

‘WORKS OF THE LAW’ AND
THE JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN ASIA MINOR

Barry F. Parker

California Baptist University, Riverside, CA, USA

Early Records of Jews in Asia Minor

Historically, because of its situation and geographical features, Asia Minor has been more important for its migratory peoples than its settled population. It essentially covers the region occupied by modern Turkey and is known alternately as Anatolia (the Greek term for ‘east’ or ‘sunrise’). It was dominated in turn by the Hittites, Phrygians, Persians, Greeks and, by the second century BCE, the Romans.¹ As the meeting point between Eastern and Western civilization, Asia Minor was a mixture of both in culture, religion and language. The dominant influence on the central Anatolian plateau since the second quarter of the third century BCE until the end of the first century BCE was the Celts, commonly referred to as Galatians in Anatolia. They formed an uneasy alliance with the indigenous peoples they had conquered, but were allies of the conquering Romans. Although the Jewish population in Asia Minor was thriving at the time Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians, the origins of the Jewish settlement are somewhat uncertain. Despite significant archaeological progress in the twentieth century, there is a scarcity of historical information on the Jews in Asia Minor, outside of Josephus, leading up to and throughout the first century CE. John Barclay observes that ‘most of our historical information has to be derived from literary sources which, though not written by Asian Jews, tell us something about their social and religious

1. Stephen Mitchell coordinates a mass of material and provides a thorough history of the settlement of Anatolia from the invasion of the Celtic peoples in the third century BCE to the Christian developments in the region throughout late antiquity in his two volume set on Anatolia (*Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* [2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993]).

conditions'.² The narrative of Paul's travels in Acts does provide details that seem to be collaborated by the historical evidence, and thus helps to provide a context for Galatians and, hopefully, add to our understanding of the meaning of some of the more unusual words and phrases Paul uses in that letter.

The volume and scope of information on Asia Minor leading up to and including the first century CE makes a comprehensive study of the entire region impractical for the limited purpose of understanding Paul's use of language in his letter to the Galatians. While it is necessary to some extent to draw from material outside of the specific region to which Paul addressed his letter, and beyond the time frame in which it was written, certain parameters will assist in properly drawing our focus to that which is most likely pertinent in Paul's selection of words. While neither the date of Galatians nor the location to which it was directed is absolutely fixed, the wealth of information confirms that it was most likely sent to the churches in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in the south of the Roman province of Galatia, which Paul had evangelized on his first missionary journey, as described in Acts 13 and 14.³ Even if the epistle was directed to a broader audience within the province of Galatia, it is logical to assume that the gist of Paul's message would be intended for the inhabitants of the southern cities that he had encountered. Although Paul visited south Galatia on each of his three missionary journeys, the only argument for suggesting that he wrote Galatians after a subsequent visit is an alignment of Paul's confrontation with Peter, described in Galatians 2, with the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15. As we shall see, this is a connection unnecessarily imposed on the text. Therefore, we can place the date of the epistle after Paul's first missionary journey (somewhere between 45 and 49 CE) and before his second (somewhere between 50 and 53 CE).

For the origins of the Jewish settlement in Asia Minor, however, we

2. John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), p. 260. Barclay's section on the Province of Asia provides an excellent summary of the kind of information he describes here (pp. 259-81).

3. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, pp. 3-5. Colin J. Hemer notes: 'Our general conclusion is that any Pauline churches in provincial Galatia are eligible to be regarded as the "Galatians" of the epistle. If we accept the essential correctness of the Acts account which names Pauline churches of the south, we should naturally expect them to meet the case adequately' (*The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic Christianity* [WUNT, 49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989], p. 305).

must begin with a broad perspective, assessing the degree to which early communities were indicators of what Paul encountered in the first-century province of Galatia. An early record of the Jews in Asia Minor comes to us through the fragment on Clearchus's work 'On Sleep' (Περὶ ὕπνου), which is preserved for us in Josephus (*Apion* 1.176). The fragment represents an alleged encounter between Aristotle and a Jew during Aristotle's visit to Atarneus in Mysia with his friend Hermias (c. 347–344 BCE).⁴ Clearchus describes the Jews as 'descended from the Indian philosophers', and refers to their district, Judea, and their city, Ἰερουσαλήμην. The Jew in question, he says, 'not only spoke Greek, but had the soul of a Greek'.⁵ The meeting described in Clearchus's fragment is, in the general consensus, fictitious. It is written for literary purposes to establish a link between Greek and Eastern thought through an encounter between a famous Greek thinker and an Eastern thinker.⁶ Therefore, more important than what the anecdote tells us of Aristotle's knowledge of Jews in Asia Minor is what it tells us of Clearchus's knowledge of Jews in Asia Minor. Lewy identifies the Jew in Clearchus's narrative with a miracle worker described in other fragments of Clearchus's work.⁷ On the basis of this identification, which he cannot see as applicable to the Jews in the mid-fourth century BCE, Lewy concludes that 'the figure of this dialogue is an invention of the writer, who...satisfied the prevailing taste by choosing one of the sage "Barbarians" as counterpart to Aristotle'.⁸ Martin Hengel, however, suggests that by the first half of the third century BCE, when Clearchus actually wrote his work, Jewish miracle workers may well have been evident.⁹ Further, the historical data of the fragment itself is convincing—particularly the alternative spelling of Jerusalem, which suggests first-hand knowledge of its existence.

4. See Josephus, *Apion* 1.177-182. For details of Aristotle's journey into Asia Minor, see W. Jaeger, *Aristotle* (trans. R. Robinson; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 105-23.

5. Josephus, *Apion* 1.180-181.

6. See, e.g., M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanity, 1974), I, p. 47; W. Jaeger, 'Greeks and Jews: The First Greek Records of Jewish Religion and Civilization', *JR* 18 (1938), pp. 127-43 (131).

7. Note especially 'Proclus', cited in H. Lewy, 'Aristotle and the Jewish Sage according to Clearchus of Soli', *HTR* 31 (1938), pp. 205-35 (208-209 nn. 15, 16).

8. Lewy, 'Aristotle and the Jewish Sage', p. 222.

9. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1974), I, p. 258.

If the fragment preserved for us is authentic,¹⁰ despite its limited historical value, it indicates two features of early Judaism in Asia Minor. First, it indicates that the extensive penetration of Jews into Asia Minor had its origins in the fourth century BCE or earlier. The lack of further written evidence may be explained, as per Silberschlag, by 'the lack of organized community life in the early times of [the Jews'] settlements'.¹¹ In fact, we read in Obadiah 20 of the exiles in Sepherad (ספרא), which may be understood to designate Sardis (in Hebrew and Aramaic), placing the origins of the community there shortly after 587 BCE.¹² Secondly, we may infer from Clearchus's fragment that, by the middle of the third century, at least some of the Jews of Asia Minor had imbibed the Hellenistic culture of the cities there. The extent of the capitulation, however, is difficult to determine from an isolated fragment.

Jewish Settlements in Asia Minor under Antiochus III

More solid evidence for the origin of the Jewish community in Asia Minor rests on Josephus's account of the order given by Antiochus III to the governor of Asia, Zeuxis, that 2,000 Jewish families be transported from Mesopotamia and Babylon to settle in the towns of Lydia and Phrygia.¹³ This was, indeed, a characteristic method of colonization employed by the Seleucids,¹⁴ and, as Marcus concludes, 'there is no convincing evidence against the genuineness of Antiochus III's letter to Zeuxis'.¹⁵ The Jews were allowed their own laws, they were given a place to build a house and they were given land for cultivation, along with exemption from taxes for ten years. Josephus's account has been confirmed by

10. The authenticity of this fragment is well defended by E. Silberschlag, 'The Earliest Record of Jews in Asia Minor', *JBL* 52 (1933), pp. 66-77.

11. Silberschlag, 'The Earliest Record', pp. 75-76.

12. See A.T. Kraabel, 'The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence since Sukenik', in *ANRW* II.19, p. 484. V. Tcherikover, however, dismisses any suggestions of an early settlement of Jews 'since Clearchus's anecdote, even if we admit its truth, concerns an isolated and exceptional case' (*Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* [trans. S. Applebaum; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959], p. 287).

13. See Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.4 (Marcus, LCL). For support of the genuineness of this letter, see Marcus's comments in Appendix D, LCL, pp. 764-66.

14. See M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), I, pp. 492-94; II, pp. 646-47.

15. Marcus, LCL, p. 766.

inscriptionary evidence,¹⁶ and the settlement can be dated sometime after the siege of Sardis in 215–213 BCE.¹⁷ It is important to note that the Jews sent to Asia Minor were sent to ensure the fidelity of Asia Minor to the Seleucid kings—a project no doubt propelled by the privileges granted to the Jews. These privileges were equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks.¹⁸

The Jews were, in fact, military settlers.¹⁹ Many were settled in strategically located forts set up independently in the countryside, as was the practice of the Seleucid government. Indeed, Jewish military colonies, or cleruchs, were also located in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period,²⁰ in forts known as *κατοικίαι*. This term, found in an epitaph from Hierapolis in Phrygia,²¹ generally indicates a community of those who, although not citizens, were granted special legal privileges. Ramsay notes that a later Apameian inscription referring to ‘the law of the Jews’ most likely concerns not the law of Moses, but the various privileges granted to the Jewish *κατοικίαι*.²² This would suggest that the Jews were identified, to some extent, by their privileged position. A.T. Kraabel proposes that, if the Jewish settlement was indeed a *κατοικίαι*, then it might be somewhat insulated from its surrounding environment.²³

16. Extensive details are found in L. Robert, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes, I* (Paris: Librairie d’Amerique et d’Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1964), pp. 9-21.

17. A Jewish presence in Sardis may well date to the sixth century BCE with Cyrus’s annexation of the city (referenced in Obadiah 20 as Sepharad) in 546.

18. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.1.

19. See S. Applebaum, ‘The Organization of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora’, in S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), I, pp. 464-503 (469).

20. V. Tcherikover (ed.), *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-64), I, pp. 147-78. Also, papyri found at Elephantine indicate that there were Jewish mercenaries there as early as the time of Darius and Xerxes during the Persian domination of Egypt (Rostovtzeff, *Hellenistic World*, I, p. 82). Barclay notes: ‘It was the policy of the early Ptolemies to build a standing army entirely from non-natives, granting immigrant soldiers varied quantities of land (according to their status) to provide them with a regular income. Such “cleruchs” are amply attested in the papyri, among them a number identifiable as Judaeans/Jews’ (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, p. 22).

21. J.B. Frey, *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1958), p. 775.

22. W.M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), II, p. 668; cf. p. 538.

23. A.T. Kraabel, ‘Judaism in Western Asia Minor under the Roman Empire’,

Some indication as to the identity of the Jews originally settling in Lydia and Phrygia may be found in 2 Macc. 8.20, where it mentions that 8,000 Jews fought valiantly against Gallic mercenaries in Babylonia. If Zeitlin is correct in suggesting that we identify this battle as part of Antiochus's war with Molan in 222–220 BCE,²⁴ then it is likely that the 2,000 Jews for Asia Minor were selected from this military sector of Jewish society. Further, Antiochus's reference to τοῖς εἰς τὰς χρείας ὑπηρέντουσι (translated by Marcus as 'those engaged in public service')²⁵ may be interpreted as 'those engaged in religious duties'.²⁶ As Schalit notes in rendering that interpretation, ὑπηρέτης is used to translate ἱερεὺς in the New Testament (Lk. 4.20) and elsewhere in Josephus.²⁷ This would indicate that those performing religious rites in the κατοικίαι were Levites. Note particularly Josephus on this point: 'and to each magistracy let there be assigned two ὑπηρέται of the tribe of Levi'.²⁸

The prominence of Levites at this time is reflected in their exemption from royal taxes in Antiochus's letter to Ptolemy,²⁹ which is apparently echoed in the letter to Zeuxis. The responsibility for the organization of the κατοικίαι would have fallen on the Levites, who were state supported. Applebaum suggests certain features of the organization of κατοικίαι common to Asia, Mesopotamia, Babylonia and Persia:

- (1) Their organization centered on the priests and Levites, who received their personal stipends from royal fines.
- (2) The priests sometimes held the command, and as such were responsible for the basis or central strong point of the settlement area.
- (3) The position of command was in these cases hereditary in view of the priestly rank of the incumbent.³⁰

The autonomy of the κατοικίαι would, however, as with the Greek cities, be religious and social, not political.

PhD diss., Harvard University, 1968, pp. 130-31.

24. S. Zeitlin, *The Second Book of Maccabees* (trans. S. Tedesche; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 174-75.

25. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.4.

26. A.W. Schalit, 'The Letter of Antiochus III to Zeuxis regarding the Establishment of Jewish Colonies in Phrygia and Lydia', *JQR* 50 (1959–1960), pp. 289-318 (314).

27. See Josephus, *Ant.* 4.8.14.

28. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.8.14 (translation from Thackeray and Marcus, LCL, §214).

