

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PAUL'S USE OF LEVITICUS 18:5 IN GALATIANS 3:12

A PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR NT 941: HERMENEUTICS OF THE NT PERIOD

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FALL 2006

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I. Introduction

Paul's citation of Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12 comes within one of the most disputed passages in Paul's writing. As Preston Sprinkle observes, this is not because Paul's own statements are unclear, but because the reasons for the choice of passages he cites in support of his argument are not immediately obvious to modern readers.¹ Our concern in this paper is to examine the hermeneutical methods, goals and assumptions which drove Paul to use this text from Leviticus in this verse. We proceed from the assumption that Paul may have common interpretive methods and traditions with his contemporaries, though as we examine these further we shall see that Paul was not constrained by these but rather adopted and adapted them to suit his own distinct purposes.

We begin with a discussion of Paul's hermeneutical methods in this section of Galatians, examining claims that his interpretation is midrashic, that it follows the rabbinic practice of *haraz*, or chain quotations, and that he is employing the standard procedures of Textual Contradiction. Paul's methodology, while showing evidence of several close similarities with that of his contemporaries, does not follow the precise forms of rabbinic interpretation. In this section we shall also consider the textual variations in Paul's use of Lev 18:5.

Our attention will turn next to the interpretive traditions associated with Lev 18:5. The principle embodied in this text was a foundational principle of early Judaism and thus references to it are widespread. It is possible to distinguish two strands of the interpretive tradition which develop different aspects of the original text: the deferred eschatological strand which focuses on the interpretation of the life promised as future, eternal life for the individual law-keeper²; and the

1. Sprinkle, Preston M. "Why Can't 'the One Who Does These Things Live by Them'? The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12." SBL Annual Meeting. Washington, D.C., 2006.

2. As proposed by Gathercole, Simon J. "Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament." Pp. 126–45 in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New*.

salvation-historical strand which draws attention to the identification of the law as that which Israel failed to keep, thus losing the privileges of life in the land.³ We note that these two strands are not mutually exclusive and that elements of each are combined in some sources.

In light of the multi-faceted interpretive tradition, we note that it is only the context of Galatians itself that can be determinative for Paul's use of the text from Leviticus. We shall briefly examine Paul's Christological, ecclesiological and eschatological goals in Galatians and discuss how Lev 18:5 may best be understood in the light of these. We tentatively propose that the salvation-historical interpretation of Lev 18:5 makes best sense within Paul's argument in Gal 3.

II. Hermeneutical Methods

A number of similarities to contemporary rabbinic hermeneutical methods have been discerned in Gal 3: the whole chapter may be considered as an example of a midrash on the Abrahamic story; the chain quotations, or *haraz*, in Gal 3:10-14 are an obvious feature of the text; and the contrast between Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 set up in Gal 3:11-12 has led some to interpret the chapter as an example of the rabbinic method of Textual Contradiction. We shall also discuss possible hermeneutical motives for the imprecise nature of Paul's citation of Lev 18:5, here and in Rom 10:5.

A. Midrash

Midrash is a slippery term which under its broad meaning of 'investigation' or 'interpretation'⁴ has come to be used in at least three distinct ways, as outlined by Jacob Neusner:

Edited by Craig A. Evans. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2004.

3. As proposed by Willitts, Joel. "Context Matters: Paul's Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12." *Tyndale Bulletin* 54, no. 2 (2003): 105–22.

4. The term *midrash* is derived from the Hebrew verb *דרש*, meaning 'to search,' a term which was often used in the sense of 'seeking God.' Since it was in the written Scriptures that Jews primarily sought God, *דרש* came to mean simply the study of Torah. Searching for God in Torah, led inevitably to explaining and interpreting the Torah, and hence the interpretations of Torah which were the result of the search were known as *מדרש*. See Bloch, R. "Midrash." Pp. 29–50 in *Approaches to Judaism: Theory and Practice*. Edited by W. S. Green. Brown

Jewish interpretation of individual verses of scripture; the compilations of these interpretations; and, the process and principles of interpretation.⁵ With respect to Gal 3, it is clear that we are considering midrash in the third sense. Neusner identifies the aim of the rabbis in midrashic interpretation as showing ‘how an ancient text retains perpetual relevance and gains renewal in succeeding ages.’⁶ The assumption was that the Scripture has a ‘perpetual contemporaneity’⁷ which the rabbis sought to demonstrate.

It is certainly possible, as Ellis has suggested, that ‘Galatians 3 is largely a Midrash on the Abrahamic history.’⁸ N. T. Wright has argued similarly that ‘the chapter as a whole [i.e. Gal 3] should be seen as an extended discussion of Genesis 15.’⁹ In Gal 3:6, Abraham is introduced as an example of one who heard by faith. Paul then makes the broader statement that all who are ἐκ πίστεως are the sons of Abraham (Gal 3:7). By thus redefining the covenant community along the lines of faith, Paul interprets this OT story for the Christian church. In order to show how this can be so, he must interpret the Abrahamic covenant as the gospel message, that is, that the Gentiles would be included in the blessing by faith (Gal 3:8). Such a novel reading of the Abrahamic story required further explanation which we find in vv. 10-28, before Paul restates his conclusion in v. 29.

Paul achieves this explanation by exploiting the interaction between two of the foundational covenant chapters of the OT: Gen 15 and Deut 27-28.¹⁰ The catena of texts in vv. 10-14 illustrate the foretelling of the gospel. If Deuteronomy taught that the law brings a curse,

Judaic Studies 1. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978.

