works in 16c and 16d is altogether unconvincing. This is just one sentence, too little time for such a transition, and there is no adversative found to imply such a transition between any of the clauses of 16.

¹³² Some wrongly deny that this is the case, but the possibility of this single-element-exceptive construction can be proven. Das, who himself maintains the conjunctive pair is exceptive of the entire verse, admits that in John 5:19 and 15:4 ἐὰν μὴ is exceptive of only the verb of the preceding clause. A. Andrew Das, “Another Look at Ἐὰν Μὴ in Galatians 2:16,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119.3 (Fall 2000): 529-529, 531. Hunn has further demonstrated the grammatical legitimacy of such a construction as we are advocating here from its use within Plutarch, Origen, Epictetus, Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Hunn, “Ἐὰν μὴ in Galatians 2:16: A Look at Greek Literature.” *Novum Testamentum* 49 (2007): 281-290, 284-288.

While we do not have parallel uses in Scripture outside of those mentioned from John, we do find ones which might as well be if we broaden the net to εἰ μὴ. (Since ἐὰν is simply a contraction of εἰ and so closely replicates its functions that LSJ merely redirects the reader from ἐὰν to εἰ, it seems unwise to dismiss the relevancy of such uses of εἰ μὴ as Das does. Das, “Ἐὰν Μὴ,” 531-532. Paul presumably uses these words analogously, the difference being the clause’s verb. Paul is here speaking a general truth, which, were the protasis to have a verb, would use ἐὰν with the subjunctive.) Galatians 1:7 and 1 Corinthians 7:17, both from Paul’s mouth, both use the phrase more generally and not to state an exception. In Matthew 12:4 we have the construction operating virtually identically to ἐὰν μὴ in Galatians 2:16a. ὁ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἦν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν οὐδὲ τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν μόνοις. The

adversative ‘but’. Here, as always, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ function as opposing principles and mutually exclusive categories.

Matlock has wisely questioned, however, the degree to which these principles would work as natural opposites under a subjective interpretation:

Why does he talk specifically about Jesus’ πίστις at all? And what has become of the Pauline antithesis with ἔργα? What sense of πίστις is suggested by that contrast? Or, on a subjective genitive reading, what sort of ‘antithesis’ is there anymore? Why should Paul so have pitted ἔργα νόμου against πίστις Χριστοῦ (Gal. 2:16)? Why not, indeed, ἔργον Χριστοῦ?¹³³

If the real contrast meant is between law and Christ, works and faith would only seem to distract.

Since Galatians 2:16 contains two uses of πίστις and one of πιστεύω, it more than any other verse has had the allegation of redundancy leveled against its objective interpretation. With three consecutive clauses employing the same root, the charge is that if they all meant human faith in Christ, Paul would be spinning his wheels and not advancing his argument. This argument, however, mistakes lexical density for redundancy. A clear progression of thought is discernable if, as Matlock has demonstrated, one pays attention to the subjects of the verbs in the various clauses and how they shift.¹³⁴ 16a is generic (ἄνθρωπος), 16b personal (ἡμεῖς), 16c personal (δικαιωθῶμεν), and finally 16d generic (πᾶσα σὰρξ). 16a sets out the general maxim that people are justified by faith in Christ. 16b, the only independent clause within the verse, states that on the basis of this knowledge, even we (using an emphatic καὶ ἡμεῖς)—even those of us

εἰ μὴ states that it is eating the showbread was not lawful (for them) except for the priests. It seems unnatural in English translation, but this is the only intelligible sense of the Greek. Here we would translate the conjunctive pair adversatively. We should do the same in Galatians 2:16.

While most expositors treat an adversative ἐὰν μὴ and a single-element exceptive ἐὰν μὴ as two separate options, they are really one and the same: an elliptical or narrower use of the exceptive taking on a more adversative function. This is a similar phenomenon to other Greek conjunctions taking on extended and less etymologically transparent uses through elliptical and idiomatic use. Hunn, who categorizes the two uses separately, admits, “The difference between the two functions is primarily one of emphasis, as explanations with the examples cited show. If the extra word or phrase in the main clause is important enough to serve as a point of contrast, ἐὰν μὴ is adversative. If not, it is exceptive.” Hunn, “Ἐὰν Μὴ,” 288. The distinction, then, seems to be more a matter of translation convention than of interpretation. Remembering this, we also see that this single-element-exceptive/adversative ἐὰν μὴ is not so much a different meaning for the conjunctive pair as it is an idiomatic brachiological or elliptical use of it. Unless we are fixated on always glossing the pair as ‘except’ or ‘unless’ this should be no cause for concern.

¹³³ “Detheologizing,” 12.

¹³⁴ R. Barry Matlock, “Saving Faith: The Rhetoric and Semantics of Πίστις in Paul,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 73-89, 85.

who had been keeping the law and not breaking it like sinful gentiles—even we ‘faithed’ in Christ.¹³⁵ We did this, he says, in order that (16c) we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of Law. 16d returns to the general principle stating why ‘we’ did not seek to be justified by works of Law: because no flesh can be justified thereby. Hultgren charts it in this way:

What we know: A person is justified διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (16a)

What we have sought: To be justified ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (16c)

What we have done: We have believed in Christ Jesus (16b).¹³⁶

The logic is tight and the progression is transparent. Were the references to πίστις supposed to have a meaning entirely distinct from πιστεύω, hearers would not have picked up on this wordplay unless the objective interpretation were not even a linguistic possibility, a claim which has been shown to be false. Hays is either unwise or disingenuous to ignore discussion of this verse on the alleged grounds that “the sentence is so compact that it is difficult to decide.”¹³⁷ The compact nature of the sentence is itself decisive in favor of the objective understanding. The verb ἐπιστεύσαμεν with its prepositional object εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν is an overwhelmingly strong contextual indicator of Paul’s meaning, clearing up any hypothetical grammatical ambiguity over what relationship he holds there to be between πίστις and Χριστοῦ.

There is one further thing to note in relation to those who couple a subjective construal with a rejection of justification by faith. Those merely adopting the subjective interpretation who yet maintain that justification is by faith (as the phrase has been historically understood), will not run aground in this verse. Those, however, who wish to make faith subsequent to (subjective) justification and merely a sign or badge of it will be unable to account for the ἵνα in 16d. Whether it indicates purpose or result is immaterial here. What it cannot indicate is a prior cause. Our faith happens logically before and for the purpose of being justified by that faith.

¹³⁵ Fee writes in defense of the objective understanding that “the ‘even we’ is a clear pickup from what precedes. . . . The ‘even we’ makes very little sense following Christ’s faithfulness.” Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 224.

¹³⁶ Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 639. Hultgren labels these as lines two, four, and three, respectively to denote their order within Galatians 2:15-16. I have assimilated these designations to my own to make it easier to follow within this work.

¹³⁷ *Faith*, 162.

Galatians 2:20

Paul says here *ἐν πίστει* and not his typical *ἐκ πίστεως*. He is not talking about the way in which he has received life. He is talking about the way in which he currently lives his bodily life. In isolation, this case of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* would seem like it could go either way without any difficulty. It makes sense both to say, “As for my physical life,¹³⁸ I live it in the manner of faith in Jesus,” and to say, “As for my physical life, I live it in the manner of faithfulness like Jesus.” A decision will have to be made based on the context of the entire paragraph and this verse’s place within it.

Living your earthly life *ἐν πίστει* is the opposite of rebuilding rules which have been taken down (verse 18). It is the opposite of living to the Law (verse 19). It is the opposite of nullifying God’s grace by acting as if righteousness were by the Law (verse 21). Paul is saying he is living a life consistent with and characterized by *πίστις* and not by the Law. Whatever meaning *ἐν πίστει* has here in verse 20, it must be the same as above in verse 16, which laid out the beginning of this conversation: we are justified *ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου*. While this verse on its own might have been theoretically open to either the objective or the subjective interpretation, since only the objective interpretation is viable in verse 16, we can be confident that that is the meaning here also.

The trailing participial phrase at the end of verse 20, *τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ*, has been used as evidence for the subjective genitive on the grounds that Jesus’ faithfulness unto death is in view in this verse. That Paul is thinking about the Jesus who died for him is clear, but it does not follow that this is supportive of the subjective understanding. We could rightly dismiss such an inference with Achtemeier, who says that “the final phrase works quite well as an adjectival description of precisely *why* it is appropriate to live by trust in

¹³⁸ We can safely conclude that *ἐν σαρκί* means this and not the sinful nature. The verbs of 20c (*ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί*) and 20d (*ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ*), which are both *ζῶ*, are both present tense. They are conjoined not by a conjunction but by 20c being subordinate to 20d as a relative direct object (perhaps with an implied cognate accusative). Furthermore, 20c contains the word *νῦν* ‘now’. From these facts it is apparent that 20c and 20d must be not only simultaneous but also present realities describing a single life which contrasts with the past state in verse 19 of life with respect to law. What this means is that *ἐν σαρκί*, as a current state in which Paul lives, designates flesh not in its moral sense but in its physical sense. (Paul uses the expression the same way in 2 Corinthians 10:3 and Philippians 1:22.) Paul speaks here of his bodily physical earthly existence. It also seems possible that Paul used this term because of its connection to the issue he is addressing: circumcision. (For the connection between *σάρξ* and circumcision, see Romans 2:28, Galatians 3:3 [just a few verses from this one], Galatians 6:13, Ephesians 2:11, and Philippians 3:2-4.)

that Christ: because he loved me and gave himself up for me.”¹³⁹ Yet we can say more than this. Not only does the phrase fit with the objective interpretation; it jars somewhat with the subjective interpretation. Since the contexts for other uses of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* contain no markers to designate such faithfulness as Christ’s faithfulness unto death, adherents of the subjective interpretation are forced to maintain that the expression functions almost as a technical term such that all that meaning is already consciously communicated by that bare phrase. If *πίστις Χριστοῦ* is already a loaded expression for Christ’s death, the references to Christ’s having loved Paul and given himself for him do not really add anything.¹⁴⁰ That Paul elaborates on *πίστις* with a reference to Christ’s death suggests it might be a stretch to assume that this is also content inherent to the phrase *πίστις Χριστοῦ*. We also note that if ‘faithfulness’, as is stated in other verses, has to mean Christ’s faithfulness specifically unto death, when Paul is here said to live in this ‘faithfulness’, this could not refer generally to Paul’s Christ-like life in the Spirit but would have to mean his self-sacrificing nature—an interpretation which would only raise more difficulties.

Galatians 3:2-6

Twice in these verses Paul contrasts *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* with *ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως* as he appeals to the Galatians’ experience. This juxtaposition with works of Law implies the same meaning is in play. The best way to take *ἀκοῆς πίστεως* is as we took *ὑπακοήν πίστεως* in Romans 1:5, with faith meant to either describe or identify the hearing. Verse 6 begins with *καθώς*, and thereby explicitly expresses a parallel truth meant to solidify the validity of the previous truth, which in this case is the implied answer that the Galatians were in fact supplied the Spirit *ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως*. The parallel truth is that it was when Abraham believed that this was credited to him as righteousness. *ἐπίστευσεν* keys off of *πίστεως*, definitively disambiguating for us which possible meaning was used for the noun. Hunn notes that *ἐπίστευσεν* is the “only non-trivial word in 3:6

¹³⁹ Paul J. Achtemeier, “Apropos the Faith of/in Christ,” In *Pauline Theology, Vol. IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, ed. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 82-92, 83.

¹⁴⁰ The aorist tense of *ἀγαπήσαντός* shows that Paul is not speaking generally of Christ’s feelings for him but is thinking of the one defining act of love, which he immediately explicates with the second participle.

that shares a root in common with a word in 3:1-5.”¹⁴¹ This is the clear connection between the verses, and it only fits with the objective interpretation. Hays even recognizes how “attractive” this parallel is, but since in that case “verse 5 would have to be interpreted in a way that emphasizes the human act of ‘hearing with faith’,” he by circular reasoning rejects it because he sees how it would undermine his own interpretation of πίστις in the preceding verses.¹⁴² The ‘faith’ link between these verses, however, cannot be denied or circumvented. By closely bridging between its antithesis ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and its cognate verb ἐπίστευσεν, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως leaves no interpretive wiggle-room for a subjective understanding here or anywhere else πίστις is contrasted with ἔργα.

Galatians 3:7-10

Just as Abraham’s believing in verse 6 clarified what came before it, it also clarifies what comes after it (note the ἄρα which marks verse 7 as being inferred from verse 6), including five uses of ἐκ πίστεως and one of διὰ τῆς πίστεως. People who are ἐκ πίστεως are Abraham’s sons and are blessed along with πιστός Abraham. Those who have faith, or more specifically, those who seek to be justified by faith, receive the same blessing which was given to faith-having Abraham (not, based on verse 6, faithfulness-having Abraham). Dunn is right when he says, “I think the most obvious exegesis of Galatians 3:6-7 more or less settles the issue.”¹⁴³ Hays, however, attempts to interpretively reconfigure Paul’s entire thought progression:

Christians are justified/redeemed not by virtue of their own faith but because they participate in Jesus Christ, who enacted the obedience of faith on their behalf. Abraham is understood by Paul not as an exemplar of faith in Christ but as a typical foreshadowing of Christ himself, a representative figure whose faithfulness secures blessing and salvation vicariously for others.¹⁴⁴

It is very important to recognize that the blessing is given to the Gentiles not in consequence of *their* faith, but in consequence of *Abraham’s*; the blessing that God

¹⁴¹ “Habakkuk,” 84.

¹⁴² *Faith*, 170.

¹⁴³ James D.G. Dunn, “Forward,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), xv-xix, xvii.

¹⁴⁴ Hays, *Faith*, 166.

confers upon Abraham is extended vicariously to all nations. The Gentiles are blessed not on the analogy of Abraham, but “in” him.¹⁴⁵

Hays appears to base his argument on a faulty understanding of what ‘in’ means in verse 8. This flaw is found in many who advocate a fundamentally incorporative or participatory model of salvation. We do not have space to address this issue fully here.¹⁴⁶ For now, we need only see how Paul interprets the Genesis quotation. Paul concludes from it that those by faith are blessed along with a believer like him, not in him. Who they are blessed ‘in’ with the blessing of Abraham is shown in verse 14 to be Christ Jesus. Paul interprets the ‘in you’ spoken to Abraham in Genesis to be in reference to Christ. Nowhere does he mention Abraham securing a blessing for all people. “All nations will be blessed in you” means not “All nations will be blessed by becoming incorporated into you” but “All nations will be blessed by virtue of your most important descendent.” This blessing of justification comes to them the same way it did to father Abraham: by faith. Abraham is here typical of believers and not Christ. Dunn writes, “Had it been so, Paul must surely have brought it out more clearly, that is, by saying directly that Christ believed as Abraham believed. Had that indeed been Paul’s point, that Christ as Abraham’s seed believed as Abraham believed, he could have said so quite straightforwardly.”¹⁴⁷ As the text of verses 7 and 9 stands, Paul directly associates Christians and Abraham on the basis of their shared defining characteristic: their faith.

There are several other obvious defects in Hays’ approach to these verses. He claims that Paul’s use of Abraham as example of faith in Romans 4 is distinct from Paul’s use of Abraham as person achieving corporate blessedness in Galatians 3.¹⁴⁸ But why would Paul employ the same figure within the same basic argumentation of justification by faith or works in radically different—and even somewhat contradictory—ways? A much simpler solution would be that, while at times considerably different points are variously highlighted and emphasized based on circumstance, Abraham functions to confirm Paul’s argumentation concerning justification in the same rhetorical position in each of the two epistles: Abraham was justified by faith not works, and so are we, whether Jew or Gentile.

¹⁴⁵ Hays, *Faith*, 173-174.

¹⁴⁶ The meaning of ‘in’ will be taken up more extensively in Appendix H.

¹⁴⁷ “Stake,” 71.

¹⁴⁸ *Faith*, 168.

Hays also rejects the suitability of using Abraham as an exemplar for us of being justified by faith on the allegation that Abraham's faith was substantively different than ours:

If this is the correct reading of Paul, what sense does it make for him to evoke the example of Abraham, whose faith was, after all, not directed toward Jesus? Indeed the apparent appeal to Abraham as the prototype of the justified believer has always created considerable difficulties for Christian exegesis and theology precisely because his faith was *not* directed toward Christ as object.¹⁴⁹

Hays appears to deny there was a sufficiently concrete messianic hope in the Old Testament by which Abraham's faith in God might be oriented, despite the fact that Galatians 3:8 cites a messianic gospel prophecy being announced to Abraham. He unwisely sets the writers of Scripture against each other as he cavalierly dismisses the relevant comments of the evangelist: "It is not appropriate to read into Paul the Johannine idea (see John 8:56) that Abraham saw and believed in Jesus."¹⁵⁰ Abraham's faith in God, like all Old Testament believers, rested on Christ.

Hays also struggles in verse 8 over how it could be that God's verbal action of justification (*δικαιοῖ*) could be modified adverbially by a human action (*ἐκ πίστεως*). (He does not realize how contradictory it is when he at least allows the possibility that here God is said to justify by Abraham's faithfulness—also a human action.)¹⁵¹ Remembering, however, that being justified *ἐξ ἔργων* is a semantically coherent (while theologically abominable) thought, being justified *ἐκ* something does not mean the manner in or means by which God carries out his act of justifying. It means the basis on which justification takes place. If we keep in mind the forensic nature of *δικαιόω* we will not assume that a phrase modifying the verb necessarily describes God in his acting as opposed to the legal circumstance of the action. God justifies on the basis of faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:11-12

As in Romans 1:17, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to confirm his gospel of justification by faith. Unlike in Romans, here it is used more in the middle of an argument Paul has already been

¹⁴⁹ *Faith*, 150.

¹⁵⁰ *Faith*, 150 n. 119.

¹⁵¹ *Faith*, 176.

building. The subjective interpretation, by the admission of its own adherents, requires that Paul intends ὁ δίκαιος as a reference to Christ. This, though, makes for a problematic reading.

First, Paul offers no explanation that this verse refers to Christ. The lack of such indication would have left the hearers unable to follow such an atypical interpretation. This is especially true in light of the fact that the term comes on the heels of οὐδείς δικαιοῦται. Since 11a speaks not of Christ but of no person being righteous in law, when Paul proves this by ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, it is most natural to take ὁ δίκαιος in the generic sense of ‘the person who is righteous’.¹⁵² Additionally, while ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ in the following verse is not an exact conceptual parallel, it still does give its weight to the idea that ὁ δίκαιος is meant generically of people and not titularly of Christ.

Second, such an epithetical reference to Christ in verse 11 would rhetorically undermine his anaphoric bursting onto the scene in verse 13 to solve the matter. This is by no means a conclusive point, but it is worth at least considering the shape of Paul’s argument and how this alternative subjective construal would seem to detract from it rhetorically.

Finally, there is a much greater problem facing the subjective proposal. Verse 12a states and 12b explains why justification being by faith excludes it being by law. Faith and law observance are polar opposites, and that truth is the premise underlying verse 11 which Paul, to explain his point more clearly and meet possible objections,¹⁵³ explicitly expresses in verse 12. Since faith and works are presented as mutually exclusive in verse 11, this would mean under the subjective interpretation that Christ’s πίστις would be being directly pitted against observance of the law. In other words, his faithfulness would be pitted against his faithfulness. Das is correct when he says that “had Christ been ‘the righteous’ one of 3:11 and had this verse been referring to his faithfulness to the Law, then he would have been the exception disproving the very rule

¹⁵² Hays interpretively paraphrases these verses as “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the Law; for, as the Scripture says, even the Messiah, the Righteous One, will find life not by the Law but by faith.” (Although Hays uses the word ‘faith’ here, his article as a whole shows that he means this in the sense he advocates everywhere else of Christ’s faithfulness unto death.) Richard B. Hays, “Jesus’ Faith and Ours: A Re-reading of Galatians 3,” *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 7.1 (1983): 2-6, 5. His construal, however, has severed any real connection between δικαιοῦται and ὁ δίκαιος.

¹⁵³ Paul’s audience, including perhaps even the Judaizers themselves, would not necessarily have assumed that by seeking justification by works they were seeking something which was itself antithetical to faith or even to salvation by faith.

Paul just cited.”¹⁵⁴ Far from saying that Christ lived and saved us apart from the law, Paul makes clear just the opposite. Most famously, Paul emphasizes in 4:4-5 that Christ was born under law to redeem us from law. Most tellingly, immediately following our present verses, in verse 13 Paul even shows Christ earning salvation by being cursed according to the law. Christ fulfilling the law, and doing so according to the law, is gospel. Verse 12 is meant to show why in verse 11 a righteous person receiving their life by faith makes it clear that justification is not by law. The reason is that the law is not ‘by faith’; rather, it gives life by doing. Jesus did attain our life by doing. But for us and our reception of justification and life, the law does not operate ‘by faith’, which is the way we justified people (not Christ) have our life.

Galatians 3:21-22

Hays gestures big in these verses, resting much of his interpretation upon them.

Following A. J. Greimas’ model for narrative analysis to identify narrative substructures,¹⁵⁵ he claims to have identified the role of πίστις in Paul’s gospel story. He summarizes his study of 3:21-22:

This analysis, in agreement with the above analyses of 3:13-14 and 4:3-6, places Jesus Christ in the role of the Subject, with πίστις as the power of quality which enables him to carry out his mandate. If this is correct, Gal 3:22 must not be interpreted to mean that believers receive the promise by the subjective act of placing their faith in Jesus Christ; instead, it must mean that Jesus Christ, by the power of faith, has performed an act which allows believers to receive the promise.¹⁵⁶

What this means is that in his analysis of the narrative substructure found in these verses, there are two competing stories, the first contrary-to-fact, the second factual. In the first story, humans are the Subject (the active agent), attaining life is the Performance (the action to be completed), and law is the Helper (the entity or quality enabling the Subject to do the Performance). In the

¹⁵⁴ *Galatians*, 319.