29. See Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.3.

30. S. Applebaum, 'Jewish Communities', in Safrai and Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People*, I, p. 472.

Essenism and the Jews of Asia Minor

Through a study of Essenism without the aid of the Qumran literature, J.B. Lightfoot endeavoured to draw parallels between Essenism and the gnostic heresy that he saw at Colossae.³¹ Several points that he makes along the way reflect some of the problems that Paul faced at Galatia. Lightfoot notes Essenism's 'particular direction of mystic speculation, involving a rigid ascetic', and the Essene's rigor 'in his observance of the Mosaic ritual'.³² Lightfoot also notes an extensive angelology, a ritual of initiation and secret books.³³ Lightfoot's comments on the fourth book of the *Sibylline Oracles* (to which he attributes Jewish Essene authorship, c. 80 CE) are particularly relevant:

And certainly the moral and intellectual atmosphere of Asia Minor would not be unfavourable to the growth of such a plant. The same district, which in speculative philosophy had produced a Thales and Heraclitus, had developed in popular religion the worship of the Phrygian Cybele and Sabizius and of Ephesian Artemis. Cosmological speculation, mystic theosophy, religious fanaticism, all had their home here.³⁴

William Ramsay countered that such worship as was found in Asia Minor at this time may be unrelated to Essenism, and that such practices as angel worship may simply be the 'Christianizing form given to worship of dead heroes'.³⁵ The fact that angelology is mentioned by Paul in the context of Jewish ceremonial observances at Colossae, however, suggests Jewish influence. Also, the discoveries at Qumran confirm that, along with strict calendrical observances, the Essenes emphasized the role of angels.³⁶ Indeed, it is difficult to approach the Colossian heresy in isolation from Essenism in light of the material that is now at hand. We read from Benoit:

As J.B. Lightfoot suspected, and recent discoveries have confirmed, the error combated by the Epistle to the Colossians appears to be tainted with Essenism. A return to the Mosaic law by circumcision, rigid observance concerning the cult and calendar, speculations about angelic powers; all this

31. J.B. Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London: Macmillan, 1876), pp. 80-96.

32. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 81.

33. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, pp. 87-88.

34. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 94.

35. W.M. Ramsay, *Galatians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899), p. 44.

36. See, e.g., 1QS 3.20; 4QS 1.39; 1QM 7.4-6; 10.10-12; 1QSa 3.3-11.

is part and parcel of the doctrine of Qumran.³⁷

A key text for determining the nature of the Colossian error is Col. 2.18, in particular the phrase 'self-abasement and worship of angels' (ταπεινοφροσύνη καὶ θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων). Initially, the emphasis appears to be on the humility preceding the heavenly ascent necessary for participation in angelic liturgies.³⁸ Wesley Carr, however, counters this position both historically and linguistically. He notes that there is 'no direct evidence for a cult of angels either in Judaism, Christianity or paganism in the first century', and that, if θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων is read as a subjective genitive, it is 'not a question of worship being offered to angels but of worship offered by angels'.³⁹ Craig Evans suggests that, in this light, the error might be understood 'against the background of Jewish mysticism'.⁴⁰ The value in this line of reasoning becomes explicit in a subsequent article by Christopher Rowland, which argues that the expression concerning the humility and worship of angels refers 'to the regular experience of the apocalyptic visionary'.⁴¹

Carr's discussion heads in a slightly different direction. For him, the language of Colossians pertains less to the language of the oracles and mysteries than to local religious tradition. He suggests that its source may be the Bacchic religion of excess and contradiction, and that ἐμβρατεύων therefore should keep its essential sense of 'treading upon a religiously

37. Pierre Benoit, 'Qumran and the New Testament', in J. Murphy O'Connor (ed.), *Paul and Qumran* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), pp. 1-30 (17). For a similar conclusion, see S. Lyonnet, 'Paul's Adversaries in Colossae', in F.O. Francis and W.A. Meeks (eds.), *Conflict at Colossae: A Problem in the Interpretation of Early Christianity Illustrated by Selected Modern Studies* (Missoula, MT: SBL, 1973), pp. 147-61 (151-53).

38. See, e.g., A.J. Bandstra, 'Did the Colossian Errorists Need a Mediator?', in Richard N. Longenecker and M.C. Tenney (eds.), *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 329-43.

39. Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 71. On reading θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων as a subjective genitive, see also C.A. Evans, 'The Colossian Mystics', *Bib* 63 (1982), pp. 188-205 (197); A.T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 112. See also F.O. Francis, 'Humility and Angel Worship in Col. 2:18', in Francis and Meeks (eds.), *Conflict at Colossae*, pp. 163-95, where Francis lists others who have taken the phrase as a subjective genitive.

40. Evans, 'Colossian Mystics', p. 204.

41. Christopher Rowland, 'Apocalyptic Visions and the Exaltation of Christ in the Letter to the Colossians', *JSNT* 19 (1983), pp. 73-83 (75).

significant place'.⁴² The various strands of Carr's position come together to form a scene wherein the Colossian Christians seek to share in the heavenly court of angels, who, as in all Christian traditions, worship the Almighty in 'a heavenly liturgy offered night and day'.⁴³ He concludes:

It was not, then, notions from the mysteries nor a unique cult of the angels that was leading the Colossians astray. The problem was the same as that found elsewhere: claims to a spiritual superiority were being validated by claims to a higher religious experience through a mystical ascetical purity.⁴⁴

Rowland, though attributing the heresy at Colossae to apocalyptic sources, arrives at similar conclusions:

The Colossian false teaching has two major components: the detailed preparations, which were necessary to receive visions (2:16), and the visions themselves (2:18), which offered the recipients a pattern of existence which could be extended to everyday life (2:23). The problem with the teaching is its insistence on further rites and experiences in order to embrace the fullness of religion.⁴⁵

For our immediate purposes, it is not the source of the wrong teaching that concerns us so much as the nature of that teaching. Both Rowland and Carr agree on this point. In Colossae, then, the activities of angels were of interest, not only for the esoteric experience of the visionary, but as an example for the righteous. The important question pertaining to the value of these observations for understanding Paul's language in Galatians is whether or not the teaching evident in Colossians was apparent throughout Asia Minor. E.W. Saunders affirms that it was.⁴⁶ Indeed, the Colossian heresy, as analyzed by Saunders, exhibits marked elements of the opposition at Galatia:

1. The message centered on a revelation of divine wisdom which was reserved for those properly qualified to receive it as the means of obtaining salvation... 2. The ritual character of this way of salvation is alluded to by a reference to some of the practices advocated as a means to perfection: circumcision (conceived as a means of purification of the flesh, 2:11); the

42. Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, p. 69.

43. Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, p. 71.

44. Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, pp. 71-72.

45. Rowland, 'Apocalyptic Visions', p. 77.

46. E.W. Saunders, 'The Colossian Heresy and Qumran Theology', in B.L. Daniels and M.J. Suggs (eds.), *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament in Honor of Kenneth Willis Clark* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1967), pp. 133-45 (133).

observation of festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths testifying clearly to the Jewish elements in the syncretism (2:16); and the adoration of angelic beings (θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων, 2:18)... 3. The practical expression of this doctrine of salvation led to ascetic patterns of conduct...⁴⁷

Saunders links each of these points to the practice and teaching found at Qumran, observing along the way the Qumran association of mystery and perfection through obedience to the covenant and commandments, the extent of Qumran angelology and purification through the rituals of calendrical observances, initiatory baptism and circumcision.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Paul's manner of refuting the Colossian heretics through their own vocabulary hints not only at Qumran but pagan sources of worship. Andrew Lincoln observes:

What we have is rather a syncretism of non-conformist Jewish elements and speculative Hellenistic ideas... If this is so, then it is not surprising that the Hellenistic Jewish literature provides perhaps the clearest conceptual background not only for the syncretism but for some of the ideas Paul develops in his response.⁴⁹

If the Essene teaching evident at Colossae was apparent throughout Asia Minor, pagan influences on that teaching would be no less widespread. Lincoln sees in the background of Ephesians as well 'the religious syncretism which had assimilated many Jewish ideas, especially those from esoteric and apocalyptic Judaism'.⁵⁰

The Essenes combined ritual strictness with the exaltation of angelic power. Such a combination was apparent in Paul's opposition in Galatia. This would indicate that, even if Paul faced Judaizers in Galatia, they were not Pharisaic Judaizers but Judaizers from an Essene background.⁵¹ Two points give substance to the possibility of connecting the Essenes with Asia Minor. In the first place, though the bulk of our understanding of the Essenes comes from Qumran, there is no need to consider the Essenes as exclusively Palestinian. Josephus is careful to designate the

47. Saunders, 'The Colossian Heresy', p. 134.

48. Saunders, 'The Colossian Heresy', pp. 139-41. On calendrical observances, see CD 3.13-16 (cf. 10.14-11.18); 1QS 10.1-18; 1QM 4.4. On baptism, see CD 9; 1QM 14; 1QS 3.8-9. On circumcision, see 1QS 5.4, 5.

49. Lincoln, *Paradise*, p. 117.

50. Lincoln, *Paradise*, p. 139.

51. See E.E. Ellis, 'Paul and his Opponents: Trends in the Research', in J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 264-98 (295).

Essenes in his particular reference as ‘Jews by birth’ (Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν γένος).⁵² J. Murphy-O’Connor asks:

Unless there had been some doubt (which is inexplicable were the Essene movement a purely Palestinian phenomenon), why should Josephus note that the Essenes were ‘Jews by birth’? Nothing similar is said of the Pharisees and Sadducees.⁵³

Secondly, if it was from the priests and Levites that the 2,000 exiles were drawn by Antiochus III, and if we can trace the origin of the Essenes to this same group of priests and Levites, then the parallel developments in the Jews of Asia Minor may be explained in terms of origin rather than influence.

The military nature of the κατοικίαι is not out of character for the Essenes if they can be identified with the Hasideans who composed the Maccabean army.⁵⁴ Joseph Blenkinsopp notes: ‘The author’s reference to them is brief, almost laconic, but we learn that they formed a distinct group (συναγωγή, cf. 7:12), that like the Nazarites mentioned at 1 Macc. 3:49 they were fighters...and had offered themselves willingly for the law’.⁵⁵ He observes that some Hasidean priests preceded the founders of Qumran in the Judean wilderness at the outset of the Antiochean persecution (1 Macc. 2.29-48), since from the creation of the Hasmonean state the Hasideans ‘were faced with the prospect of either breaking with the official leadership or coming to terms with it’.⁵⁶ In fact, the dominant use of Hebrew by the Qumran Essenes may indicate that the Essene community originated at the time of the Maccabean revolt, when there was a move to restore the use of Hebrew as a demonstration of loyalty to Israel.⁵⁷ While the Essenes do not fit into any particularly defined category, the Torah is central to their movement. They are not known to have made any significant departures from mainstream Judaism. Nonetheless, several details of their known practice may explain some of

52. Josephus, *War* 2.8.2 (Thackeray, LCL, §119).

53. J. Murphy-O’Connor, ‘The Essenes and their History’, *RB* 81 (1974), pp. 215-44 (220).

54. See 1 Macc. 2.42.

55. Joseph Blenkinsopp, ‘Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History’, in E.P. Sanders *et al.* (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (3 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), I, pp. 1-26 (17).

56. Blenkinsopp, ‘Sectarianism’, p. 22

57. See J.A. Fitzmyer, ‘The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.’, *CBQ* 32 (1970), pp. 501-31 (502-503).

the problems that faced Paul regarding his opponents in Galatia. Matthew Black summarizes:

Qumran developed a particular type of legalistic tradition. It was from the beginning a Zadokite, that is, priestly, legalism and in its later forms it shows some remarkable features which mark it off as a peculiar and distinctive sectarian genre. It was a perfectionist 'mystery' cult, a priestly 'esoteric' legalism, its primary aim and ideal being the fulfillment of all the righteousness of the Law, as interpreted from time to time (and from situation to situation) by the Qumran Zadokite priestly hierarchy.⁵⁸

Lightfoot, following the testimony of Josephus, was concerned with the Essene worship of the sun, though, as the Qumran material shows, with little apparent basis. Part of the confusion may well stem from Asia Minor, where certain Jewish charms have freely associated the name of Helios with Jewish names. Indeed, Jewish prayer there has been made 'to the "many-named" God of Hellenistic syncretism',⁵⁹ where all the names are synonymous—certainly not what we would expect to find in any usual Jewish source.

Jewish Status in Asia Minor under Roman Rule

The Jews in Asia Minor were especially favored by the Seleucid kings. This favor continued into the age of Roman rule, wherein the Jews of Asia Minor maintained their freedom to send their temple tax to Jerusalem. Josephus records that Augustus spoke strongly in defense of this tax, stating that anyone stealing these monies 'shall be regarded as sacrilegious (ἱεροσύλον) and his property shall be confiscated to the public treasury of the Romans'.⁶⁰ Josephus's further reference to this tax in Agrippa's order to the Ephesians puts the matter even more forcefully:

And if any man steal the sacred monies of the Jews and take refuge in places of asylum, it is my will that they be dragged away from them, and turned over to the Jews under the same law by which temple-robbers are dragged from asylum.⁶¹

Added to this, the Jewish right to live according to ancestral laws included

58. Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 169-70.