5. Neusner, Jacob. *Invitation to Midrash*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.

6. Neusner, *Invitation to Midrash*, 4.

7. Neusner, *Invitation to Midrash*, 4.

8. Ellis, E. E. *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957, repr. Baker, 1981.

9. Wright, N. T. *The Climax of the Covenant*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. The following analysis of Gal 3 depends heavily on those proposed by Wright and Richard Hays (Hays, Richard B. “The Letter to the Galatians.”. In *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. XI. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

10. See Wright, *Climax*, 140 on the way Paul exploits the verbal and conceptual links between these two chapters.

for Paul this is simply the reverse view of the gospel principle, that faith brings blessing. The inclusion of Lev 18:5 strengthens this argument by its contrast with Hab 2:4, showing the incompatibility of law and faith. Those cursed under the law were redeemed through Christ, with the result that ‘the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles’ (Gal 3:14).

In vv. 15-28 Paul interprets the Abrahamic covenant Christologically and explores the relationship of this covenant to the law that came after it. Since he is concerned to show that the gospel of faith was preached beforehand, in the Abrahamic covenant, Paul needs to explain how the Mosaic law did not supersede this gospel promise of blessing through faith. He does this by assigning a different role to the law, that of the guardian, set in place because of transgressions (Gal 3: 19, 24).

Finally, Paul shows how it is through Christ that those of faith are heirs of the Abrahamic promise. Since the promise found its fulfilment in Christ (Gal 3:16), all those who are in Christ are likewise heirs (Gal 3:29).

Paul’s concern in this chapter is to interpret the Abrahamic covenant in such a way as to demonstrate its contemporary relevance for the church, in light of the Christ-event. As such, we may certainly say that it fits within Neusner’s understanding of midrash given earlier. However, given this very general understanding of midrash, it may be possible to argue that almost any NT use of the OT is midrashic. A common goal of the NT writers was to demonstrate the relevance and renewal of the OT texts in light of the Christ-event.¹¹ That other Jewish interpreters were doing something similar, in the light of their own contemporary situation and interests, indicates some common understanding of the nature of the Scriptures as God’s continuing word for his people.

B. Haraz

The practice of linking series of quotations known as *haraz* was well-established in

11. No doubt driven by Jesus’ own comments about the scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:27, John 5:39, 46).

rabbinic Judaism. Ellis asserts that it ‘had its origin in the preaching of the synagogues in which the preacher quoted from the Pentateuch and then strung on similar passages from the Prophets and Hagiographer.’¹² These passages might be linked conceptually or by means of a *Stichwort*, allowing apparently disparate texts to be brought to bear on the same question. A less formal pattern, not necessarily following the order of Law, Prophets, and Writings, is also found in rabbinic writings.¹³

The catena of texts in Gal 3:10-14 does not follow the standard pattern of *haraz*. The quotation from the Pentateuch in v. 10 is followed, as expected, with a text from the Prophets in v. 11. However, no text from the Writings is adduced, but two further texts from the Law are cited in vv. 12-13.

The techniques of *haraz* and ‘pearl-stringing’ draw support for an argument from the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. They reflect an understanding of the unity of the Scriptures and the coherence of the divine revelation. Michael Fishbane comments on the similar practice in evidence in the Qumran documents that ‘the justification of a line of argument from several biblical sources at once demonstrates the wide-ranging literary imagination of the composers, and the authority of *the totality* of Scripture for them.’¹⁴ Authority resides not only in the individual texts of Scripture but in the meanings created in the interaction between Scriptural texts.

Paul makes use of the *Stichwort* technique to draw his texts together in Gal 3. νομος, καταρα, and πιστις appear as linking words throughout vv. 10-14. In vv. 11-12, the *Stichwort* ζήσεται is used to establish the comparison and thus the contradiction between Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5. Lev 18:5 is also linked with the earlier quotation from Deut 27:16 by the expression ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ (cf. τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά in v. 10).

12. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 49.

13. See, Neusner, *Invitation to Midrash*, 240–54 for a variety of examples illustrating this kind of discourse.

14. Fishbane, Michael. “Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran.” Pp. 339–77 in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. Edited by Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling. Philadelphia: Fortress, 2004.

Ellis considers that Paul's use of the *Stichwort* may be the result of conceptual correspondence: 'Although a number of Pauline citations appear to be united under a *Stichwort*, the significance is far deeper than a verbal congruence. The recurrence of the *Stichwort* is perhaps a designed mnemonic, but at times it is only a natural coincidence in the subject matter.'¹⁵ This may be so in other cases, but in Gal 3:10-14 it does seem as though the verbal links allowed Paul to make conceptual links that did not necessarily exist between the original texts. The connection between the Abrahamic covenant and the Deuteronomic covenant curses and blessings was certainly strengthened, and possibly even suggested by, the common language of curse and blessing.

With respect to Lev 18:5, it is clear that the link with Deut 27:26 is both verbal and conceptual: both texts are speaking of Torah-obedience (or disobedience) and its consequences. The conceptual parallel with Hab 2:4 is less certain. The question of whether the life referred to by Habakkuk and that promised by Moses were really commensurate, in such a way as to allow Paul to draw a contradiction between the texts, is a complex one and it seems at least plausible that the verbal similarity was a motivation if not the main motivation for Paul's choice of texts here.

C. Textual Contradiction

The last of R. Ishmael's *middoth* indicates that where an apparent contradiction between two texts exists, they should both be upheld until they can be solved by the application of a third text to settle the matter.¹⁶ Nils Alstrup Dahl claims that this rule reflects the exceptional, rather than the usual, rabbinic method for resolving contradictions. He finds only a handful of examples in the tannaitic literature of a third text being introduced.¹⁷

15. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 50.

16. See Dahl, Nils Alstrup. *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977.

17. See Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 163–64. The examples he cites are from Melkita Pisha 4, Sifre Num. 58, Mekilta Bahodesh 9, and Sifre Lev. 16:1.