¹⁵⁵ What Hays means by narrative substructures is that Paul has a coherent gospel story of Jesus in mind, and so his many partial references and allusions to this story should not be pitted against each other but should instead be taken as complementary parts of the big picture of that gospel story. This much is laudable. Hays’ mistake comes from his rigid superimposition of Greimas’ model upon these fragmentary bits of the narrative. This results in arbitrary labels placed on elements and ultimately a distortion of what Paul is actually saying in a given sentence. If Hays had tried to see the harmony of these various portions of Paul’s gospel story without the aid of an externally constraining system, perhaps he would have come to much sounder results.

¹⁵⁶ *Faith*, 115-116.

second story, the true story, Christ is the divine Subject, delivering on the promise of life is the Performance, and faith is the Helper. From what he has labelled as the Subjects (humans and Christ), he concludes that the real contrast is between human-worked salvation and divinely worked salvation. From the label he has placed on faith, he concludes that it must be a quality or entity possessed by Christ used to accomplish the Performance of salvation. Certainly, if correct, his analysis would be weighty evidence in favor of the subjective interpretation of πίστις.

There are, however, considerable shortcomings in Hays' analysis. Most obvious would be the wooden way in which he imposes Greimas' category of Helper onto Paul and expects to be able to pigeon-hole elements from any given verse to match the categories precisely. Hays complicates things for himself when he chooses as his Subject an entity not even mentioned in the verse he says he is explaining. As Lee has demonstrated, if one should want to use this model of Greimas to interpret these verses, both law and faith would be better categorized as the Subjects themselves.¹⁵⁷ It is, after all, the law which in the first story hypothetically performs the giving of life ("For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law"), and it is faith which in the second story in actuality performs the giving of life ("what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ"). Not only does this negate Hays' supposed payoff to his claim, namely, that πίστις must be a quality possessed by Christ, but this proper understanding results in the same faith-law dichotomy which appears not only elsewhere within Paul but in the next verses.

Galatians 3:23-25

What everyone is agreed on in these verses is that the coming of πίστις equals the coming of Christ. The disagreement is over how that could be the case. The subjective interpretation holds that πίστις here means Jesus' faithfulness onto death, or perhaps the age of πίστις ushered in by his apocalyptic coming. Those who prefer the subjective interpretation see these verses as an insurmountable obstacle to the objective interpretation because they see no way in which πίστις can be used as a reference to Christ within the commitments of the objective interpretive system. This verse cannot mean that all faith was sparked when Jesus came, as there was faith before and after him. The grammar also would be being pressed to say that πίστις means merely

¹⁵⁷ Jae Hyun Lee, "Against Richard B. Hays's 'Faith of Jesus Christ,'" *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 5 (2008): 67-68.

the opportunity for faith came, which also would contradict the notion of the existence of faith prior to Jesus. The answer, however, is really much simpler than this. *πίστις* is used metonymically for the object of faith, namely, Jesus. Whether a believer lives before or after he came, Jesus is the object of their faith.

Against the subjective interpretation we might question the naturalness of the expression under their system. If Jesus is the subject of faith and not its object, would it not be more natural to refer to Jesus as *ὁ πιστός* instead of *ἡ πίστις*? Or if the expression denotes not him but his act of death, does it not sound strange to refer to this faithfulness unto death as “coming”?

Galatians 3:26

This verse contains an additional example of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* in \mathfrak{B}^{46} . Hultgren has argued convincingly that this variant, while certainly not the correct reading, is best explained by assuming the erring copyist understood the other occurrences of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* in the objective manner.¹⁵⁸ *διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, the preferred reading, could hardly be understood as the faithfulness present within Christ. But it could have perhaps been understood—and it seems this was the case here—as designating faith in Christ Jesus as its object. In \mathfrak{B}^{46} , by either conscious or unconscious harmonization, the passage was assimilated to match the occurrences of *πίστις Χριστοῦ*. Even assuming that it might be best to take the two prepositional phrases distinctly (which we should not take for granted—our initial comments above on Romans 3:25 would all be worth repeating here), only somebody taking for granted the objective interpretation could read them together and express them likewise genitively without significant alteration to the meaning. The early date of \mathfrak{B}^{46} , dated at about A.D. 200, is further evidence that *πίστις Χριστοῦ* was understood as an objective genitive in the early native-Greek-speaking church.

Galatians 5:5-6

The last words of verse 6 are a famous point of contention between Lutherans and Catholics, but both are in agreement, at least historically, that *πίστις* refers here to human faith. Choi has argued that this phrase should be understood subjectively since “the two verbs *ἰσχύω* and *ἐνεργέω*, of which *πίστις* is the subject, suggest that Paul understands *πίστις* as a salvific

¹⁵⁸ Hultgren, *Romans*, 632-633.

power.”¹⁵⁹ The sense would then be that what is really powerful is “Christ’s faithfulness working through his love.”¹⁶⁰ As nice as that thought is, it struggles contextually. To say nothing of his overly etymological readings of the ‘power’ verbs, we note the use of πίστις in the previous verse. The positioning of ἐκ πίστεως before ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης makes it unlikely that the prepositional phrase is meant to modify it adjectivally. It modifies ἀπεκδεχόμεθα adverbially. While perhaps one could say that it is by God’s faithfulness in giving us the Spirit that we are caused to await the hoped-for righteousness, the subjective interpretation requires that ἐκ πίστεως, even without an indication from the context, carry the loaded meaning of Christ’s faithfulness unto death, especially since the contrast with the law is present from the previous two verses. The meaning of this verse would then be that by Jesus’ past death we expect righteousness. There is nothing wrong with this theologically, but as a coherent sentence this does not fit well in light of the subject of the verb or its future orientation. Take, for example the necessarily resultant subjective paraphrase: “We by Jesus’ death wait for righteousness.” Since ‘by death’ modifies ‘wait’ and not ‘righteousness’ it would have to be saying that his death is the cause of our waiting. While this is true, it is unavoidably more opaque than to allow ἐκ πίστεως to be the human faith which characterizes our waiting. This objective interpretation carries over into verse 6, where the only thing that counts is faith at work through love.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

As it is currently in vogue within the scholarly world to deny Pauline authorship of Ephesians, these verses are not always included within the debate. We hold that Paul was the author of this book but cannot here give this matter the attention necessary to demonstrate it.¹⁶¹

However, even if we would, for the sake of argument, grant that Ephesians was written not by Paul but by a disciple of his one or two generations removed, the book is still relevant, speaking definitively for the objective interpretation of Paul and against the subjective interpretation by showing the early church’s manner of adopting Paul’s way of speaking.

¹⁵⁹ Hung-sik Choi, “Πίστις in Galatians 5:5-6: Neglected Evidence for the Faithfulness of Christ,” *Journal for Biblical Literature* 124.3 (2005): 467-490, 482-483.

¹⁶⁰ “Neglected,” 487.

¹⁶¹ For thorough treatments of Paul as the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians see Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 1-61; and Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 1-47.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Here once again πίστις is contrasted with ἔργων, meaning that the standard antithetical meaning will be operative. What is different in this case is that these, instead of being employed with δικαιώω at the center of Paul's overtly polemical argument, are almost more of an afterthought to what is here Paul's primary expression, χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι, interjected in verse 5 and repeated in verse 8. Paul now adds our familiar opposites to flesh out salvation by grace. Already we might ask how διὰ πίστεως without the trailing genitive Χριστοῦ could possibly be understood as reference to Christ's faithfulness without preceding case of πίστις Χριστοῦ to help establish a linguistic context. Prior to this verse there is only one even allusive reference to Christ's death within the entire letter (1:7), a fact which damages the subjective interpretation here and in all subsequent cases of πίστις. Second, we note how fitting a reference to faith is in context after verses 5-6 chronicle spiritual vivification, resurrection, and enthronement—terms describing and characterizing our coming to faith.

What is most important to us for this discussion is the further addition which Paul places in between faith and works, the well-known phrase: καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον. Assuming, as is more than reasonable, that faith and works are still consciously meant to be in opposition, what purpose does this interposed statement serve? It shows that salvation is not in any way from us but is all from God. But why bring it in front of the reference to works? Because it is meant to address the only previous element in the verse which could by any possible misunderstanding be construed so as to allow any notion of human contribution to salvation: διὰ πίστεως.¹⁶² If the reference were to Jesus' faithfulness, "not by works" would have more naturally been said immediately after "through faith" and before "this is not from you—it is God's gift." Foster contends that this inserted phrase is meant to rule out that this πίστις is that of people, meaning that it must be that of Christ, but this does not pay attention to actual form of the phrase which Paul inserts.¹⁶³ If Paul meant the interposed words to deny that the πίστις is that of human beings, a simple ὑμῶν would have been clearer than ἐξ ὑμῶν. But what is more telling,

¹⁶² Barth admits that this makes the meaning of human faith "the easiest" meaning in this verse, but then makes the linguistically faulty assertion that Paul's exception of human works serve to reassert the truths of God's faithfulness and Christ's faithfulness all loaded within the bare reference to faith. Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1-3* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1974), 224-225.

¹⁶³ Paul Foster, "The First Contribution to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: A Study of Ephesians 3.12," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 85 (2002): 91-94.

Paul should not have subsequently stated that said πίστις was a gift from God but that it was ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Paul's use of his familiar contrast in Ephesians provides a clear and unmistakable example of διὰ πίστεως, the functional equivalent of ἐκ πίστεως, referring to human faith as the means of receiving salvation.

Ephesians 3:12

The grammar differs here somewhat, as the article is present. Both the subjective and the objective interpretations would fit in context. However, the subjective interpretation would be somewhat redundant in light of the ἐν ᾧ referring to Jesus at the beginning of the verse. As a reference to Christ's death, with nothing in context to make such a reference explicit, what πίστις was supposed to allude to would likely elude his listeners. Lincoln shows by cross-reference the appropriateness of a reference to faith here as well as the relevance of this verse to the debate when he says, "In Paul's treatment of access in Rom 5:2 it is a consequence of justification by faith."¹⁶⁴ While no conclusive claims either way can be made on this verse alone, it seems that the objective interpretation we find with certainty elsewhere works well here, and perhaps slightly better than the subjective interpretation.

Ephesians 4:13

It is not certain whether the genitive τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ limits just τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως or both it and τῆς πίστεως. The genitive τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ is certainly objective. Paul is speaking of Christian unity, and so the 'faith' and the 'knowledge' which bring about that unity is that of the Christians being united. To paraphrase, Christians are united in their faith and knowledge. The most natural way of taking τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ after a 'knowledge' word is to denote the object of the knowledge. Paul speaks of knowing Christ in several other places (1 Co 2:2; 2 Co 2:14; Eph 1:17; Php 3:8,10; Col 2:2) but nowhere mentions anything about us needing to know what Christ knows. Were Paul to mean that here, he forgot to mention what that special piece of knowledge Christ possesses which we need to share. In contrast, a shared knowledge of Jesus does bring about unity and this interpretation requires no hermeneutical acrobatics or implied thoughts. The genitive is objective and the knowledge is ours directed towards Christ. If that genitive does limit

¹⁶⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1990), 190.

τῆς πίστεως also, we have an indisputable case of the objective genitive following πίστις. Even if it does not, the parallel with knowledge shows that πίστις here is our human faith, not Christ's faithfulness.

The Epistle to the Philippians — Philippians 3:9

Paul here states what his righteousness is three times, once negatively then twice positively. Both the positive descriptions make use of the word πίστις. The first has the somewhat standard formula διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ contrasted with ἐκ νόμου so we can assume the meanings here will be in conformity with those elsewhere. The second particularizes πίστις so we can assume that despite the change in preposition it has the same meaning and referent as the first use. As Achtemeier has noted in response to the argument against the objective interpretation on the basis of redundancy, “Phil. 3:9 is redundant whether the genitive be understood as subjective *or* objective, since the second phrase concerning faith surely modifies the first.”¹⁶⁵ Paul uses the second positive description of righteousness to clarify the first. Hawthorne writes that the argument for the subjective interpretation here on the argument of redundancy “hangs by too thin a thread, because the phrase, ‘the righteous of God based on faith’ in v 9c is simply added for clarification and emphasis without any concern for being tautological, and because just such emphatic redundancy is in keeping with Paul’s style of writing.”¹⁶⁶ The first use was built off of ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην, which he made more specific as τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. The phrase “not having my righteousness which is by law but that which is through faith” would have been open to the understanding that it was still essentially his own righteousness, so he clarifies with the final phrase the righteousness comes from God, the ‘from God’ to counteract the ‘my’. It seems less likely that there would have been any reason to clarify that the righteousness Paul has from Christ’s death comes from God and does not have its origin within Paul. The objective interpretation holds steadily here in Philippians also, while the subjective interpretation is again found to be unlikely at best.

¹⁶⁵ “Apropos,” 84.

¹⁶⁶ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 142.

An Unlikely Defender — The Epistle of James

Too often James and his ‘justification by works’ is said to be attacking Paul’s ‘justification by faith’. When studied more carefully, it is clear that they are both defending the gospel of Christ—not from each other, but from opposite attacks, that of antinomianism and that of legalism, respectively. In the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, however, James is afforded the rare opportunity to even be used to directly defend Paul.

James 2:14-26 bears many linguistic parallels to Paul which confirm for us the senses of the words. Like Paul, James contrasts πίστις with ἔργα. While the nuance differs from that of Paul, the sense of πίστις is clearly that of human (or even demonic) faith and belief. This verifies for us the naturalness of contrasting these two Greek words in their senses of ‘faith’ and ‘works’.¹⁶⁷ Also like Paul, πίστις clearly refers to the believing action of πιστεύω, with which it stands interweaved. Again also like Paul, Abraham’s faith and justification are cited from Genesis 15:6. The content and language of James shows the way we would expect Paul to use πίστις in the context of Abraham, believing, and works; and we have seen that such a meaning does fit consistently within Paul.

¹⁶⁷ This proof becomes even more striking if one holds to the opinion that James was written after Paul either to combat his teaching on justification or to temper it to prevent misunderstandings. While there is good reason not to assume this, many do hold this view. If one assumes James is replying to Paul, we have clear indication of how Paul’s earliest commentator understood him. For more information on the relative dating of James and an analysis of James 2:14-16 as it compares with Paul’s preaching of justification by faith, see Nathaniel F. Walther, “Does James Disagree with Paul on Justification?: An Exegetical Comparison of Romans 3:27-4:3 and James 2:14-26,” (Senior thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2014), www.wls.wels.net.

CONCLUSION

Such a lengthy investigation into the syntactical kind of one particular genitive might at first blush seem excessive, especially when both meanings could be understood in a correct and edifying manner. However, the critical nature of these texts to our understanding of the biblical doctrine of justification leaves us desiring as much precision in our exegesis as the text itself allows. The subjective genitive interpretation fails both on semantic grounds and repeatedly where it really counts—in the Pauline texts themselves. The objective genitive interpretation uses the contextually preferred meaning of πίστις, is an appropriate Greek grammatical construction, and adeptly accounts for all the textual and contextual data. Any arguments against it only give rise to more questions than they answer.

We absolutely cannot afford to give the wrong answer in this Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. The question of whose πίστις it is, while perhaps at times asked innocently by some, is being used by others to advance an anti-justification-by-faith agenda and to effect a paradigm shift to a principally participatory gospel, which, even if unintentionally, inevitably reintroduces human merit into salvation.¹⁶⁸ Even if we intend not a seismic revolution but simply a greater emphasis on the objective merits of Christ on which justification stands, we undermine the all-sufficiency of those objective merits by not properly understanding and proclaiming faith and its proper instrumental role in justification. Justification is ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ ‘by faith in Christ’. Faith is our God-given hand which receives his promised righteousness. Faith is in Christ.

¹⁶⁸ Campbell admits, “My rereading’s feasibility tends to stand or fall in the main in relation to the meaning of ‘faith,’ so close readings of that data will dominate what follows. If we understand the causality and epistemological location of ‘faith’ in Paul correctly, then most of the other issues seem to fall into place.” Campbell, *Deliverance*, 896. Therefore defending πίστις is tantamount to defending the faith.

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APPENDIX A
HABAKKUK 2:4

Because of its use by Paul at key junctures of his argument for justification by faith, Habakkuk 2:4b finds itself drawn into the center of a New Testament hermeneutical debate. Paul quotes it in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. However, while Paul has clearly intended this citation to be both a grand summary statement of his gospel and his lynch-pin argument against works-righteousness, the textual, lexical, and hermeneutical issues surrounding Habakkuk's statement have raised for scholars more questions than answers. Here are the various forms the verse is found in:

MT, :הנה עֲפֹלָה לֹא־יִשְׂרָהּ נַפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ וְצַדִּיק בְּאַמוּנוֹתָיו יִחְיֶה:

1QpHab 7:14: [] הנה עופלה לוא ישרה

LXX: ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται

Alexandrinus (London: fifth century), and the *Recensio in catena magna in prophetas inventa*: ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται

Freer (Washington: fourth-fifth century): ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται

8HevXIIgr 12: ἰδ[] σκοτία, οὐκ εὐθεῖα ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ [] καιος ἐν πίστει αὐτοῦ ζήσεται[]

Aquila: ἰδου νωχελευομένου οὐκ εὐθεῖα ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ δίκαιος ἐν πίστει αὐτοῦ ζήσεται

Symmachus: ὁ (δὲ) δίκαιος τῇ ἑαυτοῦ πίστει ζήσει

Paul: ὁ (δὲ) δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

Hebrews 10:38: ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ

Origen¹⁶⁹: ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου (Πάντες· αὐτοῦ) ζήσεται

Peshitta: כִּי אִי־אֵמוּנָא לֹא־יִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה לְאִשְׁתּוֹתָא¹⁷⁰

Syriac Hexapla: כִּי אִי־אֵמוּנָא לֹא־יִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה לְאִשְׁתּוֹתָא¹⁷¹

Vulgate¹⁷²: ecce qui incredulus est non erit recta anima eius in semet ipso iustus autem in fide sua vivet

The extant Hebrew texts themselves all have third-person pronominal suffixes attached to both ‘soul’ and ‘faith’. However, it certainly would be conceivable that originally a first-person suffix was present in either case and was accidentally changed in transmission, as the difference would be an alteration of just one letter, from ך to ך. The Greek versions, including that used in Hebrews 10:38, are unanimous in reading “my soul.” Syriac and Latin translations, though, do retain “his soul,” confirming that the current reading of the Masoretic Text has, at the very least, antiquity, and should be given strong priority.

The other pronominal suffix, however, has more varied readings and is also more significant to our understanding of the passage. The majority reading of the Septuagint differs from the Masoretic Text, reading “by my faith” instead of “by his faith.” Alexandrinus, the *Recensio*, and the writer to the Hebrews have the word ‘my’, corroborating the pronoun’s presence in the translation. Yet through apparent transposition in these texts it is attached to the previous element, resulting in the reading “my righteous one.” While Freer may have simply removed the ‘my’ to harmonize with Paul, either consciously or unconsciously, the transposed word order found in the Hebrews quotation suggests that already at the time of the First Century, the reading of Alexandrinus and the *Recensio* was in existence. Perhaps it arose because it was a simple way to harmonize the words of the passage with its understood sense—that it is the faith of the righteous one and not the divine speaker which is in view here. It is also possible that this

¹⁶⁹ Readings of Origen, Aquila, Symmachus, and the Syriac Hexapla all come from Origen Alexandrinus, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt; sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum vetus testamentum fragmenta. Tomus II*, ed. Frederick Field (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), 1005.

¹⁷⁰ “And in evil his soul does not delight, but the righteous by faith will live.”

¹⁷¹ “Those of the remnant by his faith will live.”

¹⁷² Jerome also notes “Et ubi LXX posuerunt: *Iustus autem ex fide mea vivet*, omnes aequaliter transtulerunt, *ex fide sua vivet*.” Quoted in Origen, *Hexapla*, 1005.

change was made by the writer to the Hebrews to move the verse back towards its true meaning, and this change worked its way into copies of the Septuagint translation of Habakkuk.

This interpretation of the text is also held by the other Greek translators. 8HevXIIgr 12, Aquila, and Origen all have *αὐτοῦ*. Symmachus is even more explicit with *ἑαυτοῦ*. Likewise the Syriac Hexapla and Jerome respectively translate it *ܫܠܝܗ*¹⁷³ and *sua*. As the Syriac versions are generally considered to be heavily dependent on the Septuagint, their agreement with the Masoretic Text against the Septuagint is noteworthy. The Vulgate reading also is significant because, like Origen, Jerome expresses an awareness of the standard Septuagint reading, and yet rejects it in favor of the Hebrew. The Qumran Peshier also explicitly interprets the ‘faith’ as belonging to human beings.¹⁷⁴

It is quite safe to say that the Masoretic Text preserves Habakkuk’s original reading in 2:4b. It is furthermore safe to say that, perhaps apart from what became the dominant Septuagint reading, every extant ancient version, as well as some alterations made in Septuagint transmission, understand the ‘faith’ to be that of the ‘righteous’, as also it was understood and used by both Paul and the writer to the Hebrews.