59. E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbolism in the Greco-Roman Period* (13 vols.; New York: Bollinger Foundation, 1953-1968), II, p. 200.

60. Josephus, *Ant.* 16.6.2 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §164).

61. Josephus, *Ant.* 16.6.4 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §168).

a variety of privileges, although worship on the Sabbath and celebration of festivals seemed to require special confirmation. Victor Tcherikover suggests that, when the Jews' official roles in Asia Minor were disrupted by Sabbath observance, it caused problems with their Greek counterparts.⁶² Indeed, this was particularly the case with military obligations. We read in Josephus that exemption from military service was obtained from the governor Dobella in Asia in 44 CE, specifically because the Jews 'may not bear arms or march on the days of the Sabbath'.⁶³

Although the privileges granted to the Jews were not necessarily uniform throughout Asia Minor, so long as it remained an integral part of the Greek city, the Jewish community received the protection of the Roman rulers. The protective acts of the government on their own present an enigma, but evidence unearthed from a later period at Sardis⁶⁴ indicates that it was the wealth and power of the Jews that made these acts desirable. Ramsay's investigation of Phrygian inscriptions leads him to conclude that 'nobles and officers under the Roman Empire who have all the outward appearance of ordinary Roman provincial citizens were really part of the Phrygian Jewish population'.⁶⁵ In Akmonia in Phrygia, a synagogue was built by Julia Severa during the reign of Nero.⁶⁶ Whether or not this suggests that portions of the Roman population were better aligned with Jewish inhabitants, it does indicate something of the extent to which Jewish society in first-century Asia Minor had become enmeshed in Roman society. Women, too, as was often the case

62. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 307.

63. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.12 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §226).

64. See A.T. Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism: The Sardis Evidence', in A. Benoit, M. Philonenko and C. Vogel (eds.), *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans la monde antique* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1978), pp. 13-33 (18).

65. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letter to the Seven Churches* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), p. 144.

66. See *MAMA* 6.262, 264. Ramsay refers to Julia Severa as a Jewess of Akmonia, 'whose dignity and rank are attested by many coins and inscriptions' (*Cities and Bishoprics*, II, p. 673; cf. p. 650). Mitchell, however, refers to her as 'a gentile woman from one of the city's leading families', confirming this again in reference to the synagogue, which 'had been endowed by Iulia Severa, a gentile, just as any other temple might be' (*Anatolia*, II, p. 9). Barclay states: 'Julia Severa was almost certainly a Gentile (she and her husband were chief priests in the imperial cult during Nero's reign), though I consider it just possible that she was a Jew (married to a Gentile), whose exogamy and involvement in "idolatry" were condoned by the Jewish community because of the value of her patronage' (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, p. 280 n. 51).

in the Roman Empire, held positions in both religious and civil life. In Dionysiac worship, for example, it was the woman who played the predominant role, and Ramsay refers to 'at least one case granted to a woman at Smyrna the honorary title of archisynagogos'.⁶⁷

We also discover that the Jews had been granted citizenship in the cities founded by Seleucis Nicator.⁶⁸ There were exemptions and privileges given to Jews who were Roman citizens.⁶⁹ Jews in Asia Minor were able to conduct successfully a formal legal dispute in the presence of Marcus Agrippa in 14 BCE.⁷⁰ Some indication of the power held by the Jews in Asia Minor is given in Cicero's account of the trial of Valerius Flaccus.⁷¹ The Roman governor, Flaccus, was indicted in part for confiscating the money directed to the Jerusalem temple from Apameia and Laodiceia (in Phrygia) and Andramyttium and Pergamos (in northwestern Asia Minor). Also, under the Romans there was the exemption from military service for the Jews of Asia Minor⁷²—first in an edict of 49 BCE extended to practicing Jewish Roman citizens, and later in an apparently unrestricted edict.⁷³ In Pisidian Antioch, in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, we may assume that Jews had acquired the rights of Antiochene citizenship, since it is for such rights that Jason appealed on behalf of the Jews of Jerusalem.⁷⁴ It is in Antioch, too, where we read that 'the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city' (Acts 13.50) against Paul and Barnabas. This not only confirms the social status of the Jews in that city but the extent of their influence.⁷⁵

67. W.M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907), p. 68.

68. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.1 (Marcus, LCL, §119).

69. Josephus *Ant.* 14.10.8–14.10.25 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §§213-264).

70. Josephus, *Ant.* 16.2.3 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §§27-30). Similarly, the Jews in Asia Minor made an appeal to Augustus (see *Ant.* 16.6.2 [Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §§162-165]).

71. Cicero, *Flac.* 28 (Lord, LCL, §§66-69).

72. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.11–14.2.19 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §§223-240).

73. For further documentation of the edicts concerning Jews in Asia Minor, see M. Stern, 'The Jewish Diaspora', in Safrai and Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People*, I, pp. 117-83 (143-46).

74. See C.H. Kraeling, 'The Jewish Community at Antioch', *JBL* 51 (1932), pp. 130-60 (137).

75. See Walter G. Hansen, 'Galatia', in David W.J. Gill and Conrad Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* (The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 377-95 (391).

Along with political and civic advantage, there was, of course, the strong undercurrent of religious privilege. All of this caused a certain degree of friction between the Greek city authorities and the Jews of Asia Minor. In Antioch, disturbances concerning Jews were apparent in 40 BCE and in 66–70 CE.⁷⁶ The continued appeal by the Jews to the Roman officials to safeguard their temple tax reflects something of a situation wherein the Greeks found a practical means of both venting their frustration and sharing in the wealth of the Jews; that the cities' procedures could be stopped with additional considerations speaks again of the power of the Jews.⁷⁷

The Roman organization of the provinces of Asia Minor made a swift and direct impact upon the culture. In particular, the imperial cult marked the urban communities of the first century CE:

Only three Roman cities in central Anatolia outside the province of Asia have yet been excavated on a substantial scale: Ancyra, Pessinus, and Pisidian Antioch. In each case, the central feature of these excavations has been a temple dedicated to the imperial cult, built in the time of Augustus or Tiberius. Emperor worship was from the first an institution of great importance to the provincial communities, and one that had, quite literally, a central role to play in the development of the new cities.⁷⁸

In the new Roman province of Galatia, in addition to Galatians the population included Paphlagonians, Phrygians, Lycaonians and Isaurians—who were intermixed and difficult to distinguish because the Romans divided them according to jurisdictions rather than tribes.⁷⁹ By the time of Paul's first missionary journey to the province of Galatia, temples and other markers of the imperial cult were widespread throughout Asia Minor.⁸⁰ It was more of a political tool than a religious one for the Romans, and the depiction of the emperor as both man and

76. See W.A. Meeks and R.L. Wilcken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), p. 4.

77. The Jews were given a plot of land for the synagogue and dietary considerations. See G.M.A. Hanfmann and J.C. Waldbaum, 'New Excavations at Sardis and Some Problems of Western Anatolian Archaeology', in J.A. Sanders (ed.), *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 307-26 (310).

78. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, p. 100.

79. Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.4.12 (Jones, LCL, §407).

80. Mitchell notes that it is 'overwhelmingly probable that the imperial cult was established in Galatia, both at a provincial and civic level, soon after it was annexed' (*Anatolia*, I, p. 102).

god was certainly not in conflict with the existing Anatolian religions, but it defined very powerfully the nature of the political relationship that the outlying provinces had with Rome. Nonetheless, as Mitchell observes with reference to its pull on Christian converts, the imperial cult in Antioch was perhaps the dominant pagan force with its 'packed calendar of...days, months, seasons and years which it laid down for special recognition'.⁸¹ No doubt the Jewish community, too, would have been impressed by the scope of this conformity.

The Religious Milieu

The complexity of the cultural make-up of Asia Minor in the first century CE is particularly evident in the mixture of religions found there. Within these pagan religions there was extensive syncretism, due both to a lack of exclusiveness and to inherent similarities. Greco-Roman religion, Egyptian religion, Syrian religion and the indigenous religions of Asia Minor were all factors in the religious atmosphere that confronted the Jews.

The Galatians maintained much of their Celtic religion when they moved into the rural regions of Anatolia, but, nonetheless, adopted the indigenous religions of the region to the point of officiating in the temple worship of such prominent deities as Ma by the time Paul composed his letter to the Galatians.⁸² With reference to the Galatian assemblies at the sacred oak grove known as the Drynemetos, Mitchell observes that there was no real distinction between politics and religion for them, and that the Galatians had 'taken over the beliefs and cults of their new homeland but retained those parts of their old religion which were indivisibly linked to their peculiar social and communal life'.⁸³

Greek philosophy and religion had a strong base in Asia Minor, as it did throughout the Roman world, even though the Anatolian peoples were not as readily Hellenized as other regions of the Greek world.⁸⁴

81. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 10.

82. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, p. 49.

83. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, pp. 49-50. For more details on the Galatian tetrarchies, see Gareth Darbyshire, Stephen Mitchell and Levent Vardar, 'The Galatian Settlement in Asia Minor', *AnSt* 50 (2000), pp. 75-97 (81-82).

84. While the Greek cities in Asia Minor would establish a base of Hellenistic culture, the majority of the Celts settled elsewhere, and, while maintaining much of their own culture, the main influence on their religion and culture came from

Artemis, prominent at Ephesus where ‘she was worshipped not as the virgin huntress of Greek mythology, but as the power of fertility in nature’,⁸⁵ is found nowhere in the inscriptions and coins from Galatia during the imperial period, although she may appear elsewhere as the ‘Hellenized version of an Anatolian goddess’.⁸⁶ She became associated with the existing orgiastic worship of the goddesses known variously as Ma, Cybele and Astarte, and became identified with Aphrodite and Atargatis. The Greek emphasis on sex and fertility was well suited to the religious environment of Asia Minor.

Carr correctly observes that mystery religions ‘made no measurable impact upon the Christian faith in the first half of the first century’.⁸⁷ The rise of these religions, at least insofar as they were to affect Christian thinking (in which context they are most frequently cited), begins towards the end of the first century, and arrives full force in the second century. Nonetheless, many of these religions enjoyed some prominence in the centuries prior to the common era, and at least a shadow of those practices that are recorded once Christianity is more firmly entrenched in the region would have been in the collective consciousness of the Anatolian mind in Paul’s time. The practice of castrating high priests, for instance, was prominent in the ancient indigenous religions, and ended coincidentally with the appearance of Galatian chieftains in the second century BCE.⁸⁸

As well as Greek civic and folk religions, there were the Eleusinian

the native population (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, p. 58). Further, Mitchell notes that in central and eastern Anatolia ‘the defining characteristics of Greek culture and Greek settlement are also largely absent’ (*Anatolia*, I, p. 85).

85. J. Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 21.

86. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, p. 49. Nonetheless, the presence of the Artemis cult throughout Western Asia Minor in the first century CE may speak to a certain disharmony among the cults throughout Anatolia. The Artemis cult ‘could at the same time incorporate numerous religious phenomena drawn from a variety of smaller cults and esoteric circles, and yet demand strict loyalty not just from its devotees, but from virtually everyone within its wider sphere of influence’ (Thorsten Moritz, “Summing-Up All Things”: Religious Pluralism and Universalism in Ephesians’, in Andrew C. Clarke and Bruce W. Winter [eds.], *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism* [Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1991], pp. 88-111 [89]).

87. Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, p. 13.

88. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, p. 48.

mysteries, the Dionysian mysteries and the Orphic mysteries.⁸⁹ The initiatory rites of the Greek mystery religions are of special interest. David Aune speaks of possession trance and vision trance:

Both states exhibit behavioral modifications, but the former is a category which deals with the possession by spirits, while the latter involves visions, hallucinations, adventures, or experiences of the soul during temporary absences from the body and so forth.⁹⁰

Egyptian mystery religion incorporated initiatory rites wherein the selected participant passed through a lesser and higher degree of experience.⁹¹ The Isis-imitation included, first, a descent into the realm of the dead. Secondly, there was a journey through the elements. Thirdly, there was the ascent to heaven.⁹² Worship of Osiris promised a means of assimilation with the deity and the immortality of body and soul. Various stages culminated in the mystic's 'perpetual rapture when he was in the divine presence'.⁹³ A noteworthy feature of Egyptian religion described by Strabo in the early part of the first century (disdained in Greco-Roman religion) was the rite of circumcision. We read in Strabo, concerning the Troglodytes, that 'they not only mutilate their bodies, but some of them are also circumcised, like the Aegyptians'.⁹⁴ There are two possible sources of this practice. Either it was a token castration, parallel to the self-castration of Re, or it was a token mutilation indicating the lost phallus of Osiris.