The more usual method depends on a distinction being made between the two texts¹⁸ or a reinterpretation of one of the texts being made to show that it in fact supports the other.¹⁹ A clear example of the application of this method may be found in Philo with respect to the question of whether God is or is not like a man.²⁰ The point at issue is not merely academic but represents the conflict between what Philo sees as two fundamental principles expressed in Scripture.²¹

The method consists in five steps, as described by Martyn:

- (1) An assertion (in Jewish traditions a *halakah*) is made by party A.
- (2) Party A cites an authoritative text in support of that assertion.
- (3) A contradictory assertion (in Judaism a *halakah*) is made by party B.
- (4) Party B cites an authoritative and contradictory text in support of that assertion.
- (5) One of the parties wins the debate by giving a new interpretation to his opponent's text, bring thereby able not only to honor both texts as aspects of the indivisible law but also to show that, correctly read, both texts support his own assertion.²²

Martyn claims that this method was common enough that it is reasonable to suppose that Paul's hearers would have recognised it and followed his line of argument. He fits Gal 3:11-12 into the model thus:

- (1) On the basis of the truth of the gospel I make a fundamental assertion: Before God no one is being rectified by the Law.
- (2) I then undergird that assertion with a quotation from scripture: "The one who is rectified by faith will live."
- (3) In light of the way in which the Teachers quote - and will continue to quote - from the Law, I must add a second assertion: The Law does not have its origin in faith.
- (4) Finally, given that second assertion, I cite a text from the Law that does not have its origin in faith - I think it is one of the Teachers' favorite texts - "The one who does the commandments will live by them."²³

Martyn is, however, forced to admit that Paul's argument deviates somewhat from the model of Textual Contradiction he has proposed. Instead of giving the contrary assertion in step

18. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 162–63 illustrates this with reference to Hillel's resolution of the apparent contradiction between Exod 12:5 and Deut 16:2.

19. Martyn, J. Louis. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible. London, New York: Doubleday, 1998 cites the work of J. S. Vos in providing the comparative material from ancient Greek and Jewish sources, from which Martyn derives his outline of the method of Textual Contradiction.

20. *Quod Deus Imm.* 51-73.

21. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 166.

22. Martyn, *Galatians*, 329.

23. Martyn, *Galatians*, 331.

(3), Paul makes a second assertion of his own, claiming the text in step (4) in support of his own argument rather than that of his opponents. Martyn interprets this as Paul rejecting the fundamental assumption that the two texts have the same origin and must therefore be non-contradictory. He suggests that Paul replaces this foundation with that of faith: ‘the benchmark from which all else must be judged is not a harmony that can be discerned by two texts drawn from the same source. That benchmark is quite simply the faith elicited by God’s promise.’²⁴

Ultimately, Martyn concludes, Paul views Lev 18:5 as a false promise. Although Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 are set in contradiction to each other, Martyn considers that Paul does not even attempt to solve this contradiction. Instead, Paul emphasises it in order to contrast the way of the law with that of faith.

There are a number of obvious problems with Martyn’s proposal, not least the conclusions he draws with respect to Paul’s attitude to scripture. The modifications to the method of Textual Contradiction needed to read Gal 3:10-14 in this way also lack persuasive power. It is hard to see that Paul’s hearers would have easily been able to identify the method given the absence of both the opponents’ view and the resolution: three of the five steps are missing or altered.

Dahl presents a more convincing reading of Gal 3 as a Textual Contradiction. He agrees that ‘[t]he whole train of thought in Gal 3:1-12 rests on the presupposition that Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 contradict one another, and that the two corresponding principles “by faith” and “by (works of) the law” mutually exclude one another as qualifications for justification and life.’²⁵ However, he concludes that, rather than simply rejecting Lev 18:5 as Martyn proposes, Paul wants to uphold these two passages in such a way that ‘that each, promise and law, can take the place which is due it according to Scripture.’²⁶

24. Martyn, *Galatians*, 332.

25. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 170.

26. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 171.

Paul achieves this by following what Dahl considers the standard approach to contradictions. That is, he first determines which statement is correct and then explains the other by making an appropriate distinction or clarification. In Gal 3:13-18, Paul determines which of the two principles, faith and law, is valid, and in vv. 19-25 he explains the apparent contradiction by giving an explanation of the role of the law. Paul denies that the law should be explained either as ‘a restrictive clause added to the promise’ or as ‘a provisional arrangement... valid for the time between Moses and Christ.’²⁷ For Paul, ‘[t]he unity of the will and purpose of the one God excludes such a duality.’²⁸ Instead he outlines how the law should be viewed as a guardian, protecting the people until the coming of Christ.

The contrast between Paul’s rabbinic methodology and his Christian conclusions in this passage is striking indeed. As Dahl puts it: ‘In no other place does Paul deviate more from the views of the rabbis. But in no other place is his style of argumentation more similar to that of the rabbis than in Galatians 3.’²⁹

D. Text or principle?

Our final methodological question concerns the actual text of Lev 18:5 as it is cited in Gal 3:12. Neither of the instances in which Paul refers to Lev 18:5 (Rom 10:5 and Gal 3:12) cite the LXX form precisely and nor are they demonstrably closer to the MT. The differences appear to be relatively minor and have little effect on the meaning of the phrase.

Gal 3:12 ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ’ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

Rom 10:5 Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας

27. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 173.

28. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 173.

29. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 175.

αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

Lev 18:5 LXX καὶ φυλάξεσθε πάντα τὰ προστάγματά μου καὶ πάντα τὰ κρίματά μου
καὶ ποιήσετε αὐτὰ ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐγὼ κύριος
 ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν

MT **וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-חֻקֵּי יְהוָה וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר יְעֲשֶׂה אִתְּכֶם הָאֱלֹהִים וְחִי בָהֶם**

With respect to Gal 3:12, Stanley has proposed that the omission of ἄνθρωπος is driven by rhetorical motives, in order to sharpen the parallel and thus the contradiction with Hab 2:4.³⁰ This is certainly plausible but it nevertheless leaves unanswered the question of how it is that Paul feels able to amend the biblical text at all.