The meanings of the words in this verse also pose a number of difficulties. *הַפִּלֵּץ* proves difficult, and many of the versions translate it in ways implying a corruption of the Masoretic Text. While more modern dictionaries attempt to recover the meaning of *פִּלַּץ* (BDB says, ‘swell’,¹⁷⁵ while HALOT says, ‘to be foolish, impudent’,¹⁷⁶ also, on the evidence of Numbers 14:44 respectively allowing ‘be heedless’ for a second identical verbal root or ‘dare’ for a Hifil meaning for the same stem), the Septuagint translates *ὑποστειλῆται* ‘shrink back’ or ‘avoid’, which might at first suggest its translator read *פָּלַץ* ‘be faint’ or ‘swoon’. Aquila’s *νωχελουμένου* ‘slothful one’, however, seems to be reading *פָּלַץ*, meaning ‘slow’, ‘sluggard’, or even

¹⁷³ “of him”

¹⁷⁴ “Its interpretation concerns all observing the Law in the House of Judah, whom God will free from the house of judgment on account of their toil and of their loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness.” 1QpHab 8:1-3, In Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition (Translations)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹⁷⁵ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), § *פִּלַּץ*.

¹⁷⁶ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2004), § *פָּלַץ*.

‘hesitate’, which also could account for the Septuagint reading. The Peshitta’s ܐܘܨܘܒܐ ‘in unrighteousness’ is self-evidently a translation of its cognate עוול.

It is perhaps impossible to nail down with certainty what exactly Habakkuk wrote for this word (and we have currently only even been trying to decipher the root, not even necessarily the grammatical form or even the part of speech), but that does not mean that these questions do not help in interpreting the thrust of the entire verse, particularly the all-important second half. A translator, in rendering הַפְּזִיזָה, shows how they construe the parallelism of the verse. The parallelism in Habakkuk 2:4 must be antithetical, and all translations take it as such. Yet it is difficult to determine which elements are placed by Habakkuk in antithesis with each other. (This is not to say that every element must have a perfect parallel, but when parallel expressions are used they should be interpreted in a way which preserves the parallelism of the entire verse.) Here is the NASB’s translation:

Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him;
But the righteous will live by his faith.

The impression given by the translation is that ‘proud one’ is to be taken parallel with ‘the righteous’. The Peshitta establishes the same parallelism, with ܐܘܨܘܒܐ ‘unrighteousness’ being lexically opposite of ܐܘܨܘܒܐ ‘righteousness’. Neither Aquila nor the rest of the Greek tradition understands the passage in this way, however. Both νωχελευομένου and ἐὰν ὑποστείληται function more naturally in contrast with ‘by faith’. Jerome follows the parallelism so strongly in this manner that he renders the unclear vocable as *qui incredulus est*, presumably nothing more than a guess based on what will fit the context. More importantly, this is the way this passage was used by the writer to the Hebrews:

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while,

“He who is coming will come and will not delay.

But my righteous one will live by faith.

And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.”

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (10:35-39)

As the surrounding verses demonstrate, the contrast is between ‘shrinking back’ and ‘faith’. These are the operative terms in the contrast, marked accordingly:

Behold!	Shrinking back,	<i>his/my soul does not go right with him.</i>
But the righteous	by faith	<i>will live.</i>

Just as the writer to the Hebrews regards ‘shrinking back’ as parallel with ‘by faith’, he considers ‘I will not be pleased with him’ and ‘will live’ as parallel, interpreting them as ‘are destroyed’ and ‘are saved’. Even if the meaning עֲפָלָה would be something more along the lines of ‘presumption’ or ‘impudence’ instead of ‘shrinking back’, the parallelism is clearer if that element is juxtaposed with ‘faith’.

All this both presupposes and supports the notion that בְּאִמּוּנָתוֹ should be translated “by his faith” and not “by his faithfulness.” Admittedly, אִמּוּנָה usually does mean ‘faithfulness’ throughout the Old Testament. However, ‘faith’ provides a much more transparent contrast with either ‘presumption’ or ‘shrinking back’. It is certainly also within the range of its root אָמַן, which frequently occurs in Hifil meaning ‘believe’ or ‘trust’. In fact, it seems plausible that Habakkuk might even be intending an allusion to the Old Testament’s most famous use of that verb root: וְהָאֱמֵן בְּיְהוָה וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Ge 15:6). Reminding them of their father in the faith, Habakkuk 2:4 speaks of the blessings of life coming to one who has צְדָקָה and does אֱמָן.¹⁷⁷ The lexicons list no word of this root which means exclusively ‘faith’ as opposed to ‘faithfulness’,¹⁷⁸ so this very well could have been the most natural nominal form of the root אָמַן to express the concept of believing trust.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ It would not be wrong to view as somewhat parallel to Habakkuk 2:4b also a passage such as Isaiah 28:16. “So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts (הַמְאֲמִין) will never be dismayed.’”

¹⁷⁸ This is confirmed by Barr: “There is no word in the OT in Hebrew meaning ‘faith’ or ‘belief’; that is to say, there is no noun form representing nominally the act indicated by the verb *he^emin* ‘believe’—a fact which is widely known and acknowledged.” Barr, *Semantics*, 173. In a footnote to this text, however, Barr does hold out Habakkuk 2:4 as a possible exception.

¹⁷⁹ Barr cautiously argues that later Hebrew writers not only used the word in this way, but understood Habakkuk’s use in this way. “Another element however has to be added here, namely, the development of the semantic value of ‘trust, faith’ in certain nouns on the Semitic side also. For Hebrew itself this sense, which became

What seals ‘faith’ as the proper understanding is the context of the entire book of Habakkuk, a concise yet impassioned theodicy. A basic outline of the book is as follows:

- 1:1-4 Habakkuk complains that there is no justice against the wicked.
- 1:5-11 God promises to destroy the wicked.
- 1:12-17 Habakkuk complains that there is no justice against the wicked.
- 2 God promises to destroy the wicked, but it must be trustingly waited for.
- 3 Habakkuk sings in contentment while trustingly waiting for the Lord

The entire book is about trusting. Several key verses will illustrate this point. God’s first words within the book highlight the fact. “Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own” (1:5-6). God is promising that he is going to do something. There is no condition given. The response expected of Israel is to watch this happen and believe the unbelievable. However, when Habakkuk complains a second time, and then stations himself on the ramparts, impatiently waiting God’s response (2:1), God gives this answer in the verse immediately preceding the one here under discussion: “For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.” God states that deliverance is coming in its time, even if it seems to people that it takes too long. The more logical response demanded by a coming deliverance from oppression is to wait for it in patient trust, not to exhibit faithfulness, and by that patient trust God promises in the next verse that his righteous one will live. God then continues with further promises of the destruction he will bring on the wicked, and closes by saying, “But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” That is to say, recognize that the Lord is in control and ruling over all things, and so trust his governance—there is no need to question it. After hearing God, Habakkuk is convinced. He now sings to God a prayer holding God to his promises. The final verses of the book demonstrate Habakkuk’s new attitude, the very attitude of faith and trust which God was seeking:

well established in late Hebrew, may well have developed for ^e*munah* during the late Judaistic period. From Qumran the most important text is at 1QPHab 8:2-3; the sense of ‘faith’ is supported by some scholars here, although it is not certain, since the passage might be translated ‘because of their toil and their faith in the teacher’ or ‘because of their toil and their faithfulness to the teacher’. To me the presence of the preposition *b^e*, which is used with the verb *he^emin* ‘believe’, rather suggests the former.” Barr, *Semantics*, 202.

I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. *Yet I will wait patiently* for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, *yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.* The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. (3:16-19)

Habakkuk has learned his lesson. Even in troublesome times, wait patiently on the Lord and trust in him. He brings life and deliverance. This is the meaning of the book of Habakkuk and the meaning of its central and most famous verse.

It is frequently asked what the prepositional phrase ‘by faith’ hangs on, ‘the righteous’ or ‘will live’. The question concerns whether Paul conceived this verse in a manner grammatically different than what Habakkuk intended. The most natural way to understand the Hebrew is to take it adverbially, modifying ‘will live’, the same way intimated by the Masoretic pointing. This is not often debated. The allegation, however, is that Paul understood it adjectivally, modifying ‘the righteous’, and the implication from this is that Paul misappropriated the verse for his own theological agenda. This assumption does not hold up to investigation. While justification by faith is formulaic in Paul, it does not follow that he must interpret a passage to be using a phrase grammatically the same way he commonly does. He shows that he does just the opposite, in fact, in Galatians 3:11. To contrast faith-righteousness and law-righteousness, he juxtaposes two Old Testament citations which display a strong degree of formal symmetry, Habakkuk 2:4b and Leviticus 18:5:

‘Ο δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.
‘Ο ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

Both begin with an articularized substantivized subject to be taken generically. Both use the same exact verb, ζήσεται, the springboard for Paul’s contrast. Most importantly, both have adverbial prepositional phrases which, in contrast with each other, explain the way by which such a person would receive life. Paul did understand ‘by faith’ adverbially.

This understanding also fits in Paul’s other citation of Habakkuk, Romans 1:17. If we paraphrase the citation, “One who is right before God has their life by faith,”¹⁸⁰ it becomes

¹⁸⁰ It is probably best here to take פִּיִּץ in a primarily judicial and not exclusively ethical sense. While it is true that this word can take on an ethical sense in Old Testament usage, the sense of legal status cannot be denied.

apparent that Paul’s thought about justification by faith is not undermined but supported by the quotation, even if the formula varies somewhat syntactically. The quotation shows that a righteous person completely has their life¹⁸¹ by faith.¹⁸² Although strictly speaking ‘by faith’ does not hang on ‘the righteous’ *grammatically*, Paul still is able to use this verse to connect righteousness and faith exactly as he intends to do by it—and Paul can do this without at all distorting or abusing Habakkuk’s original sense. That this recognition poses no threat to the traditional Lutheran understanding of Paul and Habakkuk is seen from the fact that this is also how the Lutheran Confessors understood Habakkuk, using this verse to support the regeneration of faith.¹⁸³

One more issue regarding this verse requires mention here: could the righteous one of Habakkuk 2:4 be a reference to Christ? Campbell realizes that he must stake his entire argument for the subjective genitive on this verse:

As we have already intimated, ἐκ πίστεως in Hab 2:4, when it is quoted in Rom 1:17b, should take the same sense as the immediately preceding instance of the phrase in v.

Some examples of the judicial use of this root would include Genesis 15:6, 30:33; Exodus 23:7-8; Deuteronomy 16:19, 25:1; 1 Kings 8:32 2 Kings 10:9; 2 Chronicles 6:23; Proverbs 24:24; and Isaiah 5:23, 29:21. Paul’s judicial use is not out of line with such Old Testament judicial use.

¹⁸¹ Judging by the meanings for חי listed by both HALOT and BDB, it appears that this verb always denotes ‘life’ in some sense as opposed to ‘death’ (though it is flexible enough to embrace physical, spiritual, and eternal life). It would not appear to speak to the manner of life or the place of dwelling like the English ‘live’ can. Paul would be using it in regard to the spiritual existence of blessing we have before God which exists now and extends into eternity.

¹⁸² Lightfoot’s comment is worth noting here: “The other construction takes the emphasis off ‘faith,’ which the context shows to be the really emphatic word, and lays it on the verb ‘live.’ Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul from Unpublished Commentaries* (London: Macmillan And Co, 1895), 251.

¹⁸³ Ap. 12:47: “And quickening ought not to be understood as a Platonic fancy, but as consolation which truly sustains life that is escaping in contrition. Here, therefore, are two parts: contrition and faith. For as conscience cannot be pacified except by faith, therefore faith alone quickens, according to the declaration, Hab. 2, 4; Rom. 1, 17: *The just shall live by faith.*”

FC:SD 3:19-20: “For, in the first place, the word *regeneratio*, that is, regeneration, is used so as to comprise at the same time the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake alone, and the succeeding renewal which the Holy Ghost works in those who are justified by faith. Then, again, it is [sometimes] used *pro remissione peccatorum et adoptione in filios Dei*, that is, so as to mean only the remission of sins, and that we are adopted as sons of God. And in this latter sense the word is much and often used in the *Apology*, where it is written: *Iustificatio est regeneratio*, that is, Justification before God is regeneration. St. Paul, too, has employed these words as distinct from one another, Titus 3, 5: *He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost*. As also the word *vivificatio*, that is, making alive, has sometimes been used in a like sense. For when man is justified through faith (which the Holy Ghost alone works), this is truly a regeneration, because from a child of wrath he becomes a child of God, and thus is transferred from death to life, as it is written: *When we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ*, Eph. 2, 5. Likewise: *The just shall live by faith*, Rom. 1, 17; Hab. 2, 4. In this sense the word is much and often used in the *Apology.*”

17a—to argue otherwise leads to unacceptable interpretive convolutions. Our suggestion concerning 17a therefore necessarily involves reading Hab 2:4 as a messianic proof-text. Certainly, if it cannot be so read, this would falsify our suggested reading of v. 17a.¹⁸⁴

Campbell, however, admits that understanding Habakkuk 2:4 as a messianic prophecy can only be shown to be allowable, never conclusively demonstrated.¹⁸⁵ He does not even attempt to marshal any evidence from Habakkuk itself that it was intended to be messianic, but instead resorts only to evidence that it was understood as messianic, in particular by Paul.

As the possibility of Paul interpreting this verse messianically was addressed already in the body of this thesis, what must be addressed here is only the argument for the likelihood a messianic interpretation based on the Greek rendering of the previous verse. Hays,¹⁸⁶ followed by Campbell,¹⁸⁷ points to the Septuagint form of Habakkuk 2:3, used with little modification by the writer to the Hebrews, to show the plausibility of interpreting both verses 3 and 4 messianically. The Masoretic Text and its Septuagint translation are as follows:

כִּי עוֹד הָיוּ לְמוֹעֵד וַיִּפְּחַד לִקְרֹא יְכֹזֵב אִם־יִתְמַהֲמַה חֶבְה־לּוֹ כִּי־בָא יְבֹא לֹא יִאָּחַר:
 διότι ἔτι ὄρασις εἰς καιρὸν καὶ ἀνατελεῖ εἰς πέρας καὶ οὐκ εἰς κενόν· ἐὰν ὑστερήσῃ, ὑπόμεινον αὐτόν,
 ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἤξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίσῃ

The Septuagint renders the infinitive absolute אָב with the masculine participle ἐρχόμενος.¹⁸⁸ Tov’s compilation of the various ways in which the Septuagint renders infinitive absolutes shows this to be a common way to do so,¹⁸⁹ as this method was “probably as close the translators could come within the possibilities of the Greek verbal system.”¹⁹⁰ Including

¹⁸⁴ “Crux,” 281.

¹⁸⁵ “Crux,” 282.

¹⁸⁶ *Faith*, 134-135.

¹⁸⁷ *Deliverance*, 614.

¹⁸⁸ As the difference would only be one of vocalization within a yet unpointed text, one might suggest that the Septuagint translators here read the masculine participle אָב instead of אָב. However, 1QpHab 7:9 inserts a vowel letter to read בּוֹא, giving us a clear example of an ancient text reading an infinitive. As we will see, there is a much simpler explanation which requires no deviation from the understanding preserved in the Masoretic Text.

¹⁸⁹ Emanuel Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 253.

¹⁹⁰ *Septuagint*, 249.

Habakkuk 2:3 in such tabulations,¹⁹¹ he even concludes that “the participle construction is preferred in . . . the Minor Prophets.”¹⁹² It is safe to say that the Septuagint translators did not intend ἐρχόμενος as a messianic designation.

Their choice of the masculine still requires comment. In the Hebrew, אָנֹכִי, like אֲנִי before it, are both masculine. They refer back to הַיְיָ, which is grammatically masculine. In the Greek ὄρασις is grammatically feminine. The Septuagint translators should have written αὐτήν and ἐρχομένη to make the gender match that of its referent, but they did not do so. Conceivably this could have been because they did not consider the vision to be the referent here and instead posited a masculine personal entity. Yet it is more likely that the translator simply reproduced the gender of the Hebrew *Vorlage* and the gender mismatch is owed to an under-interpretive translation and not an over-interpretive one. Pietersma’s introductory notes on his translation of the Greek Psalter point out a number of times within that portion of the Septuagint where the translator “mechanically transferred the Hebrew gender of a pronominal, thereby presenting an exegetical challenge to anyone reading the text independent of the Hebrew: 26.3-4; 73.18; 80.6; 108.27; 117.23; 118.50, 56; 131.6,”¹⁹³ and Pietersma further cites as common knowledge in a response to fellow grammarian Muraoka that at times in the Septuagint “Hebrew pronouns [are] glossed according to Hebrew gender rather than Greek referent.”¹⁹⁴

While it seems that there was no messianic interpretation involved in the Septuagint’s handling of the verse, its use of ἐρχόμενος certainly did allow for it to be used messianically without much difficulty. This is what we see in Hebrews 10:37. The writer to the Hebrews even articularizes the participle as ὁ ἐρχόμενος to make it explicit as a reference to the coming Christ. In appending the phrase μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, “in a little while,” from Isaiah 26:20, a prophecy about the Lord coming to judge the world, he makes this understanding clear as well. Although a personal messianic referent was not in mind in Habakkuk, or even his translator, the holy writer, under inspiration, takes advantage of the translation phrasing and this, so to speak, sanctified

¹⁹¹ *Septuagint*, 250 n. 9.

¹⁹² *Septuagint*, 254.

¹⁹³ Albert Pietersma, “Psalms: To the Reader,” in Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds. *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 542-547, 543.

¹⁹⁴ Albert Pietersmaa, “A Response to Muraoka’s Critique of Interlinearity,” (2008), [http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~pietersm/ResponsetoMuraoka\(2008\).pdf](http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~pietersm/ResponsetoMuraoka(2008).pdf), 19.

exploitation of the wording is not all that troubling. He is simply highlighting that the ultimate fulfillment of a general promise of coming deliverance does take place through a specific and personal coming deliverer—Jesus. While we have no other evidence of such a messianic use beyond the writer to the Hebrews, it is possible that his contemporaries, including Paul, also used the verse similarly.

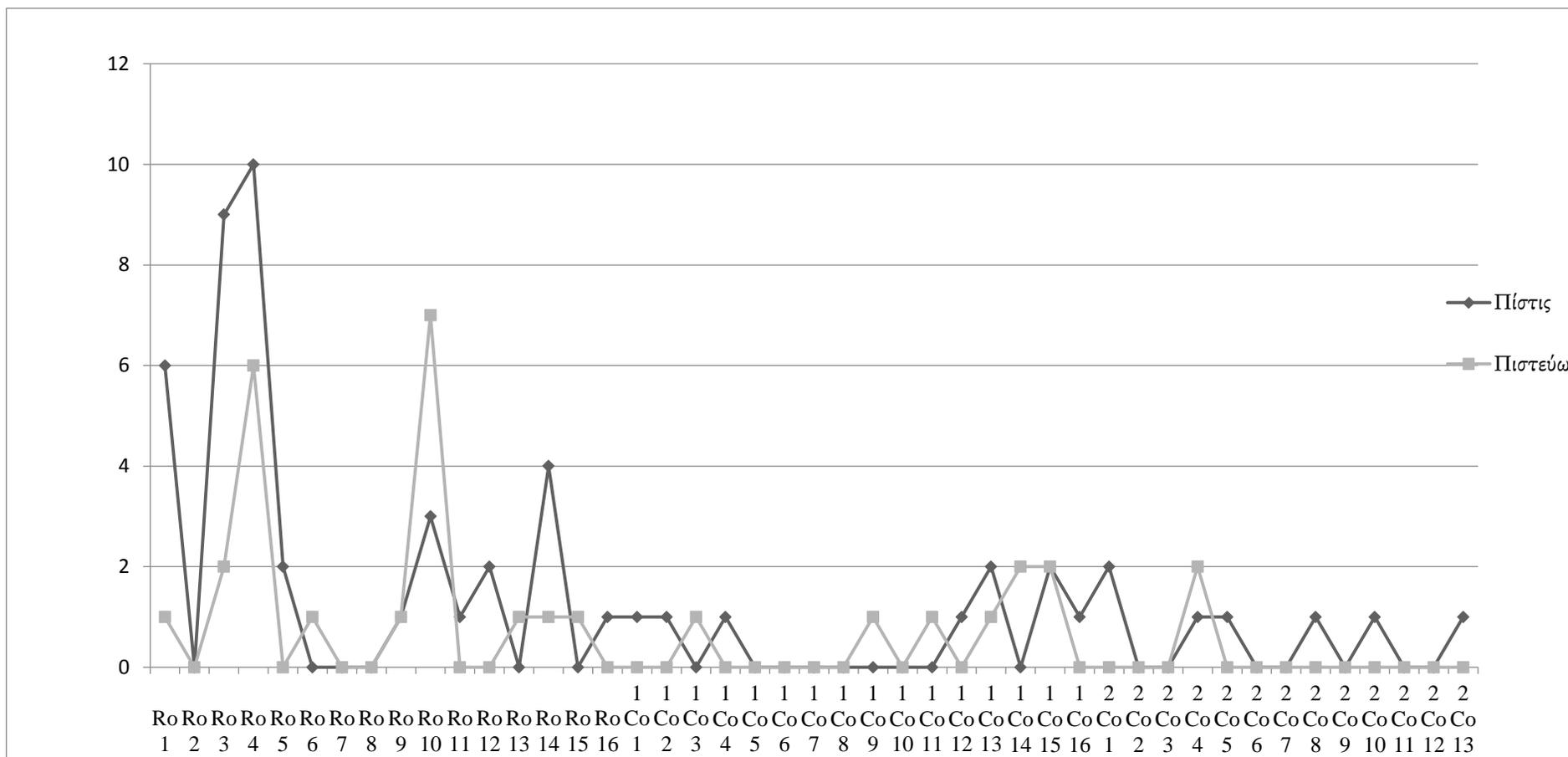
But what bearing does the possible messianic interpretation of Habakkuk 2:3 have on Habakkuk 2:4? Ultimately, very little. Understanding verse 3 to be an explicit reference to the Messiah does not make verse 4 to be one too. There are several reasons to be confident that it would not be understood in such a way. First of all, the parallelism discussed above begins to break down. By using *ἐάν ὑποστείληται*, a conditional construction, both the Septuagint and Hebrews intimate that they take both 4a and 4b of Habakkuk 2 in a generic sense (the same generic sense of the same word which is apparent in both the Hebrew and the Septuagint of Habakkuk 1:4,13). Besides, if the deliverer is to come and destroy the wicked, what reason would there be just to state that he will be alive? The actual promise of what the Messiah would do when he came is left unsaid in that case. It would fit more intelligibly within a messianic prophecy to state that the Coming One is coming, and so the righteous people will have life trusting him.