89. Although evidence of any impact by the mystery religions on Anatolia in the first half of the first century CE is sparse (if extant at all), the prominence of the mystery cults, such as the one at Eleusis, especially in the time of Augustus, would suggest at least some awareness of such practices in the Roman cities there. See Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, pp. 13-14.

90. David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 19-20 (cf. p. 86). See also E. Bourguignon, *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness and Social Change* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973), pp. 12, 42-43, 336.

91. Inscriptions have shown evidence of worship of Egyptian deities, in particular Isis, in the cities of Ancyra and Pessinus in the northern reaches of the province of Galatia (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, pp. 13-14).

92. See G. Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries* (trans. J.P. Smith; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), pp. 106-10. Cf. Martin Dibelius, *Botschaft und Geschichte* (2 vols.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1956), II, pp. 32-34.

93. F. Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover, repr. 1956), p. 100.

94. Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.4.17 (Jones, LCL, §776).

Further evidence of mystery cults and the practice of self-mutilation comes from later, often unreliable, sources. In the early second century CE, Lucian described in detail the rites of the spring festival at Hierapolis.⁹⁵ There, most vividly, his account of the Syrian religion show parallels to the Egyptian mysteries. At the climax of the celebrations, following the self-mutilation of eunuch priests, young men, incited by the music and the spectacle, castrated themselves and thus dramatically entered the priesthood.⁹⁶ (We read in Dio that the Emperor Elagabalus partook in the Syrian cult, as a priest, through circumcision.⁹⁷ And, although this substitution of circumcision for castration took place some 175 years after Paul's letter to the Galatians, there must have been some inbred association between castration and circumcision in the minds of the people involved.) The eunuch priest was attributed divine qualities and something of a divine nature as a result of his separation from the world through castration. Combined with this act, the priest donned feminine garments as part of his annihilation of his sexuality. In this way, he sought to be closer to divine life. Ramsay's comments on this aspect of the Hierapolitan religion put us in mind of Paul's concern for the Galatians: 'Hence it is part of the religion to confuse in various ways the distinction [between the sexes]; to make the priest neither male nor female, and to make mutilation a test of willingness to enter the divine service'.⁹⁸

Mithraism was evident in Asia Minor in the centuries prior to the common era,⁹⁹ and the Mythraic mysteries were spread throughout the Roman Empire by the beginning of the Roman imperial period,¹⁰⁰ but

95. Lucian, *Syr. d.* 5 (Harmon, LCL §§ 49-51). Lucian's account here has been treated with a certain skepticism, given his broad perspective on religion, and his sympathy with the philosophies of the Epicureans and the Cynics. C.P. Jones, however, notes that in his work 'he imitates Herodotos in language and manner' and that 'opinion has turned in its favor' (*Culture and Society in Lucian* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986], p. 41).

96. J.G. Frazer describes a spring festival at Rome that saw adherents of the Cybele-Attis cult similarly sacrifice their virility (*Adonis, Attis, Osiris: Studies in the History of Oriental Religion* [London: Macmillan, 1914], pp. 267-71).

97. Dio Cassius, *Hist. Rom.* 30.5.11 (Cary and Foster, LCL).

98. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics*, I, p. 287.

99. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, p. 86, for possible evidence of Mithraism in Cappadocia in the third century BCE, and also *Anatolia*, II, pp. 29-30, for evidence of it in the early Hellenistic period in Phrygian cities.

100. H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), I, p. 373.

Mithraism did not really rise to prominence until after the first century CE. And, again, while developments there cannot be read back into Paul's writings, certain features of what was later recorded must have echoed at least some of the earlier practice. There were seven stages of initiation in Mithraism, after which the initiate acquired perfect wisdom and purity. Inscriptions have confirmed Jerome's attestation to these stages in his comments on Graccus's destruction of the cave at Mithros. Jerome asks: 'Did not he break and burn all the monstrous images there by which the worshippers were initiated as Raven, Bridegroom, Soldier, Perseus, Sun-runner, and Father?'¹⁰¹ Entrance into the higher stages was increasingly difficult, and with each higher stage, the initiate expected correspondingly greater truths to be revealed. These stages paralleled the seven planetary spheres through which the Mithraists believed the soul traversed en route to its dwelling with the blessed. Cumont describes this journey:

As the soul traversed these different zones, it rid itself, as one would of garments, of the possessions and faculties that it had received in its descent to the earth. It abandoned to the Moon its vital and nutritive energy, to Mercury its desires, to Venus its wicked appetites, to the sun its intellectual capacities, to Mars its love of War, to Jupiter its ambitious dreams, to Saturn its inclinations. It was naked, stripped of every vice and every sensibility, when it penetrated the eighth heaven to enjoy there, as an essence supreme, and in the eternal light that bathed the gods, beatitude without end.¹⁰²

Although often touted as the most important mystery religion of the imperial period, its prominence peaked in the third and fourth centuries CE, and initiation was restricted to men, thus making it predominantly 'the mystery cult of soldiers, sailors, and merchants'.¹⁰³

The indigenous religions of Asia Minor are complex. It is notoriously difficult either to classify or distinguish the various cults with any degree of precision. Perhaps the best approach for organizing the various groups is suggested by Mitchell:

Four groups of cults give the best impression of the religious atmosphere of ancient Anatolia, namely those for Zeus, for the various Mother Goddesses, for Men, and for the several champions of divine justice and vengeance. These groups of cults share a broadly similar distribution pattern across Asia Minor. The heartland, where all were repeatedly found, was Phrygia,

101. Jerome, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi epistulae* 107 (Wright, LCL, §2).

102. F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra* (trans. T.J. McCormack; New York: Dover, 1956), p. 145.

103. Koester, *Introduction*, I, p. 373.

continental western Anatolia par excellence, but they also occurred in most of Lydia, Mysia, Bithynia, Galatia, Lycaonia, and northern Pisidia. There is no evidence that any of these cults was introduced to Anatolia from elsewhere, and it is an economical and convincing hypothesis that they make up the central core of the religious culture of the indigenous Anatolian population, whose traditions naturally reach far back into the prehistoric period.¹⁰⁴

The origin of the god Men can be traced to Phrygian religion. In Pisidian Antioch, the sanctuary of Men dates back to the second century BCE,¹⁰⁵ and, by the end of the first century CE, Men had developed from an agrarian myth, through the phases of nature worship, to become an astrological-celestial god.¹⁰⁶ For those in Antioch, Men became, as Ramsay observes, ‘the Anatolian supreme god, the impersonation of their entire conception of the divine nature and power’.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, reference to other deities in the inscriptions uncovered in Antioch is so scarce as to suggest that worship of Men was almost exclusive.¹⁰⁸

More generally in Anatolia, however, the principal deity was Cybele, the mother goddess.¹⁰⁹ The cult of Cybele was centered in Pessinus, and its influence was pervasive well before the transfer of its holy black rock to Rome in 204 BCE,¹¹⁰ and well before the invading Celts, soon known as ‘Gallogrecians’, or Greek-speaking Galatians (despite being more

104. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 19.

105. S. Mitchell, ‘Geographical and Historical Introduction’, in S. Mitchell and M. Waelkens (eds.), *Pisidian Antioch: The Site and its Monuments* (London: Duckworth, 1998), pp. 1-18 (7).

106. See J.B. McMinn, ‘Fusion of the Gods: A Religio-Astrological Study of the Interpenetration of the East and the West in Asia Minor’, *JNES* 15 (1956), pp. 201-13 (205-207).

107. W.M. Ramsay, *The Cities of St Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907), p. 287. See Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.8.14 (Jones, LCL, §577).

108. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, pp. 24-25. Mitchell also observes that ‘the public religious life of Antioch was dominated by two deities...Men Askaenos, the *patrios theos* of the colony, and the person of the Roman emperor and his family’ (*Anatolia*, II, p. 9). Details surrounding the sites of these sanctuaries are provided in Mitchell and Waelkens (eds.), *Pisidian Antioch*.

109. Another goddess with a similar role, the Syrian goddess, was also popular among the Anatolians. See S.J. Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923), p. 112. Also, the Anatolian goddess Artemis was closely akin to the Ephesian Artemis. See Ramsay, *The Cities of St Paul*, p. 296. Athena was adopted into this role by the Greeks of Iconia (p. 333).

110. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 20.

influenced by the Phrygian culture than by Hellenization),¹¹¹ participated in her temple at the height of its popularity. A decline in the influence of Cybele, however, was apparent by the early part of the first century CE.¹¹² As in the Syrian religion, some of the worshippers of Cybele sacrificed their virility to her. They became priests known as Gali. Cybele also ascended from her role as a nature goddess (associated with fertility) to a mystic-astral goddess. Her consort, Attis, in many ways reflects Men of the Antiochene religion. Attis's growing importance placed him in the role of saviour-god, while Attis and Cybele together 'became cosmic powers who overcame the fatal law imposed on mankind by extending astral immortality to the initiated'.¹¹³ Jewish influence extended into aspects of worship of Attis-Cybele in Asia Minor. McMinn makes the provocative statement that 'under Jewish influence both [Cybele] and Attis are united with Theos Hypsistos, the God of Israel'.¹¹⁴ There is no indication, however, that this influence was reciprocal. Nonetheless, it is an unusual union. The focus of Attis-Cybele was, from its early stages, on fertility rites. Inscriptions dating to the Hittite period show that Attis 'is denoted by a phallus placed on a table'.¹¹⁵ This suggests that castration may have been practiced at that time. Certainly the subsequent practice of castration of priests was connected with the myth of Attis's castration. Though Frazer claims that the myth was incorporated as 'an attempt to account for the self-mutilation of priests who regularly castrated themselves on entering the service of the goddess',¹¹⁶ the early emphasis on the phallus suggests that the myth was, indeed, before the practice.

In Acts 14.11-13, we read that, at Lystra, the priest of Zeus wanted to offer sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul, who were received as Zeus and Hermes by the crowds. This is consistent with the historical data that links those two gods in the region of Iconium and Lystra.¹¹⁷ Hansen suggests that 'Zeus was the most widely worshipped god in Galatia', and that 'temples to Zeus were ubiquitous'.¹¹⁸ A significant shrine to Zeus at

111. See Hansen, 'Galatia', in Gill and Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts*, p. 381.

112. Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.3 (Jones, LCL, §567).

113. McMinn, 'Fusion of the Gods', p. 210.

114. McMinn, 'Fusion of the Gods', p. 208.

115. A.H. Sayce, 'The Discovery of Archaic Hittite Inscriptions in Asia Minor', *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 27 (1905), pp. 21-31, 43-47 (27).

116. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, I, p. 265.

117. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 24.

118. Hansen, 'Galatia', in Gill and Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts*, p. 393.

Tavium is noted by Strabo,¹¹⁹ and worship marked by an early temple at Iconium was probably imported from the countryside.¹²⁰ Cults of Zeus often served as a unifying focus for communities scattered throughout different regions, and the name of Zeus was often identified with particular settlements. It is not surprising, then, that Zeus was also identified with some of the more notable deities of Anatolia, like Sabazios and Hypsistos and, by transference, the Jewish Yahweh.

The pagan god most discussed in relation to the Diaspora Judaism of Asia Minor is Sabazios. Sabazios, like Men, developed under Oriental influence into a celestial god. He became a solar deity—the counterpart to the lunar deity, Men. In this context, Sabazios is connected with the flow of months and seasons.¹²¹ It is likely that the Jewish worship of Yahweh and reverence for the Sabbath caused pagan worshippers of Sabazios to identify Yahweh with Zeus Sabazios.¹²² McMinn suggests that the connections between Zeus Sabazios and Yahweh may have been strengthened by Antiochus Epiphanes' transformation of the temples of Jerusalem and Mount Gerazim into temples of Zeus Xenius in 168 BCE.¹²³ The association, however, was probably more innocuous. In 142 BCE, for example, in a note to the Roman administration, the Jews described their 'anonymous' god as Zeus Sabazios. Bickerman observes: 'the assonance between Sabazios, Sabaoth and Sabbat favoured this equation which was purely nominal'.¹²⁴ The cult of Sabazios, once developed into a sophisticated mystery religion, adopted beliefs that might suggest Jewish influence. It was believed that, before their death, participants in the Sabazios cult would be conducted by angels 'to the banquet of the blessed, where a liturgical meal foreshadows the eternal joys'.¹²⁵ Kraabel, while recognizing that Sabazios was identified with Yahweh from the Gentile perspective, draws attention to the absence of evidence of any Jewish knowledge of him in more than eighty inscriptions from

119. Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.2 (Jones, LCL, §567).

120. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 23.

121. See Goodenough, *Jewish Symbolism in the Greco-Roman Period*, VIII, p. 192.

122. See S.E. Johnson, 'A Sabazios Inscription from Sardis', in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), pp. 542-50 (547).

123. McMinn, 'Fusion of the Gods', pp. 210-11.

124. E.J. Bickerman, 'The Altar of the Gentiles: A Note on the Jewish "ius sacrum"', *Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité* 5 (1958), pp. 137-64 (149).