As we shall see in the next section of this paper, Lev 18:5 was a text widely used in early Jewish writings, so much so that it has been dubbed ‘the John 3:16 of early Judaism.’³¹ However, what is significant for our purposes here is that the text did not need to be cited verbatim for this principle to be invoked. The concept of law leading to life was common currency, not necessarily even evoking an allusion to Lev 18:5.³² Paul’s citation is certainly close enough to the original for us to presume that he had the text in mind, but the freedom with which he altered the text here and in Romans, may suggest his familiarity with the more general usage of the principle. Paul may be intending to allude to the slogan used by Jewish teachers in a variety of forms, as well as or instead of, the original text from Leviticus.

30. Stanley, C. D. *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*. SNTSMS. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

31. Sprinkle, “Why Can’t ‘the One Who Does These Things Live by Them’? The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12,” 1.

32. Simon Gathercole identifies *Baruch 4.1* and *Let. Aris. 127* as examples of such ‘red herrings’ which suggest a connection between Torah-obedience and life without making any direct verbal allusion to Lev 18:5. See Gathercole, “Torah, Life and Salvation,” 128–29. See Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 9–16*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas, Texas: Word for a list of biblical and extra-biblical texts that cite a similar principle. Dunn also notes the phrase ‘the law of life’ which expresses a similar idea.

III. Interpretive traditions

Inevitably, as Lev 18:5 was used and applied in later Jewish writings, it gained a whole range of associations and ideas not found in the original. As the text was interpreted its meaning also began to shift in directions not implied in its Pentateuchal context. Any subsequent allusion to Lev 18:5 might therefore evoke, not just the meaning of the verse in its original context, but one or more of the later interpretive traditions or associations. Silva notes that this kind of citation, invoking accepted interpretations of the verse was known within rabbinic hermeneutics, such that it was possible to ‘to quote a verse and mean not just the verse of the passage but an interpretive framework associated with this verse.’³³ If Paul is employing this kind of technique, it will be important for us to examine the interpretive traditions that had come to be associated with Lev 18:5 by the first century C.E.

Before we turn to consider the development of the interpretive traditions associated with it, we should briefly consider the sense of the verse in its original context. Lev 18:5 contains a command addressed to the Israelite community to keep the Lord’s statutes and rules (מִן־הַקְּדָשִׁים and מִן־הַשְּׁפָטִים), and a promise that the man who does them shall live in/by them (בָּהֶם). The corporate context of the address indicated in vv. 1-5 is mitigated by the individual nature of the commands regarding sexual impurity that follow.³⁴ That the individual is the focus is made abundantly clear in the threat of v. 29: ‘For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people.’ Despite these warnings of the consequences of the failure to keep God’s laws, the promise in v. 5 appears positive in its expectation of the possibility of success.

Gordon Wenham describes the life that was offered as

33. Silva, Moisés. “The New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Text Form and Authority.” Pp. 147–65 in *Scripture and Truth*. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992 (originally published in 1983).

34. Of course, even these acts will inevitably impact on the community as a whole, but this is not made an explicit focus of the passage. It is the perversion inherent in these acts which is the cause of their abominableness, not their destructive effects (see Lev 18:17, 21, 22, 23).

...primarily physical life. But it is clear that in this and similar passages more than mere existence is being promised. What is envisaged is a happy life in which a man enjoys God's bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity. Keeping the law is the path to divine blessing, to a happy and fulfilled life in the present (Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28:1-12).³⁵

The use of the preposition ב leads to two possible interpretations of the promise. If the ב is understood instrumentally, that is to say 'by them', then the life promised may be considered either as a reward for obedience, or the consequence of obedience. If, however, ב is understood to mean 'in them', then the expression becomes merely descriptive: doing the law involves living a life characterised by the law.

Subsequent interpretations of Lev 18:5 may be, broadly speaking, categorised into two traditions. The first focuses on the life offered to those who do the law, interpreting the original promise of life as future, eternal life for the obedient individual. The second places the emphasis on the law and Israel's corporate, historical failure to obey it and thus retain the privileges and blessings of life in the land.

A. Deferred eschatology

Simon Gathercole has argued that the bulk of evidence from Palestinian Judaism interprets Lev 18:5 in line with the general trend for the Jewish interpretation of OT texts according to the principle of deferred eschatology. He cites evidence from a variety of texts to show that OT warnings of historical judgment and promises of immediate blessing were interpreted as referring to a future age.³⁶

We can see from several examples how this general trend was applied to Lev 18:5.

35. Wenham, Gordon J. *The Book of Leviticus*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

36. See Gathercole, "Torah, Life and Salvation," 130–31. He cites examples from the Mishnah, the Septuagint, and the Greek translation of Sirach interpreting texts from Ps 1, Job, and the Hebrew text of Sirach in such a way as to make the deferred eschatology explicit.

1. *Bar 4.1*

αὕτη ἡ βίβλος τῶν προσταγμάτων τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὁ νόμος ὁ ὑπάρχων εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα πάντες

οἱ κρατοῦντες αὐτῆς εἰς ζωὴν οἱ δὲ καταλείποντες αὐτὴν ἀποθανοῦνται

She is the book of the precepts of God, the law that endures forever; All who cling to her will live, but those will die who forsake her (NAB).