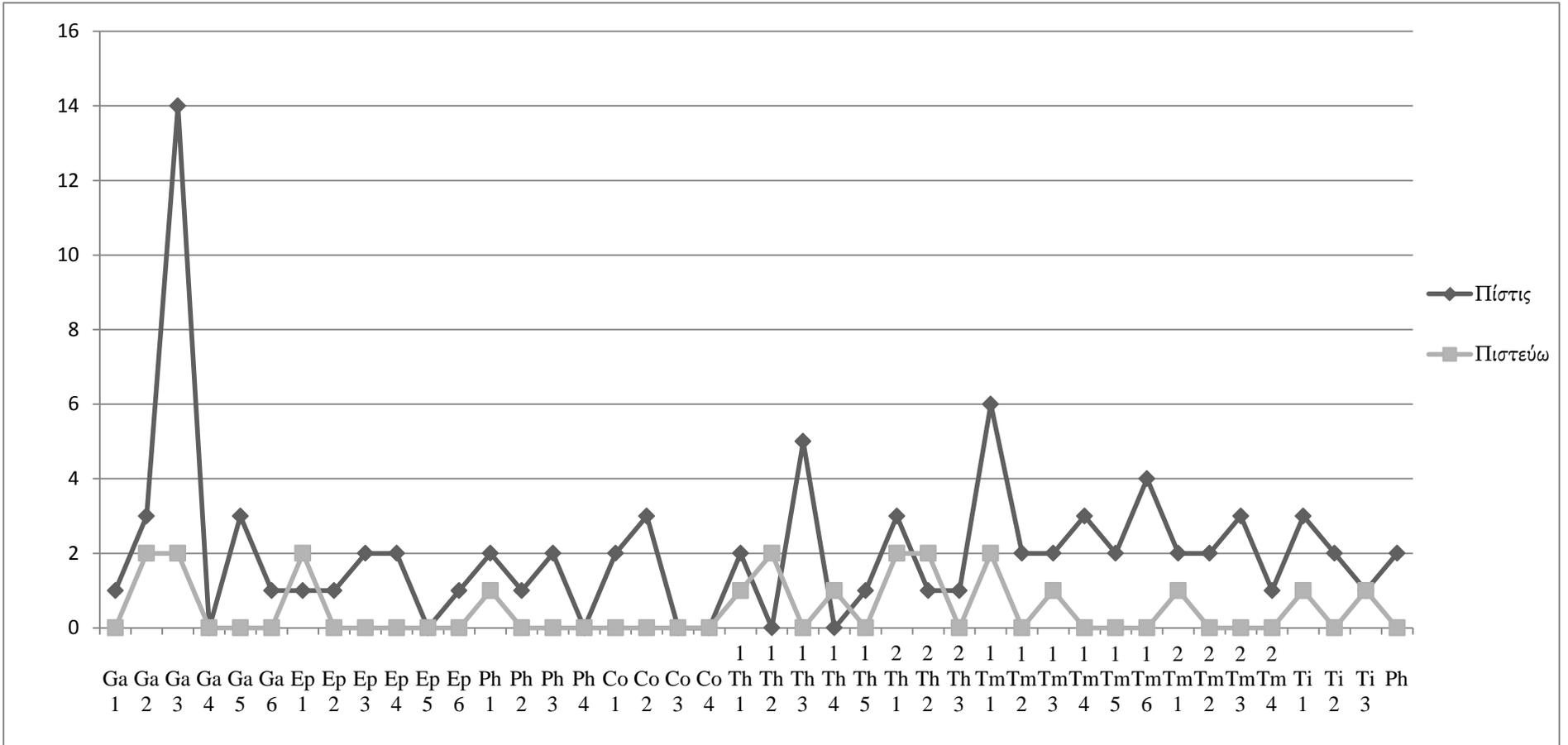
Secondly, this also is the way in which Habakkuk 2 is used by the writer to the Hebrews. While verse 3 is taken to be a reference to the Messiah, verse 4 is understood as a reference to Christians. As his concluding comments in the chapter demonstrate, he uses these verses to encourage Christians to live in trust as they wait for their Messiah's second coming, very similar to Habakkuk's original encouragement.

For these reasons any interpretation which views the righteous one as a messianic reference must do so solely on the basis of Paul's use. As has been shown, this would have required Paul's readers to connect an insurmountable number of dots to track his thought pattern. The best understanding of Habakkuk 2:4b remains the simplest understanding, shared by Paul: people who are right before God, trusting in him, will have life.

APPENDIX B

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF ΠΙΣΤ- WORDS IN PAUL





APPENDIX C

THE WITNESS OF THE FATHERS AND THE VERSIONS

The early church, which notably includes native Greek speakers, read πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive. Typically when such a passage is quoted, the phrase is simply used and not explicated. This demonstrates that native speakers not only did not understand it subjectively, but that such a thought never occurred to them.¹⁹⁵ The context and the natural sense of the phrase led them to the objective interpretation without even making them aware of a possible grammatical ambiguity to address. We list below, then, a number of quotations from the fathers (I use the term here very loosely to include all the ancient church figures) through which further commenting and exposition does make plain an objective interpretation.

Tertullian (Latin, 160-225)

Where three people are gathered together, there is a church, even if all three are laypersons. For each individual lives by his own faith.¹⁹⁶

“Because the just shall live by his faith.” Now, although the prophet Habakkuk first said this, yet you have the apostle here confirming the prophets, even as Christ did. The object, therefore, of the faith whereby the just man shall live, will be that same God to whom likewise belongs the law, by doing which no man is justified.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Reasoner and then Bird and Whinton after him have claimed to have found a case where Origen first chooses the objective genitive (seen in the first quotation listed under Origen) and then subsequently, in Reasoner’s words, “leaves open the sense of the subjective genitive as well.” Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 24. Michael F. Bird and Michael R. Whinton, “The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Hippolytus’s *De Christo et Antichristo*: Overlooked Patristic Evidence in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *New Testament Studies* 55 (2009): 552-562, 556-557. They assume that a reference to one “who believes in Jesus and through Jesus in God” assumes that we are receiving Jesus’ faith in God. They miss the more natural interpretation that all Origen is saying is that our faith has God as its object through having Christ as its object, a similar thought to what Peter expressed when he said, “Through [Christ] you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God” (1 Pe 1:21).

¹⁹⁶ *De Exhortatione Castitatis* 7, in Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VI: Romans* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 29.

¹⁹⁷ *Adversus Marcionem* 5.3, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 3, *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885), 434.

Origen (Greek, 182-254)

“And justifying the one who is of faith”, that is, the one who believes in Jesus and through Jesus in God.¹⁹⁸

A man is justified by faith. The works of the law can make no contribution to this. Where there is no faith which might justify the believer, even if there are works of the law these are not based on the foundation of faith. Even if they are good in themselves they cannot justify the one who does them, because faith is lacking, and faith is the mark of those who are justified by God.¹⁹⁹

Cyprian (Latin, d. 258)

If you are a just man and live by faith, if you truly believe in God, why do you, who are destined to be with Christ and secure in the promises of the Lord, not rejoice that you are called to Christ and be glad that you are free from the devil?²⁰⁰

Marius Victorinus (Latin, fl. 360s)

Every mystery which is enacted by our Lord Jesus Christ asks only for faith. The mystery was enacted at that time for our sake and aimed at our resurrection and liberation, should we have faith in the mystery of Christ and in Christ. For the patriarchs prefigured and foretold that man would be justified by faith. Therefore, just as it was reckoned as righteousness to Abraham that he had faith, so we too, if we have faith in Christ and every mystery of his, will be sons of Abraham. Our whole life will be accounted as righteous.²⁰¹

“That faith has come” means that Christ himself has come—for then faith arose. There began to be a time for faith to fully come and for us to believe in him in whom is all salvation, in contrast to the Jews, who did not believe [in him].²⁰²

Ambrosiaster (Latin, fl. 370s)

He says that this same righteousness is revealed in the gospel when God grants faith to man, through which he may be justified. The truth and righteousness of God are revealed in this, when a man believes and confesses.²⁰³

For it is by faith in the revelation of Jesus Christ that the gift long ago promised by God is acknowledged and received.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ *Commentary on Romans 3*, in Bird and Whitenton, “Hippolytus,” 557.

¹⁹⁹ *Commentary on Romans 3*, in Bray, *Romans*, 104.

²⁰⁰ *De Mortalitate 3*, in Bray, *Romans*, 31.

²⁰¹ *Commentary on Galatians*, in Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VIII: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 39.

²⁰² *Commentary on Galatians*, in Edwards, *Galatians*, 50.

²⁰³ *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul*, in Bray, *Romans*, 31.

For he had promised that he would justify those who believe in Christ, as he says in Habakkuk: The righteous will live by faith in me. Whoever has faith in God and Christ is righteous.²⁰⁵

By the circumcised Paul means the Jews who have been justified by their faith in the promise and who believe that Jesus is the Christ whom God had promised in the law. By the uncircumcised he means the Gentiles who have been justified with God by their faith in Christ.²⁰⁶

Severian of Gabala (Greek, fl. 398-404)

“That which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith,” for I believe in the Son of God. If the Son of God in whom I believe is at the right hand of the Father, I am a citizen of heaven.²⁰⁷

John Chrysostom (Greek, 349-407)

For we do not get it by toil and labor but by believing.²⁰⁸

Then that no one should say, How are we to be saved without contributing anything at all to the object in view? he shows that we also offer no small matter toward this, I mean our faith. Therefore after saying, “the righteousness of God,” he adds straightway, “by faith unto all and upon all that believe.”²⁰⁹

So that you may not be elated by the magnitude of these benefits, see how Paul puts you in your place. For by grace you are saved, he says, through faith. Then, so as to do no injury to free will, he allots a role to us, then takes it away again, saying and this not of ourselves. . . . Even faith, he says, is not from us. For if the Lord had not come, if he had not called us, how should we have been able to believe?²¹⁰

Jerome (Latin, 347-420)

Paul shows clearly that righteousness depends not on the merit of man but on the grace of God, who accepts the faith of those who believe without the works of the law.²¹¹

²⁰⁴ *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul*, in Bray, *Romans*, 99-100.

²⁰⁵ *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul*, in Bray, *Romans*, 103.

²⁰⁶ *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul*, in Bray, *Romans*, 106.

²⁰⁷ Karl Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche* (Muenster: Aschendorffschen Buchdruckerei, 1933), 300.

²⁰⁸ *Homily II on Romans 1:17*, in Bray, *Romans*, 32.

²⁰⁹ *Homily VII on Romans 3:22*, in Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 1.11, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1889), 377.

²¹⁰ *Homily IV on Ephesians 2:8*, in Edwards, *Galatians*, 134.

²¹¹ *Contra Pelagianos*, in Bray, *Romans*, 106.

Some say that if Paul is right in asserting that no one is justified by the works of the law but by faith in Christ, the patriarchs and prophets who lived before Christ were imperfect. We should tell such people that those who are said not to have obtained righteousness are those who believe that they can be justified by works alone. The saints who lived long ago, however, were justified from faith in Christ, seeing that Abraham saw in advance Christ's day.²¹²

Paul says this in case the secret thought should steal upon us that “if we are not saved by our own works, at least we are saved by our own faith, and so in another way our salvation is of ourselves.” Thus he added the statement that faith too is not in our own will but in God's gift.²¹³

Pelagius (Latin, 354-420)

This refers to the faith by which one believes in Jesus Christ. In this there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile.²¹⁴

Some people misinterpret this verse in order to do away with the works of righteousness, saying that faith by itself is enough, even though Paul says elsewhere: If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If this seems to contradict the sense of the other [verses], what works did the apostle mean when he said that a man is justified by faith, without works? Obviously, these are the works of circumcision, the sabbath and so on, and not the works of righteousness about which St. James says: Faith without works is dead. [In this verse] Paul is speaking about the man who comes to Christ and is saved when he first believes by faith alone. But by adding the works of the law Paul is saying that there are also works of grace which believers ought to perform.²¹⁵

Augustine of Hippo (Latin, 354-430)

Accordingly he advances a step further, and adds, “But righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ,” that is, by the faith wherewith one believes in Christ; for just as there is not meant the faith with which Christ Himself believes, so also there is not meant the righteousness whereby God is Himself righteous.²¹⁶

This is the faith by which the just man lives; this is the faith whereby he believes on Him who justifies the ungodly; this is the faith through which boasting is excluded, either by the retreat of that with which we become self-inflated, or by the rising of that with which we glory in the Lord. This, again, is the faith by which we procure that largess of the Spirit, of which it is said: “We indeed through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”²¹⁷

²¹² *Commentary on Galatians*, in Edwards, *Galatians*, 30.

²¹³ *Commentary on Galatians*, in Edwards, *Galatians*, 133.

²¹⁴ *Commentary on Romans*, in Bray, *Romans*, 100.

²¹⁵ *Commentary on Romans*, in Bray, *Romans*, 105.

²¹⁶ *De spiritu et littera* 9.15, in Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 1.5, *St. Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1887), 89.

²¹⁷ *De spiritu et littera* 32.56, in Schaff, *Augustine*, 108.

Gennadius of Constantinople (Greek, fl. 458-471)

By ‘by faith’ he means not by works of law but believing in the resurrection of Christ.²¹⁸

Fulgentius of Ruspe (Latin, 468-533)

The blessed Paul argues that we are saved by faith, which he declares to be not from us but a gift from God. Thus there cannot possibly be true salvation where there is no true faith, and, since this faith is divinely enabled, it is without doubt bestowed by his free generosity. Where there is true belief through true faith, true salvation certainly accompanies it. Anyone who departs from the true faith will not possess the grace of true salvation.²¹⁹

Some have claimed to have found evidences within the church fathers suggesting a subjective construal of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Often these seem to be a case of interpreters seeing what they want to see. Bird and Whittington have argued that Hippolytus’ *De Christo et Antichristo* 61:26 uses the phrase Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν as a subjective genitive referring to Christ’s death.²²⁰ However, Cirafesi has, both by himself²²¹ and with Peterman,²²² demonstrated that this interpretation of Hippolytus was made too hastily, and that an objective genitive is the most natural interpretation here also.

Wallis also provides a number of alleged cases of such a subjective genitive in the church fathers, but his methodology is flawed on several accounts.²²³ First, none of his examples come from a writer involved in interpretation of one of the Pauline texts, and none of them were discussing justification when they used the phrase. Their use, then, does not necessarily mean that the father read Paul that way, but only that speaking of Christ’s faith was a theologically acceptable and meaningful thing for him to do—a fact with which we too are in agreement. Wallis also is operating under a faulty assumption as he approaches the texts, one which causes him to overlook the possibility of the objective genitive. As Elliott notes, “It seems that Wallis

²¹⁸ Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 355.

²¹⁹ *De Incarnatione Filii Dei*, in Edwards, *Galatians*, 133-134.

²²⁰ “Hippolytus,” 552-562.

²²¹ Cirafesi, “Ἐχειν Πίστιν.”

²²² Wally V. Cirafesi and Gerald W. Peterman, “Πίστις and Christ in Hippolytus’ *De Christo et Antichristo*: A Response to Michael F. Bird and Michael R. Whittington,” *New Testament Studies* 57 (2011): 594-603.

²²³ *Faith*, 175-212.

thinks that only as exemplar can Jesus be the author of faith.”²²⁴ Beyond this, Wallis has misread a number of the passages he cites as being of the subjective interpretation. An objective interpretation will work as well or better in these cases.

For example, τῆς πίστεώς σου in the Acts of Thomas 107²²⁵ could be understood as a subjective genitive,²²⁶ yet as the passage seems to be an allusion to Philippians 1:29, the objective genitive would be in keeping with οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν. *Redde igitur Christo fidem suam* in Tertullian’s *De carne Christ* 11.6²²⁷ does not mean to give Christ his own faith. Elliott has corrected Wallis, showing that it means to render him the faith in him which is due to him.²²⁸ This should be apparent enough from the fact that the translation Wallis uses immediately needs to insert “[believe]” to connect the two clauses.²²⁹ Having failed to demonstrate conclusively any “theological function of Jesus’ faith,” the most Wallis’ evidence can do is bear “witness to a broader conception in which he is both the exemplar and the source of faith.”²³⁰

Whitenton’s exploration of the Apostolic Fathers yields comparable results. While he claims to have located several cases of πίστις followed by a subjective genitive denoting Jesus and none of an objective genitive, many of his findings are articularized, many of his findings are ambiguous, and none of them are found in a context in any manner reminiscent of those within which Paul uses the phrase.²³¹ All of these are of relatively little consequence to our reconstruction of the patristic understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ. The clear references from

²²⁴ Mark W. Elliott, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Church Fathers and Beyond,” In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 277-289, 282.

²²⁵ Ὁ δὲ ἀπόστολος ἀπιὼν ἐπὶ τὸ δεσμωτήριον χαίρων καὶ ἀγαλλιών ἔλεγεν· Ἐξομολογοῦμαι σοι Ἰησοῦ ὅτι οὐ μόνον τῆς πίστεως σου ἄξιόν με ἐποίησας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ὑπομεῖναι πολλὰ διὰ σέ. In Richard Adelbert Lipsius and Maximilian Bonnet, eds., *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, Vol. 2.2 (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1903), 219.

²²⁶ Wallis, *Faith*, 187.

²²⁷ *Redde igitur Christo fidem suam, ut qui homo voluit incedere animam quoque humanae condicionis ostenderit, non faciens eam carnem sed induens eam carne.* In Ernest Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise on the Incarnation* (London: S.P.C.K., 1956), 42.

²²⁸ “Fathers,” 279.

²²⁹ *Faith*, 193.

²³⁰ *Faith*, 190.

²³¹ Michael R. Whitenton, “After Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Neglected Evidence From The Apostolic Fathers,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 61.1 (Apr 2010): 82-109.

antiquity which are actually themselves engaged in Pauline exegesis are unanimous in favor of the objective interpretation.

Wallis blames the Arian controversy for eliminating the subjective view's acceptability.²³² This is not entirely inaccurate from a historical perspective. It does seem that from that point on orthodox fathers do not in any way want to attribute faith to Christ because they perceive faith to imply a lacking. Wallis points to Athanasius' response to the Arians as indicative of such a nascent trend:

Further, if the expression, 'Who was faithful,' is a difficulty to them, from the thought that 'faithful' is used of Him as of others, as if He exercises faith and so receives the reward of faith, they must proceed at this rate to find fault with Moses for saying, 'God faithful and true,' and with St. Paul for writing, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.' But when the saints spoke thus, they were not thinking of God in a human way, but they acknowledged two senses of the word 'faithful' in Scripture, first 'believing,' then 'trustworthy,' of which the former belongs to man, the latter to God. Thus Abraham was faithful, because He believed God's word; and God faithful, for, as David says in the Psalm, 'The Lord is faithful in all His words,' or is trustworthy, and cannot lie. Again, 'If any faithful woman have widows,' she is so called for her right faith; but, 'It is a faithful saying,' because what He hath spoken has a claim on our faith, for it is true, and is not otherwise. Accordingly the words, 'Who is faithful to Him that made Him,' implies no parallel with others, nor means that by having faith He became well-pleasing; but that, being Son of the True God, He too is faithful, and ought to be believed in all He says and does, Himself remaining unalterable and not changed in His human Economy and fleshly presence.²³³

The fact that they did not wish to speak of Christ's faith does not, however, mean that this is the impetus for their exegesis. Athanasius' concern here is to explain the passage correctly, pointing out that the Arians were duplicitously attempting to exploit an alternate meaning of πιστός. Matlock also notes that the Arians apparently utilized this expression from Hebrews 3:2 and not any of the occurrences of πιστις Χριστοῦ.²³⁴ While theological concerns may have made it unacceptable to speak of Jesus' faith from then on, it does not appear that before then either it had ever occurred to anyone—even those to whom it would have been polemically advantageous—to translate Paul's uses of πιστις Χριστοῦ as Jesus' faith.

²³² *Faith*, 202-212.

²³³ *Apologia contra Arianos* 2.6, in Archibald Robertson, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 2.4, *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1892), 351.

²³⁴ "Saving," 88.

The appeal to antiquity which some proponents of the subjective interpretation seem most enthusiastic about is to the ancient versions, specifically those in Coptic, Syriac, and Latin. Howard is the first one to have proposed such evidence in his own support.²³⁵ The argument is that all these languages translate the phrase in a manner which typically shows possession and so they must have understood the phrase subjectively. Howard fails to realize that what is really happening in all three versions is simply a formal equivalence translation methodology. Even if it does not read as the most natural translation in the target language, the translators are simply reproducing as closely as they can the grammatical relations of the source language. The fact that these languages had another way—even a preferable way—to articulate the objective relationship does not mean they understood the relationship as subjective here.