125. McMinn, 'Fusion of the Gods', p. 221.

Sardis.¹²⁶ This is particularly noteworthy in that the name Sabazios has not Greek but Oriental origins, with which we would expect the Jews to be more familiar. S.E. Johnson, who sees evidence of Jewish Sabazios syncretism in Sardis, finds no evidence of Jewish Sabazios in Apameia—despite its connections with Sardis.¹²⁷ It appears, therefore, that while the Jews of Asia Minor may have allowed an association between their God and Sabazios, the purpose underlying this association was explicative rather than syncretistic. In M.P. Nilsson's extensive study, the association of Sabazios with Theos Hypsistos is demonstrated to originate from a Jewish source.¹²⁸ Whereas the pagan religions freely adopted Jewish characteristics, the Jews endeavored not to compromise their Jewish identity. Nevertheless, in their effort to describe their God to their pagan environment, the Jews of Asia Minor did adopt terms that allowed them to relate to existing beliefs.

The link between pagan and Jewish patterns of beliefs, however, appears most prominently with reference to Theos Hypsistos. The title Zeus Hypsistos is used in more distinctly pagan circles, and there is a definite uniformity of worship in inscriptions to Theos Hypsistos, whether of a pagan or Jewish origin.¹²⁹ Although the epigraphic evidence for Theos Hypsistos in Asia Minor dates from about two centuries after Paul's letter to the Galatians, Mitchell notes that 'in Egypt there are Jewish dedications to Theos Hypsistos from the mid-second century BC... [and] it is not unreasonable to presume that the cult had a similarly long pedigree in Anatolia'.¹³⁰ The implication from the evidence is that there was an easy alliance between the Jews and the pagans who worshipped Theos Hypsistos, not only in terms of social and political culture but also religious practice. The prominence of God-fearers (φοβούμενοι

126. Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism', pp. 28-29.

127. Johnson, 'A Sabazios Inscription', p. 548.

128. M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (2 vols.; Munich: C.H. Beck, 1950), II, pp. 658-67, esp. 662.

129. An extensive list of documentary evidence for Theos Hypsistos and Zeus Hypsistos is provided in Stephen Mitchell, 'The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews and Christians', in Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 81-148 (128-47). Supplemental evidence and further references are listed in Stephen Mitchell, 'Further Thoughts on the Cult of Theos Hypsistos', in Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 167-208 (198-208).

130. Mitchell, 'The Cult of Theos Hypsistos', p. 109.

τὸν θεόν ἢ σεβόμενοι) in the territories evangelized by Paul, notably at Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, speaks to the identification of this group with the Hypsistarian worshippers.¹³¹ The emphasis on angels as divine intermediaries between Theos Hypsistos and the Hypsistarian worshippers not only parallels the function of Hermes in the cult of Zeus, but it is also one of the Jewish emphases in Asia Minor, the origins of which, as we have suggested, commence with the Essenes and culminate for Paul in an unwarranted emphasis on angels in the Colossian church. Mitchell traces ‘the concept of Theos Hypsistos and his angels’ in Anatolia to ‘the unhellenized communities of the interior of Asia Minor’, which ‘drew on the indigenous tradition which favored both monotheism and an ascetic religious morality’.¹³²

Phallism, Festivals and Initiatory Rites

Invading religions posed no threat to the adaptable Anatolian religions. The isolationist policies of Judaism were unnatural amidst the religious milieu. The diversity of religions expressed itself by absorbing common factors. By the first century CE, most of the religions that we have considered here, and many more besides, had been in Asia Minor for many years.¹³³ The syncretism was such, however, that it is often difficult to separate the ideas and cultic practices of one from those of another. It is important to note, however, that the indigenous religions of Asia Minor were fertility religions. The impact of these religions on the Judaism of Asia Minor, and consequently Paul’s remarks to the Galatians, must therefore be considered under the categorization of the rites of these religions as phallism, festivals and initiatory rites.

First, we note that phallism is expressed through castration. The principle behind castration appears to involve a sacrifice of virility—initially for fertility and, as it develops, as a means of attaining communion with

131. See Mitchell, ‘The Cult of Theos Hypsistos’, pp. 115-21, and ‘Further Thoughts’, pp. 189-96.

132. Mitchell, ‘The Cult of Theos Hypsistos’, p. 126

133. Mitchell observes: ‘The virtually limitless tolerance which the pagan gods showed to newcomers made the system almost infinitely flexible. As Hellenized culture and literacy slowly embraced the native populations of Anatolia, it had no difficulty in acknowledging the religious beliefs and practices of Asia Minor’s indigenous inhabitants as part of one and the same religious system’ (*Anatolia*, II, pp. 30-31).

the gods. Closely related to this is the rite of circumcision as a token-castration. Jewish circumcision, though related to neither castration nor fertility in general, was nonetheless a rite that the Jews of Asia Minor had in common with the native Anatolian religions. And just as these Jews explained their unnamed God in terms of the named gods of their environment without pressing for an identity of gods, so, too, could they be expected to relate their rite of covenant-circumcision in terms of the communion-circumcision of the pagan cults. In this case, the severity of Paul's cynical comment in Gal. 5.12, 'I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves!' (ὄφελον καὶ ἀποκόψονταί οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς), must be judged on the extent to which Paul believed the Jews to have capitulated their identity to relate to their Anatolian hosts.

Secondly, regarding the festivals, we note that, in keeping with their association with the mundane and cosmic fertility cycles, the festivals of the indigenous cults in Asia Minor were orgiastic. The climax of feverish self-abandonment was indicative of divine possession. This in itself would be abhorrent to the Jews. Nevertheless, Judaism celebrated its own special days and seasons in accordance with its religious history and law. Parallels between Christian and Jewish holy days are easily drawn. Though the content and method of celebration would vastly differ, it would follow, therefore, that the Jews of Asia Minor could easily draw upon the pagan festivals for explicative purposes. Again, the extent to which the Jews maintained their own identity is decisive in understanding Paul's despair in Gal. 4.10: 'You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years!' (ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς). The presence of Jewish apocalyptic in such an environment would further blur the distinctiveness of Jewish identity, since in Jewish mysticism, as with the ecstatic religions of Asia Minor, the ultimate goal was union with the divine. In light of this, Carr's observation that the Colossian error was not a 'major Christological error', but rather 'a confusion over the connection between religious experience and moral practice',¹³⁴ seems applicable, if not inescapable.

Finally, we see further emphasis on unity with the gods in the initiation rites of the pagan religions of Asia Minor. Progressively more testing stages of initiation promised a deeper and more profound experience of heavenly bliss. Although generally void of such mystical overtones, Torah-obedience was the sole means by which the Jews drew nearer to their God. It was, indeed, a faith-relationship, but that faith was

134. Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, p. 84.

irrevocably grounded in Torah. In the Jewish apocalyptic, however, strong parallels with the pagan cults may be drawn. Rowland notes that, for the Jews, there are two types of initiation into the divine heavenly secrets: ‘Either the apocalyptic seer is told directly by God or angel (e.g. Slavonic *Enoch* 25 and Dan. 10:20ff.); or he is shown the heavenly mysteries’.¹³⁵ In order to maintain unity with the exalted God, the Jewish mystics sought to transcend normal life and supplement their knowledge of God.¹³⁶ Francis describes the Colossian errorists in similar terms, as those who ‘failed to understand their “completeness” in Christ (cf. Col. 2:10) and so sought after their heavenly Lord through rigorous piety and mystical soul ascent’.¹³⁷ Essenism perhaps provides the link here. In Essenism, obedience to covenant and commandments was at the root of mystic speculation regarding perfectionism. Combined with the practice of initiatory baptism and circumcision, the Essene doctrine is not too far removed, in principle, from the pagan initiation in Asia Minor. Much of what Paul says in Galatians may be read in this light. Certainly the perfectionism implicit in Paul’s opponents’ practice, as well as both legalistic and libertine tendencies, may be explained in terms of stages of initiation.

The Jews of Asia Minor need not be understood as syncretistic in order to cast doubt on the effect of their efforts to maintain their identity.¹³⁸ A selective use of Torah would allow the Jews to blend into the religious milieu while perpetuating the illusion of unshakeable Jewish identity. It would also explain Paul’s frustration in confronting an opposition who distorted not only the Christian gospel, but the Jewish Torah.

Jewish Identity

Questions concerning the Hellenization of the Jews are not new. Certainly, the effects of such a process in centres such as Alexandria and in individuals such as Philo cannot be disputed. The extent of Paul’s

135. Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven* (London: SPCK, 1982), p. 56. Martin Dibelius, however, goes too far in translating ἐμβρατεύων in Col. 2.18 as ‘to initiate’ (‘The Isis Imitation in Apuleius and Related Initiatory Rites’, in Francis and Meeks [ed.], *Conflict at Colossae*, pp. 61-121 [86-91]). See rather Francis, ‘Humility’, pp. 171-76.

136. See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, p. 275.

137. Francis, ‘Humilty’, p. 191.

138. See, however, Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, p. 82. Note also Lincoln’s suggestion that Paul’s apocalyptic language is an indicator of the Jews’ syncretism (*Paradise*, p. 183).

association or disassociation with Palestinian Judaism is a central issue in the analysis of Pauline theology.¹³⁹ Nonetheless, the significance of external influences on Judaism must begin with the basic question of Jewish identity. Despite the religious milieu, Judaism maintained its identity in Asia Minor. The capitulation to outside influences was, by and large, social. The Jews in the Asian Diaspora, as elsewhere, maintained their identity through adherence to the law¹⁴⁰ and their devotion to God. Ironically, even Philo despairs of Jews who neglect the literal sense of the law in favour of the symbolic. The Jews retained their standing as Jews in the eyes of other Jews by their affirmation of Jewish election.¹⁴¹ We find special confirmation of Sabbath observance in official documents,¹⁴² granted possibly because of the inconvenience that the Jews caused in the Greek cities when they refused to take up their offices on the Sabbath.¹⁴³ Indeed, we may assume that it was generally the case that, once Jews broke away from the law, they would not have turned to a more moderate form of Judaism but rather would likely have assimilated into the pagan culture altogether.

In Asia Minor, Jews maintained all the forms of their Jewish identity. Nonetheless, one cannot avoid raising the question of whether or not there was some discrepancy between their self-conscious identity and the actual quality of that identity despite its forms. Beyond the privilege of living according to ancestral laws, there is no specific indication that Jews were exempted from participating in the worship of Roman gods. Kraabel, though conceding the inevitability of such worship, maintains that this worship was not viewed by Jews as a threat to their faith.¹⁴⁴ Though this may be true, Jewish worship of Roman gods is nevertheless

139. E.P. Sanders provides a brief survey of approaches to Pauline theology from the perspective of its relation to Judaism in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977), pp. 1-12. Sanders himself, though not encumbered with questions concerning the extent to which Paul was Hellenized, nevertheless focuses throughout his book on Paul's relationship to Palestinian Judaism.

140. Philo, *Migr. Abr.* 16 (Colson, LCL, §§86-93).

141. See E.E. Urbach, 'Self Isolation or Self-Affirmation in Judaism in the First Three Centuries: Theory and Practice', in Sanders *et al.* (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, II, pp. 269-98 (292-93).

142. See Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.20-21, 23, 25 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL, §§241-246; §258; §§263-264, respectively).

143. See Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 307.

144. Kraabel, 'Judaism', p. 221.

more logically understood as an indicator of the poor quality of that faith. The only specific evidence of exemption from the worship of emperors is found in the letter from the governor of Syria under Claudius, Publius Petronius, to the leaders of Dora.¹⁴⁵ But this letter was issued in direct response to the violation of the synagogue with an image of Caesar by the men of Dora, and possibly in indirect response to Caligula's similar efforts.¹⁴⁶ In the cities of Asia Minor, where Jews were such a predominant part of the civil life and functions, emperor worship would be imperative. Ramsay maintains that, in this system, 'Jews even became high priests in the worship of Emperors'.¹⁴⁷

In the early third century CE, the gymnasium complex was not only tolerated in its proximity to the synagogue in Sardis, but it appears that the Jews of Sardis participated in it.¹⁴⁸ Within the Sardis synagogue a table has been found, supported with the design of eagles, 'their talons gripping a bundle of rocks, perhaps originally the fulmen or thunderbolt of Zeus'.¹⁴⁹ Flanking this table are two stone lions, which are a traditional Sardis image deeply entrenched in Sardis mythology.¹⁵⁰ Although this structure is nearly two centuries removed from Paul's words to the Galatians, it may be indicative of a pattern of Judaism in Asia Minor that was in place well before the first century CE. Kraabel goes to great lengths to explain such phenomena by underlining the fact that the Jews who were introduced to western Anatolia were not from a background of 'Holy Land' Judaism, but were 'Jews who would have already learned to live as a minority in a Gentile world: Babylonian, Mesopotamian, Seleucid'.¹⁵¹ In reference to the pagan shapes and symbols within the Sardis synagogue, he argues: 'the Sardis synagogue reflects a self-confident Judaism, bold enough to appropriate the pagan shapes and symbols for itself. This impression is

145. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.6.3 (Feldman, LCL, §§303-311).