Gathercole argues that this text, since it lacks any verbal links to Lev 18:5 is no more than a red herring in trying to determine the interpretive traditions associated with the verse.³⁷

However, the conceptual links with Lev 18:5 are clear enough that even if no direct dependence can be assumed, the allusion can be seen in the principle expressed. In Baruch 4, the contrast drawn between life and death indicates the kind of life in mind. This is not the blessed life lived in the land, but life which overcomes, or in some way extends beyond, death.

2. *IQS 4:6-8*

6 ... ופקודת כול הולכי בה למרפא 7 ורוב שלום באורך ימים ופריית זרע עם
 כול ברכות עד ושמחת עולמים בחיי נצח וכליל כבוד 8 עם מדת הדר באור
 עולמים

.. and the reward of all those who walk in it will be healing, 7 plentiful peace in a long life, fruitful offspring with all everlasting blessings, and eternal enjoyment with endless life, and a crown of glory 8 with majestic raiment in eternal light.³⁸

Again the verbal links to Lev 18:5 are not strong but the conceptual links are sufficient to suggest that an allusion to the principle of Lev 18:5 may be intended. The relationship between

37. Gathercole, "Torah, Life and Salvation," 128–29.

38. Text and translation are from Martínez, Florentino García, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

obedience and life is made explicit: life is the reward for obedience. The nature of that life is likewise spelled out as endless, offering everlasting blessings and eternal enjoyment.

3. CD 3:12-20

12... ובמזיקים במצות אל 13 אשר נותרו מהם הקים אל את בריתו לישראל עד
 עולם לגלות 14 להם נסתרות אשר תעו במ כל ישראל ... שבתות קדשו ומועדי 15
 כבודו עידות צדקו ודרכי אמתו וחפצי רצונו אשר יעשה 16 האדם וחייה בהם ... פתח
 לפניהם ויחפרו באר למים רבים 17 ומואסיהם לא יהיה והם התגוללו בפשע אנוש
 ובדרכי נדה 18 ויאמרו כי לנו היא ואל ברזי פלאו כפר מעד עונם וירא לפשעם 19 ויבן
 להם בית נאמן בישראל אשר לא עמד כמהו למלפנים ועד 20 הנה המחזיקים בו לחיי
 נצח וכל כבוד אדם להם הוא

But with those who remained steadfast in God's precepts, 13 with those who were left from among them, God established his covenant with Israel for ever, revealing to them 14 hidden matters in which all Israel had gone astray: his holy sabbaths and his 15 glorious feasts, his just stipulations and his truthful paths, and the wishes of his will which 16 man must do in order to live by them. He disclosed (these matters) to them and they dug a well of plentiful water; 17 and whoever spurns them shall not live. But they had defiled themselves with human sin and unclean paths, 18 and they had said: <<For this is ours>>. But God, in his wonderful mysteries, atoned for their failings and pardoned their sins. 19 And he built for them a safe home in Israel such as there has not been since ancient times, not even till 20 now. Those who remained steadfast in it will acquire eternal life, and all the glory of Adam is for them.³⁹

Here we find a clear verbal allusion to Lev 18:5, though not quite a precise quotation, in the phrase 'the wishes of his will which man must do in order to live by them.' The next verse contains an allusion by way of reversing the principle: 'whoever spurns them shall not live,' and in so doing makes the interpretation of the text from Leviticus clear. The contrast is drawn between life and death, not between a life of obedience and a life of disobedience. This is further confirmed in v. 20, where the reference is certainly to eternal life.⁴⁰

39. Text and translation taken from Martínez, and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 554–55.

40. See Gathercole, "Torah, Life and Salvation," 136–37 for this argument.

4. *Pss. Sol. 14.2-3*

² τοῖς πορευομένοις ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ προσταγμάτων αὐτοῦ ἐν νόμῳ ᾧ ἐνετείλατο ἡμῖν εἰς ζωὴν ἡμῶν ³ ὅσοι κυρίου ζήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

2 To them that walk in the righteousness of His commandments, in the law which he commanded us in order that we might live. 3 The holy ones of the Lord shall live by it for ever.

In the psalm, the ambiguity we find in Lev 18:5 due to the preposition κ is reproduced in the Greek ἐν αὐτῷ. The reference is to the Torah mentioned in the previous verse where it is described as being εἰς ζωὴν ἡμῶν. It seems most likely then that we should understand this verse to be offering life as the result or reward of obedience, rather than describing obedience as the characteristic of life.⁴¹ Later in this same psalm we find reference to the righteous inheriting life (v. 10) which similarly suggests that the writer viewed life as a future, rather than present, existence.

5. *Targums*

Tg. Ezek. 20:11 (cf. 20:13, 21)

דאם יעביד יתהון אנשא ייחי בהון בחיי עלמא

If a man observes them, he shall live an everlasting life through them

Ezekiel's reference to Lev 18:5 is given an explicitly eschatological interpretation by the author of this targum. The life promised to those who observe the laws of God will be everlasting.

41. Gathercole, "Torah, Life and Salvation," 133.

Tg. Onq. Lev 18:5

וְתִטְרֹן יְת קְנִמִי קְנִמִי וְיֵת דִּינֵי דְאָם יַעֲבִיד יְתִהוֹן אֲנָשָׁא יִיחֵי בְהוֹן בְּחַיֵּי
עֲלָמָא

And you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which [if a man] do he shall live by them an everlasting life

Tg. Ps.-J. Lev 18:5

And you shall keep my statutes, and the order of my judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them, in the life of eternity, and his position shall be with the just.

The individual nature of the promise is brought to the foreground in *Tg. Ps.-J.* by means of the final clause in which the obedient individual is counted among the righteous people. The promise is clearly expressed in terms of a future eternal life, with no mention of the blessed life in the land that was the referent of the original verse. Since these later Targums were written long after the fall of Jerusalem, it is unsurprising that the texts which spoke of the promise of the land needed to be reinterpreted in this way.