This is really all we need to say about the Sahidic New Testament. Howard raises another piece of evidence concerning the Peshitta which we must address. In Galatians 2:16 it translates ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ as ܠܒܘܨܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ²³⁶ which in addition to the genitival ܐ also includes an anticipatory pronominal suffix. He claims that requires the subjective meaning, “that by *his* faith, that of the Messiah.”²³⁷ However, Nöldeke, in his Syriac grammar, speaks of this construction as being common in cases of “pure Genitive relation” as opposed to adjectival and appositional genitives. Objective genitives are not excluded. Furthermore, Nöldeke says that there is “no sharp line of demarcation” over which manner of genitival constructions can occasionally employ the anticipatory pronominal suffix.²³⁸ Meyer does give an example of this construction denoting an objective genitive, and states that when “the second member is a personal name” they “are almost always found” in this construction.²³⁹ Muraoka finds that the criterion for this construction is “when a person or a thing is considered contextually definite.”²⁴⁰ We should not make too much of this common grammatical feature in Syriac.

²³⁵ George Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ’,” *The Expository Times* 85.7 (1974): 212-215.

²³⁶ “by faith of him, of the Messiah”

²³⁷ “Faith,” 213.

²³⁸ Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, trans. James A. Crichton (London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), § 205c.

²³⁹ Mark Robert Meyer, “A Comparative Dialectical Study of Genitive Constructions in Aramaic Translations of Exodus,” (Doctoral dissertation, Catholic University of America, 2009), 31.

²⁴⁰ Takamitsu Muraoka, *Classical Syriac: A Basic Grammar with a Chrestomathy*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), § 73d and 112d.

For the Vulgate, all we simply need to add is a reminder of the above quotations from Jerome. Jerome may have translated it with a simple genitive, but he shows elsewhere that he understands it objectively and so this is simply a matter of translation technique. It is no different than when the King James Version typically translated the phrase as “faith of Christ.” This was not indicative of an exegetical interpretation but of a tendency towards formal equivalence. This is clear from the case in which the grammar of Romans 3:26 led the King James translators to prefer a more idiomatic rendering: “him which believeth in Jesus.”²⁴¹

In summary, there is no evidence that Paul’s phrase *πίστις Χριστοῦ* was ever interpreted as a subjective genitive in the ancient church, or that, outside a quick dismissal by Augustine,²⁴² the hypothetical possibility was really ever considered. There is, however, a very substantial amount of evidence that the phrase was interpreted as an objective genitive. The weight of such antiquity, nearer to the apostle in time, language, and culture, should not be dismissed lightly.

²⁴¹ The same seems to be apparent from KJV’s choice to translate Ephesians 3:12 with the unnatural “by the faith of him” and not “by his faith.” We also see this translational decision when the object is not Jesus (Php 1:27).

²⁴² See the first quotation listed above under Augustine.

APPENDIX D
ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ IN PAUL

In a way it is laughable to attempt to define Paul's uses of *δικαιοσύνη* in an appendix. The meaning of this word, especially when coupled with the genitive *θεοῦ*, is even more hotly debated than *πίστις Χριστοῦ* and the senses proposed for it are more numerous and more varied. Yet for our purposes here it is not really necessary to engage with such wild interpretations. In keeping with the hermeneutical principle to let Scripture interpret Scripture, in particular, with the clear shedding light on the less clear, we will, by pointing to several more transparent examples of *δικαιοσύνη* (which coincidentally happen to include some of our key verses concerning *πίστις Χριστοῦ*), have a meaning to serve as our working assumption entering upon the other passages, and in all cases the meaning will hold up. It will be our concern to show here that *δικαιοσύνη* is a forensic and judicial term.²⁴³

This interpretive question also is very much intertwined with that of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* such that it is admittedly artificial to treat them separately. But for our first point in support of the traditional Lutheran understanding of forensic righteousness, we note how well it fits with the objective interpretation of *πίστις Χριστοῦ*, and how no other proposed alternative really does. McCormack writes, "But if the case for the subjective genitive is seen to be weak, then there remains no truly compelling reason to prefer 'rectification' language over 'justification' language²⁴⁴ as the translation of *dikaioutai*, *dikaiōthōmen*, and *dikaiōthēsetai* in Galatians 2:16."²⁴⁵ Likewise, if *πίστις Χριστοῦ* denotes a Spirit-worked trust in Christ's merits, then any interpretation of *δικαιόω* which views it not in the judicial sense of 'declaring righteous' but in

²⁴³ While it is an extremely fascinating question, we do not have the time here to delve into the question of whether or not *δικαιοσύνη* is a verbal noun referring to God's act of declaring not guilty or instead a non-verbal noun referring to the not-guilty status resulting from that act. Or put another way, does *δικαιοσύνη* more precisely convey that God *δικαιόω*'s or that a person is now *δίκαιος* before him. Or perhaps it varies from passage to passage. Either of these are thoroughly judicial concepts and for our purposes here we will be content not to decide between the two.

²⁴⁴ 'Rectification' here would be the idea of making people to be right with God by changing them. 'Justification', on the other hand, would be, as it has been traditionally understood, the idea of externally declaring people to be right, that is, righteous, before God.

²⁴⁵ Bruce McCormack, "Can We Still Speak of 'Justification by Faith'? An In-house Debate with Apocalyptic Readings of Paul," In *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. Mark W. Elliott et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 159-184, 173.

the sense which some propose of ‘to save in a righteous manner’ will struggle to retain coherence. The body of this paper itself, then, can already be considered a mark in favor of forensic justification.

Moving into the passages, in 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul says that Christ was made sin in our place so that in him we might become *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. Its juxtaposition with *ἁμαρτία* excludes meanings of essential righteousness or general deliverance/saving activity. (The trailing genitive even more emphatically eliminates the essential sense as the passage does not mean that we become or possess God’s essential righteousness.) Like *ἁμαρτία*, with *δικαιοσύνη* we have a metonymy of abstract for concrete. Christ was made to be a sinner, that is to say, he was in truth treated as a sinner—even the sinner of all sinners—so that we might become righteous. That is our legal status. The forensic and judicial sense of ‘righteousness’ is definitely present here.

The same meaning presents itself in Romans 3:21 if we pay attention to the preceding verse. *δικαιοσύνη* is not the only ‘righteous’ word Paul uses. He also makes much use of the verb *δικαιόω* and the adjective *δίκαιος*. The way in which these, like *πίστις* and *πιστεύω*, are interwoven implies the difference between them is primarily that of grammatical part of speech and not one of semantic sphere. If context permits it, we seek to interpret the various words of the same stem in tandem. Only a judicial meaning of *δικαιόω* will work in 3:20. *ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, the antecedent of which is God, denotes before whom—or, we could periphrastically say, in whose court, no flesh is judge or considered righteous by works of Law. Broadening our context to verse 10,²⁴⁶ where Paul quotes Ecclesiastes 7:20 to states that there is not even one person among the human race who is *δίκαιος*, we see again that the kind of righteousness under discussion here is something which is able to be predicated or not predicated of people. These truths combine to set a context for 21 which demands *δικαιοσύνη* bear its forensic sense.

The twin verse of Romans 3:21 is Romans 1:17. Here the noun is coupled with the adjective brought in by the Habakkuk quotation, which Paul almost certainly already had in mind before dictating the first half of the verse. We are wise to allow the cited adjective to help us adjudicate between the possible meanings of the noun more than the other way around. This is

²⁴⁶ Hays attempts to appeal to a more distant context (verse 5), not recognizing that the nearer context uses the word in a diverse manner. “Interpretations of this chapter often subdivide it into discrete pericopes which are then discussed separately, as if they had no relation to one another—as if, for example, the meaning of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in 3:22 could be determined without reference to its meaning in 3:5.” Hays, *Imagination*, 52. Hays would benefit from paying greater attention to the nearer context also.

again a more focused application of the sound hermeneutical principle to interpret what is less clear in the light of what is more clear. In this case this principle is applied not between various passages but between words in the same passage which share a common stem. *δικαιοσύνη* is an abstract noun, which makes its interpretation potentially more problematic. *δίκαιος* is a concrete adjective, which (at least in theory) makes its interpretation more transparent. If the meaning of the abstract noun poses difficulty, the safest course of action is to see how the idea of ‘righteous’ fits into Paul’s point from the other time the same root occurs.²⁴⁷ This becomes even more patently the correct course when we consider that, as a citation, *δίκαιος* already has its meaning fixed to both Habbakuk and Paul before its use in this passage in Romans.

What Paul says in the first half of verse 17, he intends to confirm by the Habakkuk quotation in the second half of verse 17, as shown by his use of the citation formula *καθὼς γέγραπται*. The quotation begins with the term *ὁ δίκαιος*, which is self-evidently meant to correspond with *δικαιοσύνη*. *ὁ δίκαιος*, then, identifies for us who it is who is ‘righteous’ in connection with *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. While in theory the connection could be that the righteous Messiah performs a righteous saving act, this ignores the fact that within this argument in Romans Paul uses *δίκαιος* in contexts speaking of religious status, designating not of the party which would be the subject of *δικαιόω* but its object. A *δίκαιος* is one who is *δικαιόω*-ed.²⁴⁸ Typically in Paul, it is God who justifies and people who are being justified, that is, declared righteous, given the status of *δίκαιος*, given *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*.

²⁴⁷ This is not the only time we follow this method of disambiguation. In Galatians 3:13 Paul emphatically states that Jesus became a ‘curse’, an abstract noun. There would be a number of possible interpretations to that statement taken in isolation. Paul’s subsequent quotation of Deuteronomy 21:23 shows in what sense he means it: someone who is cursed.

The same thing is found in John 11:25. Jesus calls himself a pair of abstract nouns, “the resurrection and the life.” These could be taken in multiple ways, but Jesus clarifies the abstract noun ‘life’ with the verb ‘live’: “He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

²⁴⁸ This also becomes apparent from Romans 3:26 where God is said to be *δίκαιον και δικαιούντα*. The *και* would seem to imply a contrast, or at the least that these are not synonymous expressions. If *δικαιόω* were to mean ‘to act *δίκαιος*’ the contrast would devolve into redundancy, but if, as it does, it means ‘to make *δίκαιος*’ then the contrast is clear and quite emphatic: “so that he may be one who is righteous and one who declares righteous the one who is by faith in Jesus.”

Hays and Campbell have pointed to Psalm 98 as underlying Paul's speech in Romans 1:16-17.²⁴⁹ They assert that the righteousness the psalmist mentions in verse two cannot be a forensic status but instead either his essential righteousness or a more generic notion of faithfulness or salvation. But Seifrid has responded,

It is currently quite common for scholars to interpret 'God's righteousness' as his 'covenant faithfulness' toward Israel. In other words, God is 'righteous' in that he fulfills his promises to save his people. Despite its initial appeal, this interpretation does not fit Psalm 98. Although the Lord might be said to act out of covenant-faithfulness to his people, his action itself cannot properly be called covenantal. It rather represents the judgment of the King, who establishes justice in his creation (verse 6). As we have noted, his deliverance of Israel anticipates his 'coming' to judge savingly on behalf of the entire earth. The nations themselves expect to receive his saving justice (verses 7-9). For this reason the very elements of creation—the sea, the rivers and the hills—celebrate his coming. The fidelity which God displays toward Israel is only one manifestation of the saving righteousness which he exercises as ruler of all.²⁵⁰

Seifrid offers this conclusion of his study on the Old Testament's use of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*: "The concept of 'God's righteousness' in the Hebrew Scriptures cannot be reduced to the meaning 'salvation' or the like, since it always functions within the context of a legal dispute or contention."²⁵¹ This does not preclude Paul from picking up on Old Testament terminology and employing it in a more narrow and specialized sense, but this does seem to rule out the proposed notion that he uses it in a more general and non-judicial manner.

Moving on within Romans, in 4:3,5,6,9,11,22 Paul quotes and alludes to Genesis 15:6. The *δικαιοσύνη* here is something thought or reckoned to Abraham and those like him. This language of computation, or better yet, imputation, is consistent only with the forensic sense of *δικαιοσύνη*. Campbell's interpretation that the righteousness given to Abraham is the birth of Isaac is a forced one.²⁵² If there were still any doubt, in verses 7-8 Paul shows that righteousness is an imputed status before God when he explicates it with these words from Psalm 32: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin

²⁴⁹ Hays, "Imagination," 94-95. Douglas A. Campbell, "An Echo of Scripture in Paul, and its Implications," in *The Word Leaps the Gaps: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner et al. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 367-391.

²⁵⁰ Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 39-40.

²⁵¹ *Righteousness*, 43.

²⁵² *Deliverance*, 749.

the Lord will never count against him.” The imputation of righteousness is equivalent to the non-imputation of sins. Being credited δικαιοσύνη means having a forgiven status before God.

Romans 10:3 and Philippians 3:9 contrast human δικαιοσύνη with that which comes from God. Surely their respective essential righteousnesses are not being contrasted here, but instead the contrast is between one which has man as its source and one which has God as its source. (The Philippians verse brings this out more explicitly, as instead of the bare genitive θεοῦ like elsewhere it has ἐκ θεοῦ.) Additionally, Philippians 3:6, several verses before, also uses δικαιοσύνη to refer to Paul’s status in the law. In these verses righteousness is a legal status given by God.

Justification is a demonstrably judicial concept. Matlock has demonstrated this solely in reference to the various terms found as the antitheses to δικαιο- words within Romans:

The ‘meaning’ of δικαιόω, like that of any word, is reflected in the words with which it interacts, not least in direct semantic contrasts. The opposite of δικαιόω is not ‘enslave’ but κατακρίνω, ‘condemn’ (Rom. 8.33-34; cf., with κρίνω, 2.12-13, 16; 3.4-7; with υπόδικος, 3.19-20; see also 8.3); of δικαίωσις, not ‘enslavement’ but κατάκριμα, ‘condemnation’ (Rom. 5.18; cf. κατάκριμα/δικαίωμα, 5.16; see also 8.1); of δίκαιος, ἁμαρτωλός, ‘sinner’ (Rom. 5.7-8, 19; cf. 2.12-13; 3.9-10); of δικαιοσύνη, παράπτωμα, ‘transgression’ (Rom. 5.17; cf. 4.25; 5.18), ἀδικία, ‘wrongdoing’ (6.13; cf. 1.18, 29; 2.8; 3.5), ἁμαρτία, ‘sin’ (6.18, 20; cf. 3.9, 20; 4.7-8), ἀκαθαρσία, ‘immorality’ (6.19; cf. 1.24).²⁵³

Non-forensic meanings will not preserve such contrasts. We can be sure that being justified means to be declared not-guilty.

Just as with the πίστις Χριστοῦ question, the exact syntactical label placed on θεοῦ is only of secondary importance if we have the correct meaning of δικαιοσύνη. Whether it is one of source (‘the righteousness which comes from God’) or one of description or relation (‘the righteousness which counts before God’) it is in either case a status of righteousness possessed by people. These syntactical construals, certainly at least complementary, may not even be conceptually diverse. Both could almost be considered a subjective genitive in light of the fact

²⁵³ R. Barry Matlock, “Zeal for Paul but not according to Knowledge: Douglas Campbell's War on ‘Justification Theory’,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34.2 (2011): 115-149, 145. Note also, as Matlock does, how many of these contrasts come from Romans 5-8, which Campbell considers the home turf for his interpretation of Paul’s gospel.

that it is God who δικαιόω-s.²⁵⁴ He is the source of the righteousness in that he is the one who renders that verdict freely by his grace for the sake of the merits of Christ. He is also the one before whom the righteousness counts in that he is the one who for Christ's sake accepts and approves and renders that verdict of grace.

Both these complementary, if not synonymous, constructions were articulated already by Luther. Luther translated δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans 1:17 as “die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt,” yet sings of his discovery of the gospel:

There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.²⁵⁵

This forensic and judicial understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as God's gracious courtroom imputation of a right status before him, conclusively verifiable in some passages, fits within the context of many others. Other passages which use the noun in a different sense do so in a different context and cannot undermine its meaning in the key passages preaching justification. Justification is an undeniably forensic action.

²⁵⁴ Again, the interesting question which we regrettedly cannot take up here: is δικαιοσύνη an action which has a result or the result of an action? Though from the very way I word this question here, it is apparent that this is a question which does not significantly alter Paul's overall progression of thought nor does it alter his overall teaching on justification in the least.

²⁵⁵ Martin Luther, “Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings,” In *Luther's Works, Vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV*, ed. and trans. Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 327-338.

APPENDIX E
CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ DEBATE

In the interest of brevity, the literature review in the paper proper had to be abbreviated. This appendix will serve to chronicle more extensively the opinions held or advocated by various expositors. This list is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all who have weighed in on the issue. It is, however, meant to be an exhaustive list of all the opinions weighed in on this debate which I have been able to access while digging into the matter myself. Surely there are omissions, and perhaps even important ones.

I include this list for several reasons. Certainly not all of these expositors treat the matter with equal depth or clarity. Yet this list helps the reader to get an impression of popularity of the respective interpretations, and an indication of their respective waxing and waning. Further, since the best way to find sources for research is to piggyback the footnotes and bibliographies of one's predecessors on a topic, this classification of the different viewpoints and the people who have held them can serve as a resource for beginning research for any future investigation into the debate. It also provides a narrow glimpse at the perspective of a given commentator to those searching for a commentary for their own use.

In listing the adherents of various opinions one is in danger of giving a skewed impression of the data. As the subjective interpretation is a relatively recent innovation, it would be unfair to marshal against it expositors who, by pre-dating the debate or by failing to address it, adopt the objective interpretation seemingly unaware of the proposed alternative. For this reason interpreters who make no mention of the debate will not be included below. However, it is at the same time important to recognize the substantial weight of exegetical tradition which is behind the objective interpretation. This should not be dismissed cavalierly.

The following chart will contain four parts: the year the document was written, the writer, the document title, and finally the view espoused. Writings from the same year will be listed alphabetically by author. For full bibliographic listings of these works refer to the bibliography. Descriptions of what is meant by most of the interpretations themselves are found in the literature review in the paper proper, but I will briefly summarize them here again for ease of reference:

Objective: Our faith in Christ.

Subjective: Christ's faithfulness (unto death).

Mystical-Concentric: Denotes primarily Christ's faithfulness but includes our own Christ-like faithfulness participating in his faithfulness (in effect the same as what most proponents of the subjective view advocate).

Authorship-Source: Christ is the one who causes the faith (either by his work on the cross or by creating the faith itself).

Appositional: Christ is the grounds for faith.

Association: Faith has something to do with Christ.

Fidei Commissum: The *fidei commissum* was a Roman legal device by which someone could designate not just an immediate heir but also a subsequent heir. This occurred by making the first heir adopt the second heir as a stipulation of the inheritance and so the inheritance goes later to them also. Applied to πίστις Χριστοῦ, this view would state that Christ exercises this role as first heir of the blessings promised to Abraham, but that he has made us his heirs so that we receive them as well.