146. See Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, pp. 306, 509 n. 38.

147. W.M. Ramsay, 'The Jews in the Graeco-Asiatic Cities', *The Expositor*, Sixth Series 5 (1902), pp. 19-33, 92-109 (100).

148. See S. Applebaum, 'The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities in the First Century', in Safrai and Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People*, I, pp. 420-63 (449).

149. G.M.A. Hanfmann, 'The Sixth Campaign at Sardis (1963)', *BASOR* 174 (1964), pp. 3-58 (36). These comments accompany a photograph of the table (fig. 19).

150. See Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.84-91 (Godley, LCL). Cf. Cicero, *Div.* 1.53 (Falconer, LCL, §§120-121).

151. Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism', p. 16.

reinforced by the finds within the building.¹⁵² What Kraabel wants to argue here, as elsewhere, is that the Judaism in Asia Minor was adaptable without being syncretistic. It is the expression of that adaptability, however, that continues to raise doubts concerning the effectiveness of the expression of Jewish identity. Interestingly, Barclay, though denying any compromise of identity by Jews in the Province of Asia, suggests the following:

Like the Jews in early Ptolemaic Egypt they probably explored means by which to remain both Hellenized and faithfully Jewish, and they lived in communities unafraid to express their identity in social and cultural harmony with the environment.¹⁵³

Although the differences between the Jews of the Asian Diaspora and Palestinian Jews should not be exaggerated, it is evident that the social, cultural and religious pressures facing the Jews in Asia Minor were much greater than pressures in the homeland. Although Palestinian Judaism cannot be regarded as monolithic,¹⁵⁴ important questions concerning the adaptability of Asian Jews to their environment still remain. The Greek language, slow to develop in Judea because of the ban on pagan worship there, quickly became the natural language of Diaspora Jews. Under such circumstances, too, Diaspora Jews, unlike Palestinian Jews, could not avoid contact with their pagan surroundings.¹⁵⁵ Tcherikover summarizes the dilemma faced by the Jews of the Diaspora as

between the ambition to assimilate arising from the Jew's desire to exist among strangers by his individual powers, and the adherence to tradition induced in the struggle for existence by the need of support from the strong collective organization represented by the community.¹⁵⁶

No doubt the Jews of Asia Minor went both routes. Culturally, the pressure was mostly from Hellenism. The absence of distinctly Jewish

152. Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism', p. 21.

153. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, p. 281.

154. B.A. Pearson observes: 'The plethora of Jewish sects and religious movements in pre-70 Judaism is a well-established fact, and is becoming even clearer as a result of new discoveries and new research' ('Jewish Sources in Gnostic Literature', in M.E. Stone [ed.], *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984], pp. 443-82 [479]).

155. See J. Goldstein, 'Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism', in Sanders *et al.* (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, II, pp. 64-87, 318-26 (74-75).

156. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 346.

artifacts (so prevalent in Palestinian archaeological finds) in such sites as Ephesus and Sardis¹⁵⁷ indicates a general degree of capitulation. In order to exist in the Greco-Asiatic city Jews had to become a part of its cultural fabric. While the Jews in public office were allowed to maintain their observance of law as a priority, we must ask where the dividing line was in such situations between 'self-confidence' and 'self-denial'. Sheppard rightly remarks that 'when social contact with pagans was subject to complex rabbinic regulations, it is difficult to see how any observant Jew could have entered on a career in the pagan establishment of the city state'.¹⁵⁸

Being more open to outside views and more tolerant of foreign contact did not require an irrevocable capitulation on the part of Jews, but it did bind them to the Greek perspective on official matters. Religious pressures varied. For some, there appears to have been a natural line of transition from a proto-Essene heritage to an oriental form of paganism. Though the majority of Asiatic Jews undoubtedly abhorred much of what was involved with the pagan cults, they nevertheless employed these cults to varying degrees. In Acts 19, we read that in Ephesus the seven sons of Sceva dabbled in soothsaying and magic. As Saunders notes, the Jewish magical books of Ephesus and the nature of the fourth book of the *Sibylline Oracles* support 'the view that the Diaspora Judaism of Asia Minor spanned some sectarian groups which affected a syncretism of Jewish elements and eastern mystical theosophy'.¹⁵⁹ Further, as we have seen, Paul's assaults on circumcision, perfectionism and the celebration of special days suggest that it was those practices of Judaism that were analogous to the pagan practices that were most readily observed by his opponents.

Although the Judaism of Asia Minor cannot be considered as irreconcilable with the Judaism of Palestine, certain aspects indicate that it was distinctive. A significant proportion of the Jewish population of Anatolia was born from a proto-Essene Mesopotamian and Babylonian background. From parallel developments in Qumran, we may assume that the law was the central focus of these Jews, particularly as it related to covenant and ritual. Obedience to the commandments would not only be required but desired in terms of personal development and wisdom.

157. See Kraabel, 'Judaism', pp. 59-60.

158. A.R.R. Sheppard, 'Jews, Christians and Heretics in Acmonia and Eumonia', *AnSt* 29 (1979), pp. 169-80 (169).

159. Saunders, 'The Colossian Heresy', pp. 133-34.

For those Anatolian Jews, as for the Jews of Qumran, there would be an extensive angelology, and purification would be understood in terms of the ritual of calendrical observances, initiatory baptism and circumcision. As Oppenheimer indicates, every closed association of Jews included a probationary period that necessitated passing through a number of stages before final acceptance.¹⁶⁰ This was particularly apparent in the apocalyptic Judaism that was prevalent in Asia Minor. The apocalypse was not merely the literary expression of the mystical dimension of Judaism; rather, it typified the literary expression of Second Temple Judaism.¹⁶¹ Indeed, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Anatolian Judaism must be categorized as either syncretistic or apocalyptic. It was, perhaps, this mystical quality that made the Qumran sect so (surprisingly) appealing to Greeks and Romans.¹⁶²

Yet, unlike Qumran, the Judaism of Asia Minor was not insulated against its social and cultural environment. The Jews of Asia Minor were under considerably more pressure than their compatriots in Qumran to mix with the pagans of the Hellenistic cities—and they did so with considerable success. Because of this compromise, however, their commitment to the law must necessarily have been more selective. Further, the region was rife with pagan cults, firmly established yet remarkably fluid. The Jews were required to coexist with these cults and somehow resist the pressure to become simply another aspect of the religious milieu. Even the Christian communities that followed, though not subject to many of the longstanding social pressures that faced the Jews, were forced to give way, adopting at least some of the pagan customs as their own.

As a Jew from Tarsus, Paul could easily have accepted certain variations in Judaism in their milder forms. As W.D. Davies observes, Judaism in general allows for a wide scope of *intra muros* debate without reflection on the Jewishness of the opposition.¹⁶³ To that extent, the Diaspora Jews based their case for self-definition on the Torah. Nevertheless, *extra muros*

160. A. Oppenheimer, *The 'Am ha-Aretz* (trans. I.H. Levine; Leiden: Brill, 1977), pp. 119-20.

161. See M.E. Stone, 'Apocalyptic Literature', in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, II, pp. 383-442 (435).

162. See J.G. Gage, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 80.

163. See W.D. Davies, 'Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation', in M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (eds.), *Paul and Paulinism* (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 4-16 (6-7). In particular, Davies notes that the 'intensity, and at times ferocity, of Paul's discussions with his contemporaries were endurable when *intra muros*' (p. 7).

influences do raise questions concerning the Jewishness of the party that is affected by them. The extent to which these influences must be apparent before such questions are raised is a matter of debate. We may presume, however, that these influences were such in Galatia that Paul disputed the Jewish identity of his opponents. The inherent dedication of many Jews to the law, weakened to some extent by social and cultural influences, was undoubtedly distorted by pagan religious pressure. Though it may be argued that the Jews of the Asia Minor Diaspora were rigorous in maintaining their identity as Jews in adhering to the details of the law, paradoxically that identity had only indirect connections with Palestine, and that law was necessarily selective in its interpretation of Torah. Those Jews influenced by the pagan cults would find confirmation in their selectivity with regard to circumcision and calendrical observances, and would likewise be confirmed in their drive for perfection through tenaciously clinging to the commandments to which they had committed themselves. Being relatively free of economic and social pressures, the Galatian Jews, as with the other Jews of Asia Minor, not only practiced their faith freely, but also likely integrated into the prevailing culture to a significant degree. The easy acceptance of Jews in Anatolia undoubtedly compounded the problem of Jewish identity, particularly in terms of vocabulary.¹⁶⁴

If Christianity was presented to these Jews as a part of their Jewish tradition, there would be a sense of duty on their part to introduce in turn to Christianity some of the elements that were seen to be absent from Paul's teaching. The concept of law would be central to any *intra* or *extra muros* debate concerning Judaism. Paul may speak strongly against a certain interpretation of the law without himself denying the law. If the overriding concern in Galatians 3 is the 'faithfulness of Christ' (πίστις Χριστοῦ), as we shall contend, then the law would have been used by both parties to support their own view rather than being dismissed by either party as something that stands in contrast to that view.

Paul's Challenge

In directing his letter to the Galatians, Paul does not have a single constituent of Anatolian society in view but a rather complex mixture.

164. Mitchell observes: 'The native population [in Lydia and Phrygia] must soon have become aware that the Jewish community shared many of their values; they were happy enough also to share the vocabulary of their cult' (*Anatolia*, II, p. 37).

He addresses the epistle to the churches of Galatia. Given the details of Paul's travels in Acts 13–14, this creates no serious problem. The Roman province in its entirety was referred to as Galatia, and 'it was as natural to refer to the churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe as churches of Galatia, as it was to call that of Corinth a church of Achaea'.¹⁶⁵ The primary addressees of Galatians are new converts—new not only to the Christian message but also to the intricacies of Jewish tradition. Through these new converts, Paul is also addressing Jewish Christians who are determined to see their pagan counterparts adopt at least some of their distinctive Jewish practices, particularly circumcision. But neither of these groups was, as we have seen, homogeneous. The non-Jews in the cities that Paul had evangelized may have had their roots in Greek religion and may well have been active in the traditional Greek cults of the city. On the other hand, the province and city structure was revamped by the Romans, and the imperial cult was certainly the dominant influence on a good portion of the urban population. On top of all this, the indigenous religions of the Anatolian population, if not extensively found in the urban centres, were certainly known and were themselves mixed with the Celtic traditions brought to Asia Minor by the original Galatians.¹⁶⁶ Jewish religion, as noted, had been influenced to some degree by the culture in which it was engulfed and could not be perfectly aligned with the Jewish tradition of the homeland in which Paul had been schooled.

Even a cursory understanding of the cultural make-up of the peoples to whom Paul wrote his letter helps to put some of his less comprehensible admonitions into a more reasonable perspective. For instance, calling his primary readers 'foolish Galatians' (Gal. 3.1) provides an apt description of what Paul thinks is the nature of the error they have committed. Mitchell's point on this is significant:

165. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 4. Hansen adds that 'whatever their mother tongues or ethnic backgrounds may have been, all inhabitants of the Roman province of Galatia were considered Galatians' (Hansen, 'Galatia', in Gill and Gempf [eds.], *The Book of Acts*, p. 389).

166. Essentially, there were pockets of particular cults outside of urban areas. As Mitchell notes, this 'was not due to any intolerance, but to the relative cultural poverty of the inhabitants whose intellectual and religious horizons did not extend as far as those of more cosmopolitan townsmen. Indigenous, scarcely Hellenized deities such as Angdistis, Papas, Ma, or Sabazios occur more frequently in the countryside than in cities, while imports such as Sarapis and Isis, or less Hellenic figures such as Dionysus, were relatively unusual' (*Anatolia*, II, p. 16).

It is true that this would not be a natural or formal mode of address to the inhabitants of cities which had few, if any, genuine Celtic inhabitants, but that is precisely the point. It is part of Paul's reproach that he equates them with the barbarous people who had given their name to the province, and who themselves had quite a reputation for simple-mindedness.¹⁶⁷

So, while an understanding of the nature of the Judaism to which his opponents are trying to lead his new converts is essential, Paul must also be alert to the cultural composition of his primary audience.