6. *Sipra Lev. §193*

9. A. “You shall keep my laws and my rules, by the pursuit of which man [shall live]”:
B. This formulation of matter serves to make keeping and doing into laws, and keeping and doing into rules.
10. A. “...shall live”:
B. in the world to come.
C. And should you wish to claim that the reference is to this world, is it not the fact that in the end one dies?
D. Lo, how am I to explain, “...shall live”?
E. It is with reference to the world to come.⁴²

42. Neusner, Jacob. *Aharé Mot, Qedoshim, Emor, Behar and Behuqotai*. Vol. III of *Sifra: An Analytical*

Here the rabbis discussion centres on the nature of the life resulting from obedience. The text is clearly applied to the individual who, no matter how obedient, will surely die. Since this is so, the life must be taken with reference to the world to come.

7. *Luke 10:25-28*

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly, do this, and you will live.’ (ESV).

²⁵ Καὶ ἰδοὺ νομικός τις ἀνέστη ἐκπειράζων αὐτὸν λέγων· διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; ²⁶ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται; πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις; ²⁷ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης [τῆς] καρδίας σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχυΐ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου, καὶ τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. ²⁸ εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ· ὀρθῶς ἀπεκρίθης· τοῦτο ποιεῖ καὶ ζήσῃ.

The concern of the lawyer who addresses Jesus is future eternal life and he responds to Jesus’ first question that the way to inherit this eternal life is by obedience to the great commandments. Jesus confirms the lawyer’s answer by means of an allusion to the principle of Lev 18:5, ‘doing the law leads to life.’ The context of this encounter draws out the application of the text to the individual.

Through each of these examples we see the pattern emerging of Lev 18:5 being interpreted with respect to the individual. Life is understood in eschatological terms, as future and eternal, contrasted with death. The ambiguity of the preposition in Lev 18:5 is removed and life is explicitly stated to be the reward for obedience to the law.

B. Salvation-historical

The second strand of the interpretive tradition focused attention not so much on the life

promised as the law by which it was to be achieved.

1. *Ezek 20:11, 13, 21*

וַאֲתַן לָהֶם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי טָאֲת־מִשְׁפָּטַי הַיְדַעְתִּי אֹתָם הָאֲדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם

I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live.

Whereas Moses in the wilderness held out the promise of life in the land for any Israelite who would obey, Ezekiel addressed the Israel which had already failed to obey and was suffering the consequences. In v. 13 and v. 21, Ezekiel explicitly applies the verse to the nation as a whole: ‘They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live.’ The consequences of this rejection were also experienced corporately: failure to enter the land (v. 15); dispersal among the nations (v. 23); and being given non-life-giving laws (v. 25).

The promise of life offered in Lev 18:5 is referred to in v. 11 but is almost immediately followed by a statement of the historical reality that Israel did not keep these laws. This failure is repeated in the second generation, emphasized with an almost exactly repeated judgment. In each case, Lev 18:5 provides the identifier for God’s laws: they are ‘the laws by which if a person does them, he shall live.’

The application of Lev 18:5 in Ezek 20 is consistently negative: Israel did *not* keep these statutes which, if kept, bring life. This adds a new layer of meaning, or perhaps more correctly, of association, to the verse: to the hopeful expectation of the Mosaic presentation of this promise in Leviticus is now added the tragic reality of Israel’s failure to keep these life-giving laws. Willitts expresses this development in terms of covenant potential: ‘For Ezekiel, Leviticus 18:5 does not represent the positive purpose of the covenant, as it did in the Pentateuch, but now ironically, in light of Israel’s history, it comes to signify the *unrealised purpose* of the covenant

within redemptive history.⁴³

Ezek 20 adds one further connotation to Lev 18:5. A consequence of Israel's disobedience was that the Lord now gave them 'statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life',⁴⁴ an expression which, by contrast with Lev 18:5, reinforces the status of God's commands as those which did offer life. As Sprinkle observes, 'the rhetorical function of the statement is to exploit the divine response to the rebellion of Israel against the covenant stipulations by drawing upon and reversing the previous refrain of Leviticus 18.5.'⁴⁵ It is not the laws themselves which Ezekiel viewed negatively but Israel's failure to keep them.

2. *Neh 9:29*

וְנִתְעַד שְׁהָם לְהַשְׁמֹכְבָם אֶל-תּוֹרַתְךָ וְהַמָּה חָזִידוּ וְלֹא-שָׁמְעוּ
 לְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ הִטְאוּבָם אֲשֶׁר-יִעָשֶׂה אָדָם וְנִתְּיָה
 בָּהֶם נִילְנוּ כְּתֵרִי סוֹרְרֹת וְעֹחֲפִים הִלְשׁוּ וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ

And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.

43. Willitts, "Context Matters," 113.

44. Ezek 20:25. Block thinks that these should not be identified with the laws of the firstborn given in Egypt or the Sinai revelation for a number of reasons, not least because Ezekiel tells us they were given to the second wilderness generation. See Block, Daniel I. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Allen notes the distinctive use of *הַקִּים* to refer to these laws (in Ezekiel, Yahweh's laws are always designated with the feminine *הַקִּוֹת*) and further observes that 'חוקי' has been used in v. 18 concerning self-made rulings that Israel had substituted for Yahweh's and persisted in observing.' (Allen, Leslie C. *Ezekiel 20–48*. Word Biblical Commentaries. Dallas: Word, 1990.) Given this, Ezekiel's rhetorical point may be that even these 'self-made' laws are in fact given by God but, unlike the good laws of Sinai, they are given for judgment, since they cannot lead to life.