Third View: Possibilities range between the Christ-event, the gospel (either as content or proclamation), and the church.

d. 1834	Samuel Taylor Coleridge	See Janzen, "Coleridge And Pistis Christou"	Authorship- Source / Mystical- Concentric
1865	J.P. Lange	<i>The Epistle of Paul to the Romans</i>	Subjective
1870	M. B. Riddle	Notes in Schmoller, <i>The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians</i>	Objective/ Authorship- Source
1884	H.A.W. Meyer	<i>Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Romans</i>	Objective
1891	Johannes Haußleiter	"Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der Christliche Glaube"	Subjective (πίστις Ἰησοῦ)
1895	Johannes Haußleiter	"Was Versteht Paulus unter Christlichen Glauben?: Eine Untersuchung der Formel Πίστις Χριστοῦ"	Authorship- Source (πίστις Χριστοῦ)
1896	Prescott Jernegan	"The Faith of Jesus Christ"	Mystical- Concentric

1902	William Sanday and Arthur Headlam	<i>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans</i>	Objective
1906	Gerhard Kittel	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ bei Paulus”	Subjective
1921	Ernest Burton	<i>A Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians</i>	Objective
1925	Adolf Deissmann	<i>Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History</i>	Mystical-Concentric
1935	Adolf Schlatter	<i>Romans: The Righteousness of God</i>	Authorship-Source
1955	Gabriel Hebert	“‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith’”	Subjective
1957	C. F. D. Moule	“The Biblical Conception of ‘Faith’”	Objective
	Thomas Torrance	“One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith”	Subjective
1961	James Barr	<i>The Semantics of Biblical Language</i>	Objective
1966	E. V. N. Goetchius	“ <i>Pistis Iēsou Christou</i> ”	Subjective
	Greer Taylor	“The Function of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians”	<i>Fidei commissum</i>
1967	George Howard	“On the ‘Faith of Christ’”	Subjective
1969	Markus Barth	“The Faith of the Messiah”	Subjective
1970	D. W. B. Robinson	“‘Faith of Jesus Christ’—A New Testament Debate”	Subjective
1973	John Murray	<i>The Epistle to the Romans</i>	Objective
1974	Marcus Barth	<i>Ephesians 1-3</i>	Subjective
	George Howard	“The ‘Faith of Christ’”	Subjective
1975	C.E.B. Cranfield	<i>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans</i>	Objective
1976	Everett Harrison	“Romans”	Objective
	Richard Longenecker	<i>Paul, Apostle of Liberty: The Origin and Nature of Paul's Christianity</i>	Subjective
	Ralph Martin	<i>Philippians</i>	Subjective
1980	Arland Hultgren	“The Pistis Christou Formulation in Paul”	Objective
	Ernst Käsemann	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>	Objective
	Sam Williams	“The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans”	Mystical-Concentric
1982	F. F. Bruce	<i>The Epistle to the Galatians</i>	Objective

	Luke Johnson	“Rom 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus”	Subjective
1983	Richard Hays	<i>The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11</i>	Subjective
	Richard Hays	“Jesus’ Faith and Ours: A Re-reading of Galatians 3”	Subjective
1987	Sam Williams	“Again Pistis Christou”	Mystical-Concentric
1988	James Dunn	<i>Romans 1-8</i>	Objective
	Ronald Fung	<i>The Epistle to the Galatians</i>	Objective
	Leon Morris	<i>The Epistle to the Romans</i>	Mystical-Concentric
1989	David Hay	“Pistis as ‘Ground for Faith’ in Hellenized Judaism and Paul”	Appositional
	Morna Hooker	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ”	Mystical-Concentric
	Leander Keck	“‘Jesus’ in Romans”	Subjective
	Stanley Stowers	“Ἐκ Πίστεως and Διὰ τῆς Πίστεως in Romans 3:30”	Subjective
	John Ziesler	<i>Paul’s Letter to the Romans</i>	Objective
1990	Andrew Lincoln	<i>Ephesians</i>	Objective
	Richard Longenecker	<i>Galatians</i>	Subjective
	Moisés Silva	<i>God, Language, and Scripture</i>	Objective
1991	Richard Melick, Jr.	<i>Philippians, Colossians, Philemon</i>	Subjective
	Douglas Moo	<i>Romans 1-8</i>	Objective
	Peter O’Brien	<i>The Epistle to the Philippians</i>	Subjective
1992	Douglas Campbell	<i>The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26</i>	Subjective
	James Edwards	<i>Romans</i>	Objective
	Gerald O’Collins and Daniel Kendall	“The Faith of Jesus”	Objective
	Moisés Silva	<i>Philippians</i>	Objective
1993	James Dunn	<i>The Epistle to the Galatians</i>	Objective
	James Dunn	<i>The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians</i>	Objective
	Veronica Koperski	“The meaning of <i>Pistis Christou</i> in Philippians 3:9”	Objective

	Bruce Longenecker	“Πίστις in Romans 3.25: Neglected Evidence for the ‘Faithfulness of Christ’?”	Subjective
1994	Douglas Campbell	“Romans 1:17—A Crux Interpretum for the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate”	Subjective
	Timothy George	<i>Galatians</i>	Objective
	Roy Harrisville III	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Witness of the Fathers”	Objective
	Richard Longenecker	“The Foundational Conviction of New Testament Christology: The Obedience / Faithfulness / Sonship of Christ”	Subjective
	Leon Morris	<i>Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians</i>	Objective
1995	Robert Mounce	<i>Romans</i>	Objective
	Ian Wallis	<i>The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions</i>	Subjective
1996	Richard Hays	“Πίστις and Pauline Christology”	Subjective
	Douglas Moo	<i>The Epistle to the Romans</i>	Objective
	Leon Morris	<i>Galatians: Paul’s Charter of Christian Freedom</i>	Objective
	Jerome Murphy-O’Connor	<i>Paul: A Critical Life</i>	Subjective
	Moisés Silva	<i>Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case</i>	Objective
	David Stern	<i>The Jewish New Testament Commentary</i>	Subjective
	Daniel Wallace	<i>Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics</i>	Subjective
1997	Markus Bockmuehl	<i>The Epistle to the Philippians</i>	Subjective
	Douglas Campbell	“False Presuppositions in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: A Response to Brian Dodd”	Subjective
	James Dunn	“Once Again, Πίστις Χριστοῦ”	Objective
	Shuji Ota	“Absolute Use of Πίστις and Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul”	Subjective
1998	John Brenner	“Faith in Jesus Christ or Faith of Jesus Christ”	Objective
	C.E.B. Cranfield	<i>On Romans and Other New Testament Essays</i>	Objective
	John Dunnill	“Saved by Whose Faith?—The Function of Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Pauline Theology”	Subjective
	Thomas Schreiner	<i>Romans</i>	Objective
	Ben Witherington III	<i>Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians</i>	Subjective
	Walter Zorn	“The Messianic Use of Habbakuk 2:4a in Romans”	Subjective

1999	Peter O'Brien	<i>The Letter to the Ephesians</i>	Subjective
2000	Dennis Lindsay	"Works of Law, Hearing of Faith and Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16-3:5"	Association
	R. Barry Matlock	"Detheologizing the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective"	Objective
	Mark Seifrid	<i>Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification</i>	Authorship-Source
2001	Charles Cousar	<i>Reading Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians: A Literary and Theological Commentary</i>	Subjective
	Michael Gorman	<i>Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross</i>	Subjective
	Luke Johnson	<i>Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary</i>	Subjective
2002	Paul Foster	"The First Contribution to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: A Study of Ephesians 3.12"	Subjective
	Harold Hoehner	<i>Ephesians</i>	Objective
	R. Barry Matlock	"'Even the Demons Believe': Paul and Πίστις Χριστοῦ"	Objective
	Douglas Moo	<i>Encountering the Book of Romans</i>	Objective
2003	Sigve Tonstad	"Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Reading Paul in a New Paradigm"	Subjective
	Douglas Harink	<i>Paul among the Postliberals</i>	Subjective
	R. Barry Matlock	"Πίστις in Galatians 3.26: Neglected Evidence for 'Faith in Christ'?"	Objective
	John McRay	<i>Paul: His Life and Teaching</i>	Subjective
	Udo Schnelle	<i>Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology</i>	Objective
	Mark Seifrid	"Paul, Luther, and Justification in Gal 2:15-21"	Authorship-Source
	Herman Waetjen	"The Trust of Abraham and the Trust of Jesus Christ"	<i>Fidei commissum</i>
2004	Kukwah Yong	"The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Analysis of Paul's Use of Πίστις Χριστοῦ"	Objective
	Stephen Finlan	<i>The Background and Context of Paul's Cultic Atonement Metaphors</i>	Objective
	Moisés Silva Francis Watson	"Faith Verses Works of Law in Galatians" <i>Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith</i>	Objective Objective
	Stephen Westerholm	<i>Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics</i>	Objective

2005	Douglas Campbell	<i>The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy</i>	Subjective
	Hung-Sik Choi	"Πίστις in Galatians 5:5-6: Neglected Evidence for the Faithfulness of Christ"	Subjective
	Stephen Fowl	<i>Philippians</i>	Subjective
	Richard Hays	<i>The Conversion of the Imagination</i>	Subjective
	Mark Reasoner	<i>Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation</i>	Mystical-Concentric
	N.T. Wright	<i>Paul in Fresh Perspective</i>	Subjective
2006	Debbie Hunn	"Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16: Clarification from 3:1-6"	Objective
	Arthur Just Jr.	"The Faith of Christ: A Lutheran Appropriation of Richard Hays's Proposal"	Subjective
2007	Gordon Fee	<i>Pauline Christology</i>	Objective
	Arland Hultgren	"Flashpoints in Interpreting Paul"	Objective
	David Kuske	<i>A Commentary on Roman 1-8</i>	Objective
	Daniel Leyrer	"Πίστις Χριστοῦ: Faith in or Faithfulness of Christ"	Objective
	R. Barry Matlock	"The Rhetoric of Πίστις in Paul: Galatians 2.16, 3.22, Romans 3.22, and Philippians 3.9"	Objective
	Benjamin Schliesser	<i>Abraham's Faith in Romans 4: Paul's Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15:6</i>	Association
	Mark Seifrid	"Romans"	Authorship-Source
	Moisés Silva	"Galatians"	Objective
	Jerry Sumney	<i>Philippians: A Greek Student's Intermediate Reader</i>	Subjective
	Charles Talbert	<i>Ephesians and Colossians</i>	Subjective
	Francis Watson	<i>Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective</i>	Objective
	N.T. Wright	"Faith, Virtue, Justification, and the Journey to Freedom"	Subjective
2008	David Congdon	"The Trinitarian Shape of Πίστις: A Theological Exegesis of Galatians"	Subjective
	James Dunn	"Ἐκ Πίστεως: A Key to the Meaning of Πίστις Χριστοῦ"	Objective
	Jae Hyn Lee	"Against Richard B. Hays's 'Faith of Jesus Christ'"	Objective
	Oliver Rogers	<i>The Faith of Christ: The Relationship of Christ's Faith, Our Faith, and Salvation</i>	Subjective

	Kenneth Schenck	“2 Corinthians and the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate”	Subjective
	David Stubbs	“The Shape of Soteriology and the Pistis Christou Debate”	Subjective
2009	Richard Bell	“Faith in Christ: Some Exegetical and Theological Reflections on Philippians 3:9 and Ephesians 3:12”	Objective
	Peter Bolt	“The Faith of Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts”	Subjective
	Douglas Campbell	“2 Corinthians 4:13: Evidence in Paul that Christ Believes”	Subjective
	Douglas Campbell	<i>The Deliverance of God</i>	Subjective
	Douglas Campbell	“The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Romans 3:22”	Subjective
	Ardel Caneday	“The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ as a Theme in Paul’s Theology in Galatians”	Subjective
	James Dunn	“Forward”	Objective
	Mark Elliott	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Church Fathers and Beyond”	Objective
	Paul Foster	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ Terminology in Philippians and Ephesians”	Subjective
	Kyuseok Han	“Pistis Christou as the Irrevocable Nature of Salvation with Special Reference to Gal 2:16”	Subjective
	Bruce Lowe	“James 2:1 in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: Irrelevant or Indispensable?”	Subjective
	R. Barry Matlock	“Saving Faith: The Rhetoric and Semantics of Πίστις in Paul”	Objective
	Stanley Porter and Andrew Pitts	“Πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Discussion”	Objective
	Mark Seifrid	“The Faith of Christ”	Authorship-Source
	Preston Sprinkle	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event”	Third View
	Francis Watson	“By Faith (of Christ): An Exegetical Dilemma and its Scriptural Solution”	Objective
2010	Clinton Arnold	<i>Ephesians</i>	Objective
	Roy Harrisville III	“Πίστις Χριστοῦ and the New Perspective on Paul”	Objective
	Frank Matera	<i>Romans</i>	Subjective
	Samuel Ngewa	<i>Galatians</i>	Objective
	Thomas Schreiner	<i>Galatians</i>	Objective
	Frank Thielman	<i>Ephesians</i>	Objective

2011	Brevard Childs	<i>Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible</i>	Objective
	Arland Hultgren	<i>Paul's Letter to the Romans</i>	Objective
	Richard Longenecker	<i>Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter</i>	Subjective
	Peter Zuk	"Sola Fide, the New Perspective on Paul, and the Involuntariness of Belief"	Subjective
2012	Constantine Campbell	<i>Paul and Union with Christ</i>	Objective
	Debbie Hunn	"Pistis Christou in Galatians: The Connection to Habakkuk 2:4"	Objective
	Luke Johnson	"Response to Thomas R. Schreiner"	Subjective
	Colin Kruse	<i>Paul's Letter to the Romans</i>	Objective
	Thomas Schreiner	"Paul: A Reformed Reading"	Objective
	Thomas Schreiner	"Response to Luke Timothy Johnson"	Objective
	Daniel Waldschmidt	"The Target of Paul's Polemic: A Dialogue with the New Perspective"	Objective
	Stephen Young	"Romans 1.1-5 and Paul's Christological Use of Hab. 2.4 in Rom. 1.17: An Underutilized Consideration in the Debate"	Subjective
2013	Dennis Hamm	<i>Philippians, Colossians, Philemon</i>	Subjective
	Jonathan Linebaugh	"The Christo-centrism of Faith in Christ: Martin Luther's Reading of Galatians 2.16"	Objective
	Grant Macaskill	<i>Union with Christ in the New Testament</i>	Objective
	Michael Middendorf	<i>Romans 1-8</i>	Mystical-Concentric
	Douglas Moo	<i>Galatians</i>	Objective
	Marvin Pate	<i>Romans</i>	Objective
	Jermo van Nes	"'Faith(fulness) of the Son of God'?: Galatians 2:20b Reconsidered"	Objective
	N.T. Wright	<i>Paul and the Faithfulness of God</i>	Subjective
	N.T. Wright	<i>Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013</i>	Subjective
	2014	Douglas Campbell	"Douglas Campbell's Response to Chris Tilling"
Jae Hyung Cho		"The Christology of Romans in Light of Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 3:22-26)"	Subjective

	A. Andrew Das	<i>Galatians</i>	Objective
	Curtis Freeman	“The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Conundrum”	Subjective
	Beverly Gaventa	“The Singularity of the Gospel Revisited”	Mystical- Concentric
	Scott Hafemann	“Yaein: Yes and No to Luther’s Reading of Galatians 3:6-14”	Subjective
	Richard Hays	“Apocalyptic <i>Poiēsis</i> in Galatians: Paternity, Passion, and Participation”	Subjective
	Bruce McCormack	“Can We Still Speak of ‘Justification by Faith’?: An In-house Debate with Apocalyptic Readings of Paul”	Objective
	Chris Tilling	“Campbell’s Faith: Advancing the <i>Pistis Christou</i> Debate”	Subjective
n.d.	T. David Gordon	“The Objective Genitive, Πίστewς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, in Gal. 2:16”	Objective

APPENDIX F

THE CHRIST'S FAITH AND THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

Our purpose here is to look at what the rest of Scripture tells us about faith, both that of Christ and that of Christians. There is no question as to whether Scripture speaks of Christians exercising faith. That the Bible refers to Christ's own faith has, however, been challenged. It seems like some proponents of the objective interpretation are uncomfortable by the thought of the God-man having faith. Hays has, on these grounds, criticized his opponents for having "an implicitly docetic Christology."²⁵⁶ But the question remains: does Scripture allow us to speak of Christ having faith?

The answer is 'yes'. Not only is this truth consistent with the other truths we know of Scripture, such as Christ's true humanity and his vicarious active obedience to God (which includes the First Commandment), but Scripture itself occasionally speaks of Christ's faith. Perhaps the clearest example is from Christ's own words pre-recorded in Psalm 22:

All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads:
"He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."
Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.
From birth I was cast upon you;
from my mother's womb you have been my God. (7-10)

Jesus trusted in God. He did so all his life and even during his death. Peter writes, "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Pe 2:23). The writer to the Hebrews says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (4:15). That those temptations include First Commandment temptations is implicit in this passage itself, but is made explicit in the Gospel accounts of Satan tempting Jesus in the desert (Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13). All three of these temptations were, at their core, First Commandment temptations. Turning stones into bread would be doubting God. Jumping from the heights would be reckless presumption and

²⁵⁶ "Stake," 55.

untrustingly forcing God to prove himself. Worshipping the devil would be open idolatry. Jesus throughout his entire life, exhibited trust—faith—in God his Father.

This is an important thing for us to recognize. We are justified by faith, but not because of the perfection of our faith. We could not ever be so justified because our faith is itself imperfect. However, Christ's faith was perfect and it was substitutionary. Christ's faith is part of his active obedience on our behalf which is credited to us by faith. Those who deny Christ had faith on Christological grounds do so without the support of Scripture and at the expense of his active obedience. The unfortunate result in such a case is almost always that the perfection of our own life, or in this case, our faith, is given far too great an emphasis.

While Jesus did exercise faith, many of the passages subjective proponents employ to demonstrate that his faith is a major Scriptural theme are misused. In Hebrews Jesus is on several occasions referred to as πιστός (2:17; 3:2 and implicit in 3:6). However, in all these cases his faithfulness in his office and not his faith in God is meant. Recourse is generally made to Hebrews 12:2 where Jesus is famously described as τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν. Certainly this phrase could be grammatically construed to say that Jesus exemplified faith, but contextual constraints suggest otherwise. First, it is in Hebrews 11 and not Hebrews 12 that past examples of faith are pointed out. 12:1 marks a concluding inference from the preceding chapter. Second, if Jesus is meant here as an exemplar of faith, in what way is he either ἀρχηγὸν or τελειωτὴν? He does not temporally precede all the previous people of faith mentioned, nor does he follow Christians after him, among whom are the holy writer's audience. The best explanation of this verse is to take the phrase not as indicative of Christ's faith but of faith in him. Jesus is the one in whom all our faith finds its beginning ἀρχηγὸν and its end τελειωτὴν. This is exactly what the final verses of chapter 11 say. Speaking of past people of faith, "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect (τελειωθῶσιν)." The point is that their faith was looking forward towards their hopes being completed—which is what Jesus did—just like ours looks back. Hebrews 12:2 does not speak of Christ's own faith.

Revelation is another place where supposed references to Christ's faith are found. Again, three times Jesus is called πιστός, yet its association with μάρτυς (1:5; 3:14) and with ἀληθινός (3:14; 19:11) shows that the meaning is 'faithful' and not 'having faith'. What is more relevant is

John's own use of τὴν πίστιν μου (2:13) and τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ (14:12). Whether these mean 'faith in Jesus' or 'faithfulness towards Jesus' is a difficult question which perhaps cannot be solved definitively (and the difference has little effect on the interpretation of either passage—in this case faithfulness to Jesus is to keep having faith in him through persecution).²⁵⁷ However, it does not seem to fit into either passage to take it as 'the faith which Jesus had' or even 'the kind of faith which Jesus had'. Revelation does not speak of Christ's own faith.

The most common passage which those advocates of the subjective interpretation point to in order to demonstrate the theological function of Christ's faith comes from Paul himself in 2 Corinthians 4:13. Campbell has titularly labelled this verse as "evidence in Paul that Christ believes."²⁵⁸ Already from that title, however, we sense that all this verse can, at most, prove for the subjective interpretation is that Paul believes that Christ believed, and that premonition is correct. The assumption on Campbell's part is that τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως refers not to the Psalmist but to Jesus, who was referred to in the previous verses, and that Paul considers Christ to be the speaker of the psalm. If this is the case Paul ascribes to Christ here both πίστις and πιστεύω. The argumentation is complex and merits more attention than can be afforded it here. However, even if for the time being we accept Campbell's argument, we have ceded no more to him than to acknowledge a point we already held in agreement with him—Jesus did have faith. No more programmatic function of Christ's faith can really be proven from these verses.

In none of these—not the 2 Corinthians verse or those from Hebrews and Revelation—is the context justification. It is always about enduring present troubles and receiving future blessings. We look in vain seeking a parallel in Scripture to the concept of our being justified by Christ's faith. Moreover, proving from the Bible that Jesus had faith in no way even undergirds the subjective position. The majority of subjective proponents interpret the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ to denote not Christ's faith but his faithful death.²⁵⁹ If 2 Corinthians ascribes to Jesus the act of believing, it still furnishes no example of using πίστις in reference to his faithfulness unto death.

²⁵⁷ This theological overlap between 'faith' and 'faithfulness' helps us see why some people struggle to keep them appropriately separate linguistically. However, just because the two meanings can overlap, it does not negate the fact that they are two different meanings. It just means that within the context of Revelation this overlap, while leaving us unable to disambiguate the linguistic meaning, assures us of the phrase's basic theological sense.

²⁵⁸ Douglas A. Campbell, "2 Corinthians 4:13: Evidence in Paul that Christ Believes," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128.2 (2009), 337-356.

²⁵⁹ Hays even disavows such a position: "The expression 'the faith of Jesus Christ' signals that the death of Jesus is *simultaneously* an act of human fidelity to God and an act of divine fidelity to humanity. This observation

We do have, however, a number of verses throughout the Bible which associate human faith and salvation. While outside of Habakkuk there is no Hebrew noun used for faith, the concept of salvation by faith is still expressed, and not just in reference to Abraham in Genesis 15. “For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken” (Ps 21:7). “In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed” (Ps 22:4-5). “For they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance” (Ps 78:22). “O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you” (Ps 84:12). “Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever” (Ps 125:1). “This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it’ (Isa 30:15). “But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jer 17:7-8). “I will save you; you will not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because you trust in me, declares the Lord”(Jer 39:18). “The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.” (Dan 6:23). “The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. . . . When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened” (Jnh 3:5,10). Schaller gives an important reminder to all those who struggle to find ‘faith’ in the Old Testament: “It should be remembered that the OT frequently speaks of saving faith under its peculiar aspects of trust, steadfastness, hope, and the like, and that the *fear of God*, so often designated as the characteristic attribute of God’s children, is but another name for saving faith!”²⁶⁰

Christ is the object of that saving faith. This truth is taught already in the Old Testament. “So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed’” (Isa 28:16). That

carries an important negative corollary. Paul does not use ‘the faith of Jesus Christ’ to extol Jesus’ own religious disposition or subjective God-consciousness. It is *not* an expression that describes what many today would fondly call Jesus’ spirituality. Nor does Paul use it to call attention to Jesus’ exemplary lifelong piety.” Hays, *Faith*, xxxi.

²⁶⁰ John Schaller, *Biblical Christology* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1919), 247 n. 1.

this verse is messianic is confirmed for us by its use on the part of Paul (Ro 9:33; 10:11) and Peter (1 Pe 2:6). Isaiah also relates God's words about his messianic servant: "He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope" (42:4). Jesus proclaims himself the fulfillment of the prophecy, and he does so using the Septuagint's interpretive rendering, "In his name the nations will put their hope" (Mt 12:21).