πίστις Χριστοῦ

A study of the phrase 'works of the law' must be approached with some definitive understanding of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ. It is not enough to suggest an ambiguity in Paul's use that accommodates whatever salvific emphasis is deemed appropriate.¹⁶⁸ James Dunn argues that part of the problem with reading πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive is the difficulty in pinning down exactly what Paul might mean by that expression.¹⁶⁹ In Galatians, however, the beginning and the end of Paul's plea is the public portrayal of Christ crucified—his faithfulness unto death. It is Christ's faithful death upon which Paul rests his case. While it could be argued that it is the response to this preaching that concerns Paul, it is not the acceptance or rejection of the gospel that is his focus here, but rather the perversion of the gospel message (Gal. 1.6-10). One must be careful not to interpret πίστις Χριστοῦ based solely on a subjective analysis of Paul's discussion of law. Neither Lee, with his contention that 'Paul's focus is the human act of believing in dealing with the problem

167. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, p. 4. Mitchell notes elsewhere that 'Paul's earliest mission to Asia Minor was not aimed at the low-status Anatolian natives, still less "foolish Galatians", but at the Romanised provincial elite' ('Geographical and Historical Introduction', p. 12).

168. Jacqueline C.R. de Roo provides an excellent overview of scholarship on the phrase in *Works of the Law' at Qumran and in Paul* (NTM, 13; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), pp. 234-45. In conclusion, however, she does not fall on either side of the debate: 'Thus, "the faithfulness of Christ" and human "faith in Christ", both expressed by the deliberately ambiguous πίστις Χριστοῦ, are two salvific elements in the mind of the apostle Paul' (p. 245).

169. James D.G. Dunn, 'Once More, PISTIS CHRISTOU', in D.M. Hay and E.E. Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology. IV. Looking Back, Pressing On* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 61-81 (70).

of law and justification',¹⁷⁰ nor Hays (whom he refutes), who maintains that Paul's interest is in the contrast between the law (human action) and the faith of Jesus (divine action),¹⁷¹ makes a definitive case. In fact, it may be argued that the 'traditional understanding' of πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive is more a product of reading back into the text than it is a natural reading of the text.¹⁷² Paul's understanding of the phrase 'works of the law' may confirm our reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, but it is our interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ that helps to shape how we should understand the phrase 'works of the law'.

Grammatically, πίστις Χριστοῦ would more usually be read as a subjective genitive. This is particularly true in Paul, where πίστις followed by the genitive noun elsewhere is understood as a subjective genitive, as G. Howard correctly contends.¹⁷³ A valuable counterpoint, however, is offered by Stanley Porter and Andrew Pitts, who observe that lists of word usage function 'at a pragmatic level rather than a semantic level of linguistic code'.¹⁷⁴ Although their study precludes translating πίστις as 'faithfulness', and thus seems to support the objective genitive understanding of the phrase,¹⁷⁵ Porter and Pitts correctly observe:

170. Jae Hyun Lee, 'Against Richard B. Hays's "Faith of Jesus Christ"', *JGRChJ* 5 (2008), pp. 51-80 (80).

171. R.B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2nd edn, 2002), pp. 129-31.

172. It must be conceded, however, that whether it is the natural reading or not, understanding the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive can be traced back to the early church and has dominated Christian thinking until relatively recently. See Debbie Hunn, 'Debating the Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Twentieth-Century Scholarship', in M.F. Bird and P.M. Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), pp. 16-31.

173. G. Howard, 'On the "Faith of Christ"', *HTR* 60 (1967), pp. 459-84 (460), contrary to de Roo, who argues that since there are objective genitival constructions with the term πίστις in the New Testament outside of Paul, Paul could have used such a construction unambiguously ('*Works of the Law*', pp. 236-37).

174. S.E. Porter and A.W. Pitts, 'πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the πίστις Χριστοῦ Discussion', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 33-53 (39).

175. Porter and Pitts, 'πίστις with a Preposition', p. 39. On p. 53, they say: 'The use of πίστις as a head term with a prepositional specifier, without an intervening article and followed by an element in the genitive, provides further evidence that, at least from a linguistic standpoint, when Paul used the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ he was indicating that Christ was the proper object of faith'. A third option, which takes the

We cannot hope to solve such a delicate and sensitive issue as the meaning of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ simply by means of Greek linguistics, because there is more at stake—including exegesis and theology.¹⁷⁶

Neither faith nor faithfulness appears to be a static concept in Paul, but rather they are concepts in which the initiative is entirely on God's part. The human response to the faithfulness of Christ is not simply a passive acceptance but an actual participation in God's righteous plan as unfolded in the person of Jesus Christ. This is likewise true of Abraham, whose belief (Gal. 3.6) was not a simple acknowledgement but a mark of his faith(fulness), and whose understanding was reflected by his heirs (Gal. 3.7, 9), and whose anticipation of God's work (Gal. 3.8) was fulfilled through Christ's faithfulness. Paul's unpacking of his statements about Abraham in Gal. 3.10-14 confirm the importance of understanding πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive: 'The point is that through the faithfulness of Christ to the promise the blessing of Abraham has been given to the Gentiles'.¹⁷⁷

In Galatians, Paul harps on the faithfulness of Christ, reminding his readers of the rock upon which his diatribe is built. Anything that distracts the Galatians from this message is anathema to Paul (Gal. 1.6-10). Christ's faithfulness culminates with his faithful death on the cross—an event that is sufficient, according Paul (Gal. 3.1), to nullify any supplemental teaching. The role of the Torah, particularly the phrase 'works of the law', cannot be separated from this theme:

In Galatians, Paul's argument features Christ Jesus over against the Torah, with Torah in a servant role to Christ, as preparatory for Christ, who has now come. Paul's antithetical placement of ἡ πίστις Χριστοῦ with ἔργα νόμου/νόμον placards the faithfulness of Christ Jesus who accomplishes what the Law could not.¹⁷⁸

Thus, understanding of 'works of the law' must be appropriate to that

terms πίστις Χριστοῦ together to convey the idea of 'Christ-faith', would cohere with the analysis of Porter and Pitts. See Mark A. Seifrid, 'Faith of Christ', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 129-46. The validity of the third view, however, is disputed by Sprinkle, who ultimately opts for the objective genitive in his article, 'πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 166-84.

176. Porter and Pitts, 'πίστις with a Preposition', p. 53.

177. Howard, 'On the "Faith of Christ"', p. 463.

178. A.B. Caneday, 'The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ as a Theme in Paul's Theology in Galatians', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 185-205.

context, especially when the phrases πίστις Χριστοῦ and ἔργα νόμου lie in such close proximity.

Galatians 2.15-21 and 'Works of the Law'

Galatians 2.15-21 acts as a segue between Paul's description of his confrontation with Peter and the message that he has for his Galatian readers. Paul introduces the phrase 'works of the law' when commenting on the question he has asked Peter about compelling Gentiles to live like Jews. He contrasts being justified 'by works of the law' (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) to being justified as a result of the 'faithfulness of Christ' (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ), rather than making a simple contrast between law and faith. Sanders argues that, in Galatians, the debate between faith and law surfaces as a debate over membership in the Christian community.¹⁷⁹ Others, following Sanders's lead, describe these works as 'badges' or 'identity markers'.¹⁸⁰ This understanding seems to arise logically from Paul's use of ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in Galatians 2 (three times in v. 16). As such, Craig Evans's observation seems to sum up the situation in

179. Sanders's view came into prominence with his ground-breaking work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. More specific focus on Paul and the law followed in his *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

180. E.g. R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC, 41; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. 86, says: 'So Paul here in 2:16 uses ἐξ ἔργων νόμου not just to refer to "the badges of Jewish covenantal nomism", though that may have been how other Jewish believers thought of them, but as a catch phrase to signal the whole legalistic complex of ideas of having to win God's favor by merit-amassing observance of Torah'. More recent commentary, however, shies away from the idea that Judaism advocated some sort of legalism. See R.B. Hays, 'The Letter to the Galatians', in L.E. Keck *et al.* (eds.), *The New Interpreter's Bible*. XI. *2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), p. 239: 'Judaism had never taught that individuals must earn God's favor by performing meritorious works; members of the covenant people are already embraced by God's gracious election and mercy. Obedience to the Law is not a condition for getting in; rather it is a means of staying in the covenant community.' Dunn makes this point, too, throughout his many writings on the topic. Referring to Sanders's analysis, Dunn states that "'works of the law" are Paul's way of describing the identity and boundary markers which Paul's Jewish(-Christian) opponents thought, and rightly thought, were put under threat by Paul's understanding of the gospel'. See James D.G. Dunn, 'Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.10-14)', in his *The New Perspective on Paul* (WUNT, 185; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), pp. 111-30 (117) (reprinted from *NTS* 31 [1985], pp. 523-42).

Galatians aptly:

in Galatians Paul is criticizing Jewish Christians, who, acting with Jerusalem's authority, were attempting to 'complete' Paul's work, by bringing his converts to perfection in the new faith. This perfection would be achieved through obedience of certain works of the law thought to be essential.¹⁸¹

Jerusalem's authority is assumed on the basis of Paul's opposition to Peter. Paul does not, however, continue his rebuke of Peter in Galatians 3, but has simply referred to it in order to highlight the extent to which the Galatians were in error—they were acting under the influence of those with a far less credible authority than that which Peter represented. It is an entirely different situation that is addressed in Galatians 3, and the cultic elements involved in Paul's rebuke there must not be ignored. We cannot form a definitive understanding of the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου by examining its occurrence in Galatians 2 in isolation, since its occurrence in ch. 2 anticipates ch. 3, but from a significantly different context. However, in all of Paul's references to 'works of the law' (including those in Romans), the common context is justification that comes as a result of Christ's faithfulness and, in keeping with Sanders's school of thought, Paul's point is more forcefully made if 'works of the law' is interpreted as signifying selective works, and not simple observance of the whole law.¹⁸² Nor does observance of the whole law make sense in Gal. 3.10, where 'works of the law' are set in opposition to 'doing everything written in the book of the Law'. Seen in this way, the diametrically opposed positions that Evans sees between Jesus' pronouncement in Lk. 10.10-25—'In essence he has said that if a person does the Law, he has eternal life'—and 'Paul's claim that "no human being will be justified from works of law"'¹⁸³—are actually two halves of the same argument: the former hints at the means of observing the law in its entirety, and the latter highlights the folly of observing the law selectively.

The repetition of the phrase 'works of the law', particularly in juxtaposition to the justification of both Jew and Gentile as a result of the faithfulness of Christ, renders their selective works of the law, like the

181. C.A. Evans, 'Paul and "Works of Law" Language in Late Antiquity', in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Paul and his Opponents* (PAST, 2; Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 201-26 (201).

182. As, for example, J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), pp. 262-63.

183. Evans, 'Paul and "Works of Law"', p. 226.

circumcision of the flesh, meaningless.

Galatians 3.1-5 and 'Works of the Law'

Paul's language in Galatians 3 is dictated, to a large extent, by the language of his opponents, although it is not his opponents to whom he speaks. The appeal in Galatians 3 (as indicated in v. 1) is emphatically to the Galatian converts who are being led astray. John Bligh, omitting the term Γαλάται, contends that ch. 3 continues Paul's admonition to the Jewish Christians at Antioch, who had seen the crucifixion with their own eyes. He supports this interpretation with Paul's references to 'works of the law' in 3.2, 5, references which he regards as particularly meaningful to Jewish Christians.¹⁸⁴ Yet this is not an expression that Paul regularly uses in dialogue with Jewish Christians, nor anyone else for that matter, as the only other place it is found in his letters is in Romans 3. As we have seen, Paul's description of his readers as ἀνόητοι Γαλάται would have had a profound impact on his readers, who would see in this a reference to their unsophisticated and stubborn Galatian counterparts of Celtic descent. The idea that they could actually be bewitched or placed under some spell (βασκάνω) reinforces both the comparison and Paul's point. Further, the expression οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμούς in Gal. 3.1 is more logically associated with the lucidity of preaching than with the particular experience of those at Syrian Antioch. Indeed, all three phrases in 3.1 are interrelated in their description of the Galatian converts: the Galatians, in a manner reminiscent of their Celtic namesakes, have misunderstood the unmistakable portrayal of Christ crucified, and have thereby displayed an ignorance that could only be the product of some enchantment. The heresies of the opponents have had a devastating effect on the power of God, which has been made manifest in his Spirit. Therefore, it is likely that the emphasis from βασκάνω falls not only on the objects of this bewitchment, but also on its source. If it does not describe the opponents' strategies literally, it is at least an appropriate hyperbole. This, combined with the portrayal of Christ crucified, has its effect not only in underlining the extent of the Galatians' 'ignorance',¹⁸⁵ but also in setting the scene

184. John Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St Paul's Epistle* (London: St Paul Publications, 1969), p. 225.

185. The ignorance of the Galatians described as such (i.e. ἀνόητοι) also reflects something of the vehemence of Paul's opinion of the Judaism opposing him in Asia Minor.

for what follows, i.e. an emphasis on the implications of Christ's faithful death upon the cross.