45. Sprinkle, Preston M. "Law and Life: Leviticus 18:5 in the Literary Framework of Ezekiel." *JSOT* (forthcoming), 14.

Neh 9 records the public, corporate confession of the returned Israelite exiles. They confess not only their own sins but also those of their fathers. In v. 29 this is identified as disobedience to the laws identified by the expression from Lev 18:5. Just as in Ezek 20, the allusion to Lev 18:5 occurs in the context of a rehearsal of Israelite history which begins with the covenant made with Abraham and his offspring (Neh 9:7-8). The history is a cycle of God's mercy and Israel's disobedience which culminates in exile (Neh 9:30).

Here again, the principle of Lev 18:5 is applied to the national history of Israel with negative consequences: 'the Nehemiah passage explicitly links the *judgment* of God with the *failure* of Israel, which resulted in the squandering of the *potential* (Lev. 18:5) of the covenant relationship. If it was not clear before, Ezekiel and Nehemiah show there was *not* a time prior to the exile when Israel lived out the positive purpose of Leviticus 18:5.'⁴⁶

3. *CD 3:12-20*

We noted this allusion to Lev 18:5 earlier with respect to the eternal life associated with the promise. Here we notice that the text also alludes to the other strand of the interpretive tradition, by associating these laws with the corporate historical failure of Israel. These are the matters 'in which all Israel had gone astray'.⁴⁷

The reason for the dual interpretation is that two different salvation-historical settings are in view. The writer contrasts Israel's past failure with the renewed promise applied to the Qumran community. For this new community, the expectation is of future success in keeping these laws and achieving eternal life. They have the hope of being able to succeed where Israel failed since the 'hidden matters' have been revealed to them.

46. Willitts, "Context Matters," 114.

47. CD 3:14

This strand of the interpretive tradition reads Lev 18:5 in a strongly corporate way. Israel as a whole failed to keep the law and as a whole, the nation suffered the consequences. The text became associated with the realities of Israel's historical failure to keep the covenant. The laws which 'if a man does them, he will live by them' were precisely the laws which Israel failed to keep and as a result were cast into exile.

C. Some observations

Although we have traced the two strands of the interpretive tradition separately, we note that the traditions did not exist in isolation from each other. *Tg. Ezek.* retains the historical failure context of Ezekiel, but still eschatologises the promise of life. Similarly, the Damascus Document recalls the historical failure of Israel but makes the promise of eternal life for obedient members of the Qumran community. In fact, it should be clear that the two traditions are not mutually opposed. That Israel failed to keep the law, and thus forfeited the blessings of life in the land, did not rule out the possibility of a future promise of eternal life to those who are now obedient. If, as the Qumran community believed, the salvation-historical perspective had changed to give a renewed possibility of obedience, then the renewal of this promise should be expected.

For our purpose of determining Paul's hermeneutical assumptions and goals, it is important to notice that the interpretive traditions associated with the verse he chose to cite were not uniform. The ongoing interpretation of Lev 18:5 and its re-appropriation in different settings created a complex set of allusions, connotations and meanings, many of which could not be directly inferred from the original text. This is not to suggest that every use of the text invokes all possible associations, but it is to say that whatever Paul intended to communicate when he cited Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12, he had to say it against this background of the strong and varied interpretive tradition already associated with the text.

Of course the radical shift in worldview associated with the coming of the Christ and the establishment of the church brought its own hermeneutical perspective and it would be foolish to

assume that the NT writers always adopted existing interpretive traditions uncritically. Ellis is surely right to observe that '[i]f Paul used Jewish interpretations, he culled and moulded them to a Christological understanding of the OT.'⁴⁸ But it must nevertheless be the case that the distinct hermeneutical goals of the NT authors were achieved against the background of already existing interpretive traditions. Their hermeneutical goals did not always require them to return to the original texts and make their own exegetical decisions from scratch.

D. One implication of the interpretive tradition

One conclusion regarding Paul's use of Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12 may be easily drawn from the evidence of the interpretive tradition shown here. Since the reformation, it has been commonplace to interpret Gal 3:12 ironically. In this sense, it is argued, it may be true that 'the one who does them will live by them,' but since no one can do them no one will actually live by them.⁴⁹

Nowhere in the interpretive tradition associated with Lev 18:5 have we found anything to support the existence of such a reading of the verse. It may have been possible for Paul to have taken the text of Lev 18:5 to support such an argument, but if he wanted to make such a novel interpretation, he would surely have needed some explanatory comment to show that this was his intention. Hays observes that as it stands, '[t]his is such a ridiculous caricature of Judaism, however, that it could hardly have been taken seriously as a persuasive argument in Paul's time.'⁵⁰ It is hard to see that any of Paul's original audience could have made such an interpretive leap against the existing traditions without further explanation.

48. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 83.

49. See for example Hanson, Anthony Tyrrell. *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, who cites Luther on this verse; Stott, John R. W. *The Message of Galatians*. London: IVP, 1968; Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

50. Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians," 257 We may also note Hays' point that Paul himself suggests that the law could be kept fully in Phil 3:6 and Rom 2:13.

IV. Hermeneutical goals

In our survey of the interpretive traditions associated with Lev 18:5 we have briefly touched on a number of the guiding principles which produced these interpretations. Chief among these was the need to demonstrate the ongoing relevance of the Scriptures for the exilic and post-exilic communities. As the Jewish people entered different salvation-historical periods, the promises made to their ancestors needed to be reinterpreted to retain contemporary relevance.

In a sense, Paul's interpretation of Scripture is driven by an identical goal: to reinterpret Scripture for his contemporary situation. However his interpretation differs from the Jewish exegetes because his understanding of the contemporary situation is different. For Paul, in the light of the Christ-event, the principle of Lev 18:5 can no longer be the guiding principle for the covenant community.