The New Testament is, of course, much more explicit in identifying Christ as the object of faith. The references from John's Gospel are too many to relate here. Among them are a case of him explicitly telling the disciples to make him the object of their faith (14:1) and many others where faith in him is tied to eternal life. Apart from our disputed *πίστις Χριστοῦ* passages there are other explicit references to faith in Christ in Paul's writings. "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him" (Php 1:29).

Sandwiched between two cases of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* we find the same thing: "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified" (Ga 2:15-16).

Since both these Pauline verses have Christ not as the grammatical object of *πιστεύω* but within the prepositional phrase *εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν*, Williams has argued that Christ here should not be perceived as the object of faith but that instead, "just as Paul can say that one comes to be 'in Christ' by being baptized into Christ, so he can say that one *believes* into Christ. In this second expression, too, *eis* implies movement, change, the transfer from one order of existence to another. Thus, to 'believe into Christ' is the *means* by which one comes to be 'in Christ.'"²⁶¹ Williams here confounds theology with Greek idiom to avoid stating Christ is the object of faith. This is a common enough idiom that it can be found within Matthew (18:6), Luke (Acts 10:43; 14:23; 19:4), John (1:12; 2:11,23; 3:16,18,36; 4:39; 6:29,35,40; 7:5,31,38,39,40; 8:30; 9:35,36; 10:42; 11:25,26,45,48; 12:11,36,37,42,44,46; 14:1,12;16:9; 17:20; 1 Jn 5:10,13) and Peter (1 Pe 1:8). It simply means 'to believe in'. Christ is the object of Christian faith.

²⁶¹ "Again," 443.

The wider context of Scripture shows that salvation comes by faith and that faith's object is Christ and his merits. Paul's use of Χριστοῦ as the genitival object of human πίστις as a means of receiving justification is in keeping with his other teachings and with those of all of Scripture.

APPENDIX G

THE CHRISTOCENTRISM OF FAITH

Most Christians, particularly those who spend considerable time in the Scriptures and especially the writings of Paul, recognize that Christ should be afforded his proper place at the center of theology. This is a healthy approach to religion. However, if this notion is applied uncritically, an attempt to give Christ larger place may inadvertently serve to rob him of both glory and his central place.

Such is the case with the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. A desire to make salvation all about Christ lends a certain attractiveness to the subjective interpretation. After all, what can make justification more Christ-centered and less human-centered than to state that the faith by which justification takes place is Christ's faith and not human faith? When Evangelicals adopt the subjective interpretation as a move away from decision theology, we are right to applaud their theological motivations even if we cannot justify the reclassification of the genitive on an exegetical basis. We are happy to see them say that salvation is because of Jesus instead of because of faith.

To have this proper emphasis on Christ and his merits as the sole cause of our salvation, it is not, however, necessary to adopt a novel and exegetically suspect interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. It is only necessary to recognize the rest of what Scripture has to say about πίστις. From this it becomes apparent that faith, which itself is entirely Christocentric, as the basis of justification makes for a justification which is entirely Christocentric.

There is no shortage of passages which make it clear that repentance and conversion and faith are completely brought about by God and not by anything in man (Jer 31:18; La 5:21; Jn 1:12-13; 3:6; 6:44; Ac 5:31; 11:18,21; 15:7-9; Ro 8:7; 15:18; 1 Co 1:27-31; 2:14; 12:3; Eph 2:4-9; Php 2:13; Col 1:3-5; 2:12-13; 2 Th 1:3; 2 Ti 1:12; 2:25; 1 Pe 1:3). Additionally every time Scripture preaches faith as opposed to works, we ought to see this also as a reminder that faith itself is not a work. Faith is in no way a human work. It is not a decision we make. It is not our contribution to salvation. Faith is worked by God.

Even as a divine work, it is not what causes or brings about justification. It receives. The power in faith to save comes solely from the object of faith. Mueller puts it well:

So also faith does not justify and save either as a good quality (*nova qualitas*), or as a good work (*opus per se dignum*), or as a gift of God (*donum Spiritus Sancti*), or as a source of good works in us, but alone as the receiving means (ὄργανον ληπτικόν), by which man, who in himself is ungodly, appropriates to himself the grace of God and the merits of Christ through implicit trust in the promises of the Gospel.²⁶²

In some ways it is unfortunate how I have had to express myself throughout this work, continually referring to ‘human faith’. It was a necessary designation to make clear what was meant by πίστις. Paul, however, never explicitly says that justification is by human faith. Nor does he ever modify faith with a prepositional pronoun so as to say that we are justified by our faith. Certainly the faith is ours and we are human. But Paul leaves the expression as barebones as possible. It is simply ἐκ πίστεως or διὰ πίστεως or πίστει or ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, all of which place no further emphasis on the person exercising that faith. And all of these expressions denote an instrument or means, not a cause. Faith is how God gets justification to us, not how he brings it about. He never, as many have pointed out, speaks of justification being διὰ πίστιν. This is what Hays and others do not seem to understand. Hays complains that

Protestant interpreters have often tried to surmount this difficulty [of faith being a human work] by explaining that faith is a gift from God. Certainly that is an edifying idea, but it encounters two serious objections: 1) precisely the same affirmation could be made with reference to “works,” and indeed we find that it *is* made in the Qumran Thanksgiving Hymns.²⁶³

But Hays errs by assuming that we speak of faith as a meritorious cause of salvation and not merely an instrumental cause. This is something which the Lutheran Church has never done. Luther says,

Not even in this respect, namely, in so far as it is a gift of the Holy Ghost, does faith justify, but simply inasmuch as it stands in relation to Christ (*quatenus habet se correlative ad Christum*). Here the principal question is not whence, or what sort of work, faith is or in what respect it surpasses other works, since faith does not justify per se (on its own account) or by any intrinsic value (*virtute aliqua intrinseca*).²⁶⁴

²⁶² John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics: A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 244.

²⁶³ “Re-reading,” 3.

²⁶⁴ *Tischreden, cap. 13*: “Daß der Glaube an Christum allein vor Gott gerecht mache” (Erlangen 58:353), quoted in Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. II* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 440.

The Lutheran Confessions follow this same solidly-scriptural lead:

And, again, as often as we speak of faith, we wish an object to be understood, namely, the promised mercy. For faith justifies and saves, not on the ground that it is a work in itself worthy, but only because it receives the promised mercy.²⁶⁵

Accordingly, Scripture testifies that *by faith we are accounted righteous*, Rom. 3, 26. We, therefore, will add testimonies which clearly declare that faith is that very righteousness by which we are accounted righteous before God, namely, not because it is a work that is in itself worthy, but because it receives the promise by which God has promised that for Christ's sake He wishes to be propitious to those believing in Him, or because He knows that *Christ of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1, 30.²⁶⁶

For faith justifies, not for this cause and reason that it is so good a work and so fair a virtue, but because it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel; for this must be applied and appropriated to us by faith, if we are to be justified thereby.²⁶⁷

Faith never saves because of its own strength. It saves because of the object on which it depends. Faith the size of a mustard seed is sufficient if its object is Christ (Mt 17:20). We never could be saved on account of the perfection of our faith, because we do not trust perfectly. We must cry out like the father of the demon-possessed boy, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mk 9:24). It is actually because expressions like *πίστις Χριστοῦ*, when rightly understood, place all the emphasis on the merit *Χριστοῦ* that the subjective interpretation appears initially as contextually and theologically viable as it does. We need, however, not adopt that interpretation for it to all be about Jesus' works because that is already the point.

Finally, justification by faith is as Christocentric as it gets, because the phrase 'by faith' is absolutely exclusive of any of our works. 'By faith' does not refer to Jesus' perfect life and death on our behalf, but what it does is even more striking: it serves to eliminate everything which is not Jesus' perfect life and death on our behalf. Trusting in Jesus for salvation is the opposite of attempting to earn it. As Paul says, "the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace" (Ro 4:16).

²⁶⁵ Ap. 4:55-56.

²⁶⁶ Ap. 4:86.

²⁶⁷ FC:SD 3:13.

Faith is God's work, not ours. Faith saves because of its object, not because of itself. Faith is the exclusion of works, not a single work we render to God. If we keep these things in mind, we see that faith in Christ is all about Christ. While American Christianity will always force us to struggle with anthropocentric notions of faith, if it is properly understood as Scripture teaches, human faith is Christocentric, and so is justification by that faith.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Throughout this work, I have been speaking of justification in the subjective sense, namely, that an individual receives forgiveness by faith. None of this is meant to deny justification in the objective sense, namely, that in Christ's death all sins and all people were in truth forgiven. In fact, everything which I have said about justification all rests upon that other sense of justification. For a biblical treatment of objective justification and how it relates to subjective justification, see Jon D. Buchholz, *Jesus Canceled Your Debt!*, October 17, 2012, <http://www.wlssays.net/files/BuchholzJustification.pdf>.

APPENDIX H
THE RELATIONSHIP AND RELATIVE POSITIONING OF FAITH AND
INCORPORATION/PARTICIPATION ON THE *ORDO SALUTIS*

Lutheran pastor Stephen Chambers concludes his overview of the Πίστις Χριστοῦ debate with this “proposal for further inquiry”: “What is obviously still needed, then, is a thorough investigation of the theological implications of reading πίστις Χριστοῦ subjectively. Of particular interest, as noted above, would be the doctrines of Christology and soteriology.”²⁶⁹

Christological implications we need not address. Though it could perhaps be utilized as a move away from ascribing Christ deity, the subjective construal of πίστις Χριστοῦ would not in and of itself pose anything objectionable to Chalcedonian Christianity, as was shown above in Appendix F. The soteriological implications, however, do warrant further study.

Soteriologically speaking, there would not have to be anything objectionable with the subjective interpretation either. While some of the presuppositions its adherents bring to the table are disturbing, this interpretation can be understood in the right way. We are justified by Christ’s faithfulness unto death. There is no problem with that statement.

However, often false teaching lies not in what is said, but in what is intentionally being left unsaid, in this case, that justification comes to us by faith. This is not merely an error of omission. Many of the proponents of the subjective interpretation are consciously and intentionally using the debate as a way to mitigate, or even eradicate, forensic language within Paul so that his gospel can be reduced to one which is largely a matter of incorporation (in the case of the New Perspectivists) or participation (in the case of those like Campbell and Hays whom I call the Apocalypticists).²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ “Faith,” 42.

²⁷⁰ These two groups may seem diverse, but in reality their new gospel is very similar. It is helpful to recognize both the similarities and the differences. In both cases justification ceases to be an external thing. Instead, the goal is to be on the inside. For New Perspectivists, the goal is to be on the inside of the church, which God will then save (and since they are already in, they put all the focus on what must be done to stay in), and so their gospel is one principally of incorporation into God’s people (and how to stay incorporated). For Apocalypticists, the goal is to be in Christ, sharing by the Spirit in his trajectory of death and life, and so their gospel is one principally of participation in Christ. Beyond the distinction in what they seek to be ‘in’, the other key difference stems from their understanding of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. A correct view would be to say that there is real continuity between the peoples as well as the plan of salvation between the two testaments, but there is a real and dramatic shift and fuller disclosure at the dawn of the New Testament era. The New Perspective emphasizes the continuity and seeks to erase most of the differences between Old and New, forfeiting fuller revelation and unwisely

Campbell states that by an initial reading of Romans, chapters 1-4 seem to support the Lutheran model of justification by faith, chapters 5-8 the participatory gospel of the Apocalypticists, and chapters 9-11 the salvation history model of the New Perspective. He states what he considers must be done to reconcile Paul's gospel into a cohesive unit: "Any endorsement of one of the main argumentative units in Romans as Paul's substantive centre must also show how this primary unit underlies its two neighbouring units."²⁷¹ While we disagree with his tendency to sunder Scripture theologically, and of course also his prejudice against justification and his fervent desire to eradicate it,²⁷² he does identify the task to be addressed.

Certainly there are both incorporative and participatory elements present within the gospel Paul proclaims. Since, as we have shown within the body of this paper, justification by faith is also a truth which Paul proclaims and, at the very least, an element of that same single gospel, it will be necessary, as Campbell recognizes, to articulate their relationships with each other, and consequently their relative positionings upon the *ordo salutis*.²⁷³

Since some of Paul's clearest passages on the primacy of faith in salvation are the very ones under dispute in this debate, we will turn first to the clear witnesses of the other holy writers. John makes faith an incredible priority in his Gospel, using πιστεύω nearly a hundred

interpreting the clear in the light of the less clear. The Apocalyptic Reading highlights the discontinuity to the extent that there is little real connection between the two testaments at all (hence the title Apocalypticists, focusing on the coming of Jesus as an entirely brand new revelation, previously unhinted at and solving a problem which can in no way be recognized apart from its answer). The result at its best is Dispensationalism and at its worst flirts with Marcionism.

²⁷¹ *Quest*, 24-26.

²⁷² Campbell's argumentation against justification is driven by emotion and directed at a straw man. He repeatedly shows in his writings that he cannot accept justification because he does not believe in many of its presuppositions or logical outflows, as well as the fact that it forces us to hold in balance seeming contradictions. It is this rejection of its content that fuels his attempts to disprove it, not exegetical concern. Furthermore, the justification model he sets forth to subsequently debunk is presented in a rigid and arbitrary matter, including that he allows no concern for ethical action to have any place within such a religious system. He fails to point to a single person who ever has taught justification in the manner he presents it. Repeatedly he tries to back justification proponents into a corner by saying that justification would require taking a certain exegetical viewpoint which it would not require or saying that it would have to have a certain theological result which it would also not require. Campbell's scholarship is significantly influenced by his own biases and there is a dangerous agenda behind his work. However, he is correct when he says the passages justification advocates and participation advocates garner in their respective report must find a common and cohesive explanation. He believes that these two elements are so radically opposed that all elements of justification must be eliminated, but this is because he misunderstands participation. Integration, not elimination, should be the name of the game.

²⁷³ When we speak of things as being 'before' or 'after' on the *ordo salutis*, we are not speaking of temporal priority, for they are all instantaneous. Rather, we speak of causal priority—a logical ordering—as a way of keeping straight cause and effect when it comes to salvation.

times. He makes it plain that the difference between life and condemnation is the difference between faith in Christ and unbelief:

. . . that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (Jn 3:15-18)

John further shows belief as the single critical thing. "Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent'" (Jn 6:28-29). He also shows Jesus explicitly making himself the object of faith. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me" (Jn 14:1). A number of other quotations from the fourth Gospel could be adduced in like manner, but perhaps it is sufficient to only further mention John's concluding statement (not including the epilogous account of the post-Resurrection great catch of fish): "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31).

In Acts, Luke also makes much of believing. He repeated refers to conversion as 'believing' and Christians as 'believers'. Campbell cites such historic equations as evidence of the pervasiveness of justification thoughts within Christian thinking.²⁷⁴ The prevalence of such expressions already within Acts shows that Treblico's assessment that 'believers' was a relatively early self-designation on the part of Christians is correct.²⁷⁵ This very strongly suggests that faith in Jesus was always seen as the criterion and defining characteristic of his people, not merely something they coincidentally or secondarily all possess. What is more noteworthy for our purposes are the words Luke recorded of the Apostle Paul. "[Paul and Silas] replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household'" (Acts 16:31). Campbell himself admits that Paul's missionary journeys as recorded in Acts are entirely consistent with the idea of justification by faith in Christ—he simply rejects that book's historical reliability and its hermeneutical relevancy to Paul's writings.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ *Deliverance*, 289.

²⁷⁵ Paul Treblico, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 68-121.

²⁷⁶ *Deliverance*, 197-199.

These passages demonstrate well that justification and life and salvation come by faith. Paul's fellow inspired authors stand shoulder to shoulder with him in this proclamation. It would seem that one significant factor contributing to the potential rewriting of Paul's gospel is that historical-critical denials of both human and divine authors, coupled with scholarly over-specialization, have led modern academics to interpret it entirely independently of John's gospel and Peter's gospel and Luke's gospel as if they had no bearing on each other or ability to serve as a control for novel readings. But since these men were, in fact, all united in the same Spirit by whom they spoke, only interpretations should be entertained for any of them which might apply to all of them. Justification, as they all agree, happens on the basis of faith.

So where, then, does participation fit in? Perhaps a better question would be to ask what exactly participation even is. Those who advocate it as the center of Paul's thought seem at a loss to describe exactly what they mean. Our immediate task, then, is not to relate where those vague elements find their place but to explicate those expressions in Paul which lead the Apocalypticists to characterize Paul's gospel as essentially participatory.

We begin with the famous Pauline expression ἐν Χριστῷ and its variations, among which we may rightfully include ἐν κυρίῳ. It seems that most Apocalypticists, and, indeed, all those who take a participatory stance on the subjective interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ, assume such occurrences designate a type of participatory union whereby an individual is himself *in Christ*. For example, Romans 6:23 would be saying that wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life *when you are in Christ Jesus our Lord*. Galatians 2:17 would begin by referencing our seeking to be justified *by being in Christ*. Colossians 2:10 would mean that we have been brought to fullness *since we are in Christ*. Perhaps these examples, picked randomly from the manifold examples within the Pauline corpus, already indicate the inappropriateness of automatically assuming ἐν Χριστῷ designates Christ as the location in which people are. In fact, Harris has listed six categories of use for this one phrase in Paul: incorporative union, agency, mode, cause, location, and sphere of reference. (For ἐν κυρίῳ he lists personal relationship, agency, mode, cause, location, sphere of reference, and authoritative basis.)²⁷⁷ One might quibble with his exact classifications or the categories under which he has placed some of the passages. However, one cannot argue against him so as to say that the prepositional phrase

²⁷⁷ Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2012), 122-131.

always, or even typically, functions as if it were designating our location within Christ (which would be a highly interpretive and restricting interpretation when, as is often the case, the prepositional phrase is adverbial and not adjectival). In his study on Paul's use of prepositions and how they relate to the idea of union with Christ, Constantine Campbell writes:

In fact, ἐν Χριστῷ has a range of usage determined by the elasticity of the preposition ἐν, and close exegesis of the phrase in context demonstrates this, as we will see in chapter 3. Consequently, it is best to abandon the term *formula* when referring to the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ; it is misleading at best. Strictly speaking, ἐν Χριστῷ is a prepositional phrase, and there is no reason not to label it such. Paul's fondness of the phrase, however, suggests that it might also be described as an *idiom*. Its frequency indicates that it is not an accidental combination of preposition and proper name, and yet it does not convey a fixed meaning every time it occurs.²⁷⁸

A clear case where the phrase cannot mean a local inclusion is found in Ephesians 1:4 and 2 Timothy 1:9. Here in the context of election, these uses of ἐν αὐτῷ and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, respectively, cannot refer to someone being chosen and given grace while themselves being already within Christ if they did not yet exist. As is the case here, often ἐν Χριστῷ simply relates the cause of something being true or the sphere of reality within which something is true. No such participatory union or spiritual location is implied.

This does not mean that there are not a number of times where ἐν Χριστῷ is attributive (either articularized or as a predicate adjectival construction) and does denote the spiritual location of being in Christ. Here are some examples:

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

What does Paul mean when he talks about people who are in Christ Jesus? Certainly if the passages are excised from the rest of Paul's statements we would have nothing to restrain

²⁷⁸ Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2012), 26. To distinguish this author from Douglas Campbell, I will always refer to him by both first and last name. As has been the practice to this point, I will continue to refer to Douglas Campbell simply by his last name.

imaginative speculations. And it is true that Paul never systematically defines his phrase. There are, however, several passages which make explicit its sense.

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Ga 3:26-27). Verse 26 states in two adverbial phrases how it is that we are sons of God: by faith and because of Christ Jesus.²⁷⁹ Verse 27 is meant to give further explanation to how it is we are sons of God. It states that by being baptized into Christ we are clothed with Christ. Being clothed with Christ corresponds with our common status as sons, as is elaborated upon in the following verse. Being baptized *into* Christ has, as its natural result, being *in* Christ. This clause corresponds with the adverbial modifiers in verse 26. We could via paraphrase chart the thought progression of the two verses like so:

26a You are all God’s sons
26b by faith and because of Christ
27a because those who are in Christ through baptism
27b are wearing Christ.

Being in Christ is functionally equivalent in these verses to having faith.

There are two other cases in Galatians where we see ἐν Χριστῷ functioning in parallel with ἐκ πίστεως. These examples are less telling since the former is more causal than local, but they are worth mentioning because Hays and Campbell, although they misinterpret them, have themselves noticed this parallel. Hays says:

This compatibility of the two motifs appears most clearly in Gal 2:17, where Paul uses the expression δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. Here justification and participation in Christ are merged, and it is clear that Paul intends this phrase to be synonymous with his words in the previous verse: ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. To be justified ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is the same thing as being justified ἐν Χριστῷ.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ For the sake of this discussion, we will assume the current consensus is correct in taking the two prepositional phrases at the end of verse 26 as independent adverbial phrases. See comments above in the body on this verse for more discussion, and note that as it is the ‘by faith’ which we are most concerned with here, the distinction does not affect our present concern.

²⁸⁰ *Faith*, 212.

Campbell's words are even more telling: "Paul also seems to equate the state of being 'in Christ' with 'faith' in 5:6."²⁸¹ These ideas as Paul presents them are not as conceptually distant as at other times they are implied to be.

1 Corinthians provides us two additional examples, and clearer ones at that. "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1 Co 1:30). The context of this verse is of the Corinthians being called to faith. 'In Christ' is the resultant state of that call. The other example from this letter comes from the Great Resurrection chapter of the Bible. "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (1 Co 15:17-19). The most natural reading of these verses is that those who have fallen asleep ἐν Χριστῷ are those who died believing in him.

From these passages we conclude that ἐν Χριστῷ is not indicative of a soteriological model antithetical to justification by faith, but, when used attributively to denote a participatory union, speaks of that same instrument of faith.

Why, then, the variation? Because while the terms are intimately related and speak of the same thing, they are not synonymous in the strictest sense. ἐν Χριστῷ, being as flexible and wide-sweeping as it is, does not function with the same level of theological precision necessary for it to be the technical expression for the means for appropriating justification and by which human contribution is excluded (especially in a polemical context). When that degree of precision is necessary, Paul uses ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Furthermore, ἐκ πίστεως more properly denotes the means (the *how*), whereas ἐν Χριστῷ seems to more broadly denote the status which comes by faith (the *what* or even the *who*). This seems to account for their various usages, as well as the transition between the relative predominance of the prepositional expressions from Romans 1-4 to 5-8.

There is plenty of other participatory language found in Paul. Romans 8, for example, contains participatory language but it is more worthwhile for our purpose to focus on the foundation for that language: Paul's discussion of Baptism in chapter 6. Being baptized into Christ Jesus means being baptized into his death and consequently also being united with him in

²⁸¹ *Deliverance*, 887.

a resurrection like his. By comparison with Colossians 2:12 we see that this happens in Baptism, however, through the faith worked by God. Being in Christ through Baptism means having spiritual life in Christ now, which, speaking in terms of the *ordo*, embraces both regeneration and sanctification. Being in Christ through Baptism further means being united with and partaking of Christ's death for sin and consequently also his resurrection.

In the other passage of Paul where participatory themes most predominate, Philippians 3, we see these same broad inclusions. Paul disvalues all his own merit under the law that he may gain Christ and be found *ἐν αὐτῷ*. Paul then proceeds to define what being *ἐν αὐτῷ* is—it is having the righteousness which is by faith. Paul then advances his participatory language, speaking of both death and resurrection. In light of the apparent chiasm in verses 10-11, it seems likely that both references to resurrection speak of the physical resurrection from the dead. In between them are two references to suffering and death. So in these verses we see Paul's goal in being found in Christ is to share both Christ's physical sufferings and Christ's physical resurrection.

Based on just the few passages we have been afforded time to look at, we see that participation in Christ includes a number of diverse things. To some degree they cannot be entirely separated, but to clarify the position of participation on the *ordo* we must attempt to do just that. We may isolate these various elements of participation like this:

1. The spiritual vivification of faith
2. Clinging to and possessing the vicarious active obedience of Christ
3. Clinging to and possessing the vicarious passive obedience of Christ
4. Clinging to and possessing (in the future enjoying) the physical resurrection of Christ
5. Living a Christ-like life with respect to morality
6. Christ-like suffering, perhaps to the point of death

Within this list two distinct categories begin to emerge. Of these six there is a definite difference between the first four and the last two. The first belongs to conversion. The second through fourth encompass both conversion and justification. The fifth and sixth, however, are decidedly after justification.²⁸²

²⁸² It could, however, be said that number four straddles this fence in a way. While we possess the justification of Christ's resurrection and the sure guarantee of our own resurrection already by faith, when it comes to enjoying that resurrection, that is, actually being physically raised and living eternally, this also belongs to the idea of being made to be like Christ, which is the predominant theme in numbers five and six. And yet we would

The participatory motif of union in and with Christ is strongly scriptural. Justification by faith is the bedrock, the fundament of the gospel. But participation, rightly understood, is the broad theme which encompasses every part of the gospel and every item on the *ordo*. Every aspect of the gospel can be well summarized by this participatory proclamation: “I share in Christ’s everything.”²⁸³ But this is not sufficiently technical or specific enough without the foundation or it could be subject to gross misunderstanding. And as pervasive and as overarching as such a motif may be, we need to recognize that there are three very different types of such participatory unions which can be found within the Gospel and consequently the *ordo salutis*.²⁸⁴ The first, we could call the union of faith; the second, the mystic union; the third, the union of assimilation.²⁸⁵

want to distinguish it from these also, as our resurrection is in no way part of our sanctification in the narrow sense like number five completely is and number six is to a degree.

²⁸³ Compare what Constantine Campbell concludes:

What are we to make of this? If, as suggested above, Paul’s thought is metaphorically shaped like a web (rather than a wheel), it is my contention that union with Christ is the ‘webbing’ that holds it all together. Union with Christ is connected to everything else, perhaps, as Bouttier expresses, as ‘the light that illuminates the others’. Every Pauline theme and pastoral concern ultimately coheres with the whole through their common bond—union with Christ. . . .

Thus, I argue that union with Christ is not Paul’s ‘great concern’, nor is it the centre of his theological framework. It is, rather, the essential ingredient that binds all other elements together; it is the webbing that connects the ideas of Paul’s web-shaped theological framework. It is for this reason that we can say that every blessing we receive from God is through our union with Christ. It is by being united to him in faith by the Spirit, dying, suffering, rising, and glorying with him, having been predestined and redeemed in him, being identified with his realm, and being incorporated into his people that believers enjoy the manifold grace of God. (441-2)

²⁸⁴ To compare with our six elements of participation earlier, the first four belong to the union of faith and the last two belong to the union of assimilation. None of those listed at that time directly refer to the mystic union, but we need to include it in our discussions here for the sake of clarity. As this is the one union out of all these which is most commonly called by the term ‘union’, we want to make it clear that by the other unions we do not mean the mystic union.

Furthermore, for our purposes here, we are speaking of just these specific varieties of participatory unions. Yet several other varieties of union could be elaborated as well. While we typically do not extend the *ordo* back into Christ’s own actions, we still could refer to the Incarnation as Christ uniting himself to and sharing our humanity, and then our human life. By imputation on the cross Christ shared our sins to the point that he can be said to have become sin for us (2 Co 5:21). These unions are Christ sharing in us. The ones which have been classically located on the *ordo* and not in the locus on Christology are then, in turn, us sharing in Christ. The faith/justification union, like that previous sharing enacted by Christ on the cross is one which shares by an imputation. The next union we could speak of would be the mystic union, whereby we are united to Christ as his body and bride and all three persons of the Trinity dwell within us with their grace. The final kind of union would be the union of assimilation, which includes sanctification.

²⁸⁵ By this last term I mean that this type of participation is Christ making us more like himself in life, death, and resurrection. If someone can come up with a better name for this, I will willingly use theirs.

It is true that faith is not frequently spoken of in terms of a union in Lutheran dogmatics.²⁸⁶ However, speaking of different senses of union is not without precedent. Hollaz articulated this in a note within his treatment of the mystic union:

Although the mystical union, by which God dwells in a soul as in a temple, naturally follows justification by our manner of thinking, yet it must be acknowledged that the formal union of faith, by which Christ is apprehended, put on, and united with us as mediator and author of procuring grace and the remission of sins, is, by proof of reason, before justification. For faith is imputed for righteousness, insofar as it receives the merit of Christ and unites him to us so it so that it becomes ours. Compare Quenstedt (Part 3 Systema fol. 524).²⁸⁷ D. Brochmand clearly teaches this (T. 2 System p. 485): “But if regeneration is taken as that spiritual birth from God, this consists principally in our union with Christ. This differs from justification as cause does from effect. For we are justified because we are from God only because we are in Christ, according to what Paul says in Rom 8:1. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” The righteousness of Christ, as of a spiritual head, is imputed to believers most closely united with him, who are found as members in him (Php 3:9). Compare D. Leyser (syst. p. 1548).^{288, 289}

Pieper likewise talks of faith in union-like terms, and in a footnote cites Hollaz’s distinction with apparent approval:

The Lutheran Confessions and Lutheran theologians declare that faith is an act not only of the intellect, but also of the will. They describe faith in such terms as desiring Christ (*velle*), seeking Christ (*quaerere*), demanding Him (*expetere, desiderare*), as striving and

²⁸⁶ The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary dogmatics notes do, however, speak this way on at least one occasion: “Faith is the uniting bond in a sinner’s renewed union with God.” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, “Dogmatic Notes,” <http://www.wls.wels.net/library/dogmatics-notes>, D.I.I.1.c.

²⁸⁷ Quenstedt’s words here: “Faith itself is also said to be imputed to us for righteousness. St. Paul used this phrase a number of times in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. But he uses it in no way other than insofar as it apprehends Christ’s merit by a particular faith and receives it by a trusting apprehension and unites it to himself.” Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologica Didactica-Polemica, sive Systema Theologicum in duas sectiones* (Leipzig: Fritsch, 1702), s.I, p.III, c.VIII, s.II, th. XVIII.

²⁸⁸ Wilhelm Leyser’s words here: “But so that by this act the satisfaction and merit placed before others can be applied to an individual with divine justice intact, a foundation for this relationship in that individual is required. While this does not arise from the person, it is sufficient that it is given to him graciously. Just as by the personal union and a voluntary reception imputation was first founded (although not through adhering but through another gracious manner of helping), so this is founded by the spiritual union of faith. By its being grafted onto Christ its mediator we are made to be his flesh. And we do not reject his work by the mirror of faith which communicates all his deeds and merits and all his obedience to us so that we are found in Christ (Php 3:9). And such that we his members are rendered sharers of the works completed for all our sakes. And this union makes it so that it is not something imaginary when Christ is in it and most closely united to the believer, for imputation cannot be founded unjustly.” Wilhelm Leyser, *Systema Thetico-Exegeticum* (Wittenberg: Meyer, 1699), p.III, c.III, m.II, th.I, s.VII.

²⁸⁹ David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum Universam Theologiam Thetico-Polemicam Complectens* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Son, 1763), p.III, s. I, c. IX, q.1.

running after Him (*in Christum tendere, in Christum ferri*), as stretching out the hands toward Him and embracing Him (*extendere manus, amplecti, complecti*), as coming to Him, approaching Him, running towards Him (*venire, accedere, currere*), as clinging to Christ and joining oneself to Him (*adhaerere Christo, se adiungere Christo*).

65. This does not refer to the *unio mystica*, to the Christ *in us*, or to our renewal and sanctification. We obtain the remission of sins through Christ *for us*. Luther: Justifying faith “seizes and takes us far away beyond ourselves and beyond our heart (*extra nos ipsos; extra cor nostrum*). It takes me to Christ, whom I do not see, feel, or hear; faith would have me cling to the Son of God and believe in Him.... We must cling to Him and not look upon our fasting, praying, and other works ... in order to be justified.” (St. L. VII:2214 f.) Hollaz calls the union that is brought about by clinging to Christ outside us the *unio fidei formalis* in distinction from the *unio mystica*, which results from the former (op. cit., qu. 11).²⁹⁰

Luther never wrote a dogmatics where he would have treated such a union systematically, but he did speak in such terms of faith as union:

The third incomparable benefit of faith is that it unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom. By this mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh [Eph. 5:31–32]. And if they are one flesh and there is between them a true marriage—indeed the most perfect of all marriages, since human marriages are but poor examples of this one true marriage—it follows that everything they have they hold in common, the good as well as the evil. Accordingly the believing soul can boast of and glory in whatever Christ has as though it were its own, and whatever the soul has Christ claims as his own. Let us compare these and we shall see inestimable benefits. Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death, and damnation. Now let faith come between them and sins, death, and damnation will be Christ’s, while grace, life, and salvation will be the soul’s; for if Christ is a bridegroom, he must take upon himself the things which are his bride’s and bestow upon her the things that are his. If he gives her his body and very self, how shall he not give her all that is his? And if he takes the body of the bride, how shall he not take all that is hers?²⁹¹

This union of faith that Luther, like Pieper and Hollaz, speaks of is not, like the mystical union, a substantial union in which Christ personally dwells in us with his being. The union of faith is simply that: that faith unites us to Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. Likewise we could speak of a participation of faith. Such a participation, here understood, would not, like the participation of the union of assimilation, be our imitation of Christ and our being brought into greater conformity with him. The participation of faith is simply that: that faith partakes of, or shares in,

²⁹⁰ *Dogmatics* II:433-434 and n. 65.

²⁹¹ Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian” in *Luther’s Works*, trans. W. A. Lambert, ed. Harold J. Grimm, vol. 31, *Career of the Reformer I* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 351.

Christ's life, death, and resurrection. When it comes to this union—the union in which justification resides—Christ's life, death, and resurrection are not something which the Christian does in conformity with Christ. They are something which is in faith appropriated and so the Christian shares in their substitutionary benefits.

None of this is meant to deny those other unions. There truly is a mystical union, a substantial union by which Christ, and with him the Father and the Spirit, personally dwell within the believer. There truly is a union of assimilation whereby Christ makes us more Christ-like in every way. However, these both are conceptually distinct and theologically posterior unions to the previously defined union of faith. While either of these secondary can be—and can rightly be—spoken of by Paul in almost the same breath as the union of faith as they are not unrelated to it and also fit with the general motif of participatory union, if they are confused with or undistinguished systematically from the union of faith, the result is an inevitable commingling of justification and sanctification. Such a reintroduction of human works into salvation is the tragic yet unavoidable consequence of a misconstrual of Paul's participatory language.

As a recent example of this, we see the new Finnish interpretation of Luther coming from the ecumenist Tuomo Mannermaa and the Helsinki school.²⁹² Luther, like Paul, can speak of the union of faith in dynamic fashion, as was seen recently above. He also taught that there flows from that justified faith a real mystic union and also that Christ makes us to be like him. But if one does not recognize that he is speaking of very different things—or if one does not want to recognize that he is speaking of very different things—his vivid speech on faith will be wrongly interpreted to suggest that an apparently mystic union is at the heart of justification, and this will immediately bring the union of assimilation into the middle of things as well. Faith and mystic union, by their reading of the reformer, become identical, and the result is a distinctly Osiandrian Luther. Justification and sanctification are in every way indistinguishable.

When the Apocalypticists seek to do with Paul what the Fins have done with Luther, namely, replace faith with union and participation, there are really are only two possible results for their soteriology, with a spectrum of severity between them. As a best case scenario, they understand such participatory union in keeping with the biblical teaching of the union of faith. In this case no false teaching has necessarily resulted. However, clarity has been surrendered for no

²⁹² Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).

benefit, as Paul's clearest language on appropriation, justification, and the exclusion of human works has been passed over. As a worst case scenario, they understand such a participatory union in terms of the biblical teaching of the mystical union and the union of assimilation. Perhaps in vaguery they will end up somewhere in between these two scenarios, but to the degree that they lean toward the latter they compromise a salvation which comes not from inside us but from outside us, not by works but by faith, not from what we do but from what Christ did, not from people but from God.²⁹³ This is the true danger of replacing faith with a purely participatory

²⁹³ For the sake of example, to see just how quickly they proceed down such a dangerous road, let us look at how our two main Apocalypticists attempt to define somewhat abstractly what they are even advocating. Of the two, I see Hays as leaning more towards the side of vaguery and Campbell as very much indicative of the "worst case scenario" where we are saved more by what God does in us than by what he does for us. First, two quotes from Hays' *The Faith of Jesus Christ*:

One widely recognized property of story is its power to lead hearers into an experience of identification with the story's protagonist. Precisely for this reason, stories can function as vehicles for the creation of community, as many individuals find a common identity within a single story. In the case of a story that becomes foundational for the self-understanding of a community, the identification of community members with the protagonist may be so comprehensive that it can be spoken of as 'participation' in the protagonist's destiny. If Paul's gospel is the story of Jesus Christ, then we might participate in Christ in somewhat the same way that we participate in (or identify with) the protagonist of any story. We find that the story lays a claim upon us and draws us into its world; we recognize ourselves in the protagonist and feel that our own destinies are somehow figured in his story. This recognition is not so much a 'work' of the imagination as a spontaneous response elicited by the story. We find ourselves, in Via's phrase, 'projected into the paradigm of the death and resurrection of Jesus.' Yet the transformation which the story works upon us is neither automatic nor magical; to the extent that it may change us, it does so by engaging our assent and imagination and will. In Via's language, we 'decide for a model outside of [ourselves]'; we choose this paradigm rather than some other. Thus, our participation in Jesus Christ of the gospel story is 'real' (particularly because Paul was firmly convinced that the events of the story 'really happened'—see 1 Cor 15:12-17) without being magical. Our participation in Christ, which does also yield a new self-understanding, is both posited within and engendered by the story itself. Thus, Paul's participatory soteriology may best be understood as a function of his narrative christology. I must reiterate that these remarks should be understood as suggestions for further reflection rather than as conclusive results of this investigation. (214-215)

Our mandate is not a mandate to imitate Jesus' action of the topical sequence; however, his action empowers us to fulfill our mandate, as he did his, in obedience and faithfulness. (225)

Yet in another work, Hays does speak a little more boldly. Richard B. Hays, "Apocalyptic *Poiēsis* in Galatians: Paternity, Passion, and Participation," In *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. Mark W. Elliott et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 200-219:

The logic of salvation is *participatory*. For Christian theology, the ripple effects of this insight are extensive. It means, first of all, that the distinction between justification and sanctification is at best artificially heuristic and at worst positively misleading. (217)

And now, Campbell's more strident claims on salvation, first from his earlier *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*:

It is also important to recognize that a sense of fusion with Jesus' martyrological narrative of descent through suffering to death is frequently the dominant experience of Christians presently, according to Paul, but it is precisely this that guarantees future transformation; to be experiencing the beginning and middle of Jesus' story guarantees that its glorious end will soon be experienced concretely as well. Hence the

gospel. What may in all sincerity be motivated by good intentions to remove a supposed human contribution from the salvation equation has unwittingly done just the opposite. Pieper speaks in proper emphatic terms of the importance of getting the *ordo* correct:

And in presenting the “application of salvation” (soteriology), it is all-important that one makes faith alone (*sola fides*) the means of appropriating the forgiveness of sins. Nothing that precedes faith (contrition), nothing that follows faith (*unio mystica*, sanctification and good works, etc.), must be co-ordinated and joined with faith as a means of appropriating the remission of sins; otherwise the whole Christian order of salvation is perverted, that is, changed into the “way of damnation” (*Unheilsordnung*).²⁹⁴

We need now only briefly deal with the slightly different alternative construal of the New Perspectivists. They think in terms of a God acting to save and deliver those who have already become incorporated within his people. This, as a primary soteriological category, has much the same rebuttal as the Apocalypticist gospel, as well as the same inherent dangers. The New

important roles in Paul’s thought for the motifs of weakness and faithfulness, that is, of *astheneia* and *pistis*. They function as signs of assurance that one is on track for glory, sharing Christ’s downward trajectory, in addition to functioning as signs of authentic Christian ministry. *Ergo*, speaking specifically with respect to *pistis*, it does *not* function as a means of appropriation. This is to place *pistis* in the wrong story as well as at the wrong point, viz., it is placed at the beginning of the Christian’s saved story, as a condition, and not within Christ’s story that we go on to share in participatory fashion, in organic relation particularly to the surrounding material concerning his suffering and death. As a result of this, it has also usually been assigned an incorrect function within Paul’s overarching theological schema, leading in my view to something of a catastrophe in the history of Pauline interpretation.

Thus I would suggest that pneumatology is the key to the soteriological mechanism that lies at the heart of the apocalyptic model; not faith, or baptism, or mysticism, or some strange process of participation or interchange, that is, when unassisted by the Spirit. (60)

Just as Jesus faithfully endured suffering to the point of death and then received a triumphant and glorious resurrection, so too Christians who maintain their loyalty to God and to Christ until the end will receive a resurrection. Moreover, in so doing, God is not asking them to imitate Christ—perhaps an impossible task—so much as to inhabit or to indwell him. That is, any such endurance through duress is evidence that the Spirit of God is actively reshaping the Christian into the likeness of Christ, and that they are therefore already part of the story, a story that will result in eschatological salvation! Consequently such enduring fidelity is critical evidence that God is at work, incorporating the believer into the prototypical story of Christ. In essence, to be part of this first sequence, despite its difficulties, is to be guaranteed being part of its second: this is no mere *imitatio Christ!* (93)

And finally, perhaps the most telling statement of all on Campbell’s part, from *The Deliverance of God*:

That is—and *in nuce*—‘sanctification’ is a theory of salvation, which is entirely self-sufficient. It requires no supplementation, and makes claims in its own right to all the main theological questions. Furthermore, it is arguably a superior theological explanation of salvation to Justification, because it is not foundationalist but is based on the self-disclosure of God in Christ. From its point of view, then, Justification is poor theology, if it can lay claim to that honored title at all. Adopting the traditional justification-sanctification distinction overrides the potentially independent if not self-sufficient status of sanctification, and so ought to be resisted (that is, unless we receive good reasons for adopting it). (187-188)

²⁹⁴ *Dogmatics*, 397.

Perspective considers Paul's concern to be soteriological but ecclesiological, with the assumption that God will then save his church. The operative question for us, then, would become how to become part of the church, or, as concerns New Perspectivists more, how to stay part of the church. Here is an obvious place where human works can and do enter the picture for how we are saved in their opinion. Unless faith is the criterion for both entrance into and continued membership within the people of God, the criterion proposed in its place will be one of works, either subtly or flagrantly.

Getting the order of causation right will again solve any problems. Salvation, and even justification as the word is sometimes used, can be understood as future acts of God's deliverance. On Judgment Day God will publicly declare us not guilty and deliver us from this world into the next. These are things that he will do for those who are his people. However, this future deliverance of God is based on a present reality established already in the past. That is to say, we already possess a right status before God through faith and with that we already possess eternal life. God will make good on his promise to his people—God will save his church—but we would be wrong to treat our church membership as its ultimate cause, for rightly understood, our inclusion within the Church is itself a result of God justifying us freely by faith for Christ's sake.