Ben Witherington identifies four central convictions which guide Paul's reading of the OT:

- (1) Paul and his readers are the "eschatological people" of God;
- (2) because of this, they must read the OT in the light of this new era of salvation-history;
- (3) which will include looking for 'pre-figurations and types and prophecies and promises of what was to come';
- (4) which entails reading 'the Law, and indeed all of the Hebrew Scriptures... not just ecclesiologically but also and perhaps primarily Christologically.'⁵¹

These three principles: eschatological, ecclesiological and Christological are all embodied in Paul's attitude to the OT in Galatians.

A. Eschatological

Paul is conscious of writing to an eschatological people, living within the last age of salvation history. The gospel that was preached beforehand (3:8) is now realised in Christ. The

51. Witherington, Ben. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

promised blessing to the Gentiles is being fulfilled in the church. This new age is characterized by the coming faith (Gal 3:23) revealed in Christ.

The law, in Paul's argument here, belonged to the intervening age between the Abrahamic covenant and the coming of Christ. It was the guardian, set in place because of transgressions, keeping the people until the coming faith. The law was not given because it could give life (Gal 3:21) and so righteousness was not to be found through the law.

The inability of the law to bring life resonates strongly with the second strand of the interpretive tradition we examined. It may be the case then that Paul intends to allude to the unrealized potential of the law in his citation of Lev 18:5, evoking the associations of Ezek 20 and Neh 9. It is interesting to note that Habakkuk's prophecy also alludes to the failure of the law (Hab 1:4) as well as promising the life of faith.⁵²

By contrast, we see little evidence of the other eschatologising trend in Galatians. Paul is certainly aware of the promise of eternal life (Gal 6:8) but his primary concern seems to be with the life lived here and now by the covenant community (see Gal 2:14, 19-20, 3:2-3, 5:25).

B. Ecclesiological

We have already noted that Paul's concern in Gal 3 is to redefine the covenant community in terms of faith.⁵³ If the community is to be characterised by faith rather than Torah-obedience, Paul must show how texts such as Lev 18:5 can be interpreted accordingly.

His use of Deut 27:26 in v. 10 illustrates the principle by which Paul achieves this. A text which appears to pronounce a curse on all who do not obey the law is used by Paul to pronounce a curse on all those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. To be part of the community identified by works of the law is to be cursed. Historically, this was clearly the case. Israel, the community of the Torah, suffered the curses of the covenant as a result of their disobedience.

52. See Sprinkle, "Why Can't 'the One Who Does These Things Live by Them'? The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12" for this observation.

53. See pp. 3-4 above.

For Habakkuk when ‘the law withered’ the remedy was to be found in the principle of faith. This sets up the contradiction, as Paul points out in Gal 3:12, for ‘ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως.’ The laws which in Lev 18:5 were associated with the promise of life, are the laws which Israel failed to keep. By these laws they were cursed.

Again, it seems that the salvation-historical strand of the interpretive tradition best fits with the sense of Paul’s argument. He is speaking in corporate terms, alluding to the failed history of the people of Torah. Where the law failed to bring life, faith now succeeds, because of the work of Christ.

To offer the promise of eternal life to the obedient law keeper in this new age would be absurd. To enter back in to the community of the law would be to associate oneself with failure and curse.

C. Christological

The event above all others which determined Paul’s hermeneutical goals was the coming of the Christ. His work, and in Galatians this is mainly seen in terms of his work on the cross, is the lens through which the OT must be read.

With respect to the law, Paul understands that ‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us’ (Gal 3:12). The age of the law described in Gal 3:19-25 ended when Christ came (Gal 3:24). Faith in Christ is now seen to be the qualifying characteristic of the heirs to the Abrahamic covenant.

Reading Lev 18:5 in this context again most naturally evokes the salvation-historical associations of the failure of Israel to obey the law and enjoy the promised blessings.

V. Conclusions

Paul employed a variety of contemporary hermeneutical methods in his exposition of the OT in Gal 3. His overall interpretation may be described as midrashic and elements of the

rabbinic patterns of chain quotations and textual contradiction can be seen. In the light of the extensive and varied interpretive traditions of Lev 18:5 it seems unlikely that Paul intended to exclude any such associations from his reference to the text. Rather, as we have seen, Paul's own hermeneutical goals are best served when Lev 18:5 is understood in the light of one particular strand of the interpretive tradition, namely the salvation-historical.

It would be naïve to think that the meanings of texts can be limited to the intentions of their original authors. Whenever a text is re-used in a different context or re-applied to a different situation, it acquires a new set of associations and connotations. If this done repeatedly, as in the case of Lev 18:5, a complex web of meaning develops which may be alluded to fully or partly. Such development happened even within the biblical corpus as we see illustrated by the appropriation of Lev 18:5 by Ezekiel and Nehemiah.

The interpretive traditions associated with Lev 18:5 were not limited to those found within the Scriptures and there is no reason to suppose that Paul excluded all such interpretations, nor that his audience would have done so. The apostle was not communicating within an interpretive vacuum but against a background of already existing traditions.

The development of such traditions did not cease in the first century C.E. With the establishment of the church a new era in the development and formation of such traditions began. In evangelical circles, these traditions are generally viewed disparagingly as something to be got beyond in our desire to discover the 'original meaning' of the text. However, insofar as these traditions represent the collective wisdom of the church over the past 2000 years, and insofar as they have proven themselves profitable to the church in exalting Christ and proclaiming the gospel, they should be taken seriously as a guide to our interpretation of the text. Like Paul, we stand within the tradition without allowing the tradition to be in every respect normative for our interpretation.

Indeed, we must interact with these traditions, whether we choose to recognize them or not, for they have taught us our Scriptures; they have moulded the language with which we speak;

and they have conditioned the way in which we think. The interpretive traditions of the church over the centuries have played a significant role in forming the church we are today.

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