The expression 'works of the law' is more complex, and it is crucial to the interpretation of the first five verses of Galatians 3—if not the entire epistle. B.H. Brinsmead offers an insightful definition of the expression as meaning 'a "random selection" of commandments from Israel's legal tradition perhaps especially cultic and ceremonial commandments'.¹⁸⁶ This sort of practice points in the direction of the paradoxical Judaism that we have seen in Asia Minor. On the one hand, there is a conscious link with the accepted Judaism of Jerusalem; yet, on the other hand, there is a strong cultic overtone through which the practice of the law may have differing implications. Referring to Paul's concern that the Galatians are observing 'special days and months and seasons and years' in Gal. 4.9, Hays poses an important question: 'why does Paul not refer explicitly to "festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths" as in Col. 2:16?'¹⁸⁷ It is not, as Hays contends, that 'Paul is suggesting that Judaism's holy observances are, in effect, no different from paganism's worship of earthly elements'.¹⁸⁸ It is, rather, the particular form of Judaism that Paul encounters in Asia Minor that is reflecting the στοιχεῖα. It is the opponents who have not differentiated between Judaism's holy observances and paganism's parallel practices. It is the introduction of cultic elements through the opponents' form of Judaism that is at issue for Paul. Paul's references not only apply to the pagan practices that are particularly evident in the countryside, but to the packed calendar of the imperial cult in which many of the urban Jews were active.

Although Dunn's numerous insights into 'works of the law' in Galatians provide an excellent starting point for exploring plausible definitions, there is a sense that his own definitions are somewhat restrictive. He correctly observes that the traditional understanding of the phrase as 'good works by which individuals try to gain acceptance by God' has

186. B.H. Brinsmead, *Galatians—Dialogical Response to Opponents* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 119. D.J. Moo argues quite effectively that this phrase conveys the meaning 'works done in obedience to the law' in his article "'Law", "Works of the law", and Legalism in Paul', *WTJ* 45 (1983), pp. 73-100 (92-94). In contrast, F.J. Matera, while adopting the idea that the 'works of the law' are select, falls in line with Sanders and Dunn in defining the works as those that epitomize Judaism as identity markers. See F.J. Matera, *Galatians* (SP, 9; Colleagueville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 11, 93.

187. Hays, 'Letter to the Galatians', p. 288.

188. Hays, 'Letter to the Galatians', p. 287.

'skewed the whole exegesis of the letter'.¹⁸⁹ However, with regard to the 'corporate dimension of the discussion',¹⁹⁰ through which Dunn defends his observations, it must be noted that, for the specific situation addressed in Galatians, there was a focus on perfection through the incorporation of 'works of the law' that intersected with the pagan religions. This dimension is not apparent in Dunn's contention that what Paul has in view is covenantal nomism, and that 'works of the law' are the 'badges' that essentially mark the Jew as a 'good Jew'.¹⁹¹ While certainly tempting in the context of Gal. 2.16, it seems a stretch to extend this definition throughout the remainder of Galatians. With regard to the conflict in Jerusalem, Dunn suggests that '[Paul's] rejection of covenantal nomism as it affected the Gentile Christians was at the same time a rejection of the Jewish authority that laid them down'.¹⁹² In Paul's address to the Galatians (particularly in ch. 3), however, it is not covenantal nomism that is at stake per se but a distortion of it. Paul's resolution of the conflict in Jerusalem in ch. 2 does not resolve Paul's conflict with his opponents in ch. 3; it simply enhances his argument.

The difficulty for Dunn in providing an alternative definition for ἔργα νόμου in Galatians 3 may stem from his understanding of how it is used in 2.16, where he observes that the antithesis of πίστις Χριστοῦ 'is most naturally understood as Paul's way of posing the alternatives on the human side on the basis of which...one might hope to be justified'.¹⁹³ In fact, it is the divine side that is in view here, as it usually is when Paul is making a strong theological point. Paul spells out the condition of the Jewish Christian, observing that Cephas (or any Jewish Christian) is not justified (δικαιοῦται, passive voice!) by a selection of laws (whether or not they may be attributed to God), but through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, who was sent by God to fulfill his righteousness. Paul is not unnecessarily compounding phrases in that verse (as Dunn's interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ must contend) when he speaks of

189. James D.G. Dunn, 'The Theology of Galatians: The Issue of Covenantal Nomism', in J.M. Bassler (ed.), *Pauline Theology. I. Thessalonians, Philipians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 125-46 (130); cf. p. 137.

190. Dunn, 'Theology of Galatians', p. 130.

191. James D.G. Dunn, 'The New Perspective on Paul', *BJRL* 65.2 (1983), pp. 95-122 (110-11).

192. Dunn, 'Theology of Galatians', pp. 143-44.

193. Dunn, 'Once More, PISTIS CHRISTOU', p. 72.

believing (ἐπιστεύσαμεν, the human side) in Christ so that one may be justified by the faithfulness of Christ. Paul's use of the verb πιστεύω is the point at which he differentiates between human response and God's imparting of righteousness through the faithfulness (πίστις) of Christ. Likewise, it is not human endeavour that concerns Paul when he introduces the phrase ἔργα νόμου, whether that be the human endeavour of good works that Dunn rejects, or the human endeavour of wearing the badges of covenantal optimism that Dunn endorses.

Two clarifications must be made. First, we must understand that our conclusions regarding 'works of the law' in Galatians 3 are not based on what Paul has written immediately preceding in Gal. 2.15-21. Paul is not there posing a simple opposition between 'faith' and 'works of the law'. Rather, he speaks to the particular problem with Peter in Antioch. Paul develops his argument at the end of ch. 2 in general terms. The phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3.2, 5 has quite a different meaning from the more general phrase διὰ νόμου in 2.21. Paul's focus in ch. 3 is on selective works of the law—those more specifically attributable to the Jews of Asia Minor—rather than on the law per se. But it is not as if Paul here injects a new argument into the letter. Rather, he is returning to the original argument left behind in Gal. 1.9.¹⁹⁴ Nor is it useful to attempt to reconcile the apparent contradiction in the opponents' position as it appears in Gal. 6.13 by supposing that Paul is addressing two separate groups of opponents, i.e. those who are 'not only non-theological but also non-observant' and 'visiting missionaries'.¹⁹⁵ Given the history of the Jews in Asia Minor, it is not hard to presume that Paul is addressing two failings inherent in a single opposition.

Secondly, 'works of the law', when attributed to the pagan pre-Christian Galatians, must be interpreted in the light of στοιχεῖα in Gal. 4.3, 9. Paul's argument in ch. 3 provides the background. There he presents the opponents' theology to the Galatians as something that is made up of the same stuff as the Galatians' pre-Christian paganism, or worse, the less sophisticated paganism of those outside of the cities, being bound up in the cosmic elements. Paul thus begins to make explicit his view of the sort of Judaism by which the Galatians are being led astray. It is in this

194. And so, correctly, Ernest de Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980 [1920]), p. 143; F. Müssner, *Der Galaterbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), p. 206.

195. John C. Hurd, 'Reflections concerning Paul's "Opponents" in Galatia', in Porter (ed.), *Paul and his Opponents*, pp. 129-48 (145).

context that Paul, as a Jew, is able to critique Judaism and the law. There is another particular danger that is also prevalent: the indigenous pagan observance of days was almost always a time for sexual indulgence and other self-abandonment. For the Galatians to incorporate Jewish days into their worship might well be a means of introducing the practices of those pagan cults. Therefore, when Paul speaks to the Galatians in ch. 3, he sees in their present reliance on 'works of the law' the dangerous threat of a return to the στοιχεῖα, which, for Paul, is even more incomprehensible than that from which they were rescued.

There is an obvious parallel in 3.2 and 3.5 between ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐξ ἄκοῆς πίστεως. It would be an awkward parallel if the emphasis in the former phrase was on νόμος,¹⁹⁶ because it is the latter phrase that Paul seems to have contrived. That is, it would be easier simply to use πίστις parallel to νόμος if that was all Paul meant to convey.¹⁹⁷ As we have seen, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου must, for the Galatians, be associated with the στοιχεῖα from which they have been saved. Similarly, the phrase speaks of the law tradition that has been introduced to the opponents. It is not a case of Paul attacking the law in Galatians 3. Rather, he is attacking a particular understanding of the law—though his methodology, by nature, does not make this immediately clear. The picture presented is that of Paul deliberately colouring his exposition of the law in order that it might relate more directly to a view of the law with which he disagrees. The second phrase, ἐξ ἄκοῆς πίστεως, also relates to some of the ideas that Paul develops later. It parallels not only ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but also οἷς κατ' ὀφλαμούςς, emphasizing that Christ's faithful death has been perceived by 'hearing' as well as 'seeing'. Both of these acts are sufficient

196. As per A.V. Longworth, "'Faith" in Galatians: A Study of Galatians 2:16–3:29', in F.L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Evangelica* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), II, pp. 605-10 (607).

197. J.C. O'Neill circumvents this problem by dismissing the parallel altogether and attributing the use of ἄκοῆς (in vv. 2, 5) to a gloss—added to make explicit that it was not the 'Christian faith' that Paul had in mind here, but the faith that comes explicitly from hearing, apart from works. See his *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1972), p. 47. However, while it does not appear that Paul is (with O'Neill) contrasting faith and works, neither is it a simple contrast between faith and law. The difficulty of the expression ἐξ ἄκοῆς πίστεως is well treated by Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 125-32. He concludes: 'It is at least possible that πίστις here, as in other texts in Galatians, functions as a collective designation for "that which is believed" and does not refer explicitly to the Galatians' act or attitude of faith' (p. 132).

to convey what God has done for them as a result of Christ's faithfulness. Thus, when Paul lays out his argument in chs. 3 and 4, it is evident that he gives pre-eminence to Abraham and his salvation by 'faith(fulness) alone' rather than by 'faith(fulness) and obedience'. Paul avoids reference to Moses (who would have immediately been associated with 'faith and obedience'), since Moses would have also been associated with cosmic laws, which, in Paul's scheme, would be part of the present evil age.¹⁹⁸ A far-reaching principle lies underneath, however, which involves the manner in which Paul utilizes terms familiar to his immediate readers to defuse his opponents' argument.

We do not have a simple contrast in the expressions of Gal. 3.2 and 3.5. Both of the queries centre on the receiving of the Spirit. It is not, however, an exceptional manifestation of the Spirit that concerns Paul.¹⁹⁹ Instead, it is the natural claim that the Galatians have to the Spirit as those who had perceived his unmistakable portrayal of Christ crucified. Paul is anxious that they be aware of the eschatological implications of such a claim, that is, that they now partake in the new age of regeneration. The emphasis, therefore, is on the implications of this shift of aeons. The Galatians have confused the concepts of justification and law by viewing this cosmic transformation as if it were simply an initial work of law. Paul expounds on this transformation without dislodging its intrinsic value or its cooperative values in his salvation-historical scheme. Paul has focused on his opponents' claim that, along with the initial act of salvation certain works of the law drive one's experience of God into higher realms. It is these works of the law that are offensive to Paul—not only from a Christian standpoint but also from a Jewish standpoint. It is these selective works of the law that Paul contrasts to the hearing of faith: works that played no part in the Galatians' salvation, and which bore little resemblance to a continuation of Jewish tradition.

The cultic overtones in Galatians 3 are apparent throughout the entire chapter, which is especially seen in certain word pairings.²⁰⁰ The pairing

198. Moses would be understood as such in the view of certain Jewish apocalyptic literature. The influence of this literature would, of course, have to be apparent in Paul's opponents for the argument to stand.

199. Contra W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (trans. J.E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972 [1965]), p. 47; Müssner, *Der Galaterbrief*, p. 208.

200. James Dunn gives full credit to Paul's use of cultic language throughout his analysis of the first five verses of Galatians 3 in *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), pp. 135-37.

of ἐναρξάμενοι/ἐπιτελείσθε (3.3) is familiar from other religions in Asia Minor, especially the mystery cults.²⁰¹ ἐπιτελεῖν undoubtedly plays a significant role in the opponents' heresy. Although Paul is conscious of the perfecting role of the Spirit, it is the opponents' claim that certain 'works of the law' have perfecting qualities that instigates his outcry. The problem is that the opponents used ἐπιτελεῖν as a propaganda word to promote the claim that their way was a deepening experience of God,²⁰² indeed, leading to perfection. Such an understanding would parallel the pattern that we have seen in the mystery religions, which, though perhaps not yet expressed as fully as they would be in future centuries, had existed in various forms for many years and, if not always present in Anatolian culture, were certainly present in the Anatolian consciousness in the first century. If this assessment of the opponents' teaching is correct, then they seriously misunderstood the full implications of Paul's presentation of justification as a transformation that places one squarely in the new aeon.

Paul also uses the pairing of σάρξ/πνεῦμα (3.3) in answering his opponents. In doing so, he deliberately introduces an eschatological argument, which bolsters his assertion that 'works of the law' stand in opposition to 'hearing of faith'. There is no support for O'Neill's suggestion that v. 3 is a gloss explaining by means of the 'commonplace antithesis πνεῦμα/σάρξ why the Galatians are characterized as foolish'.²⁰³ Neither can we maintain Duncan's conclusions that

In violent opposition to the Judaizing view, [Paul] insists that the issue, which already he had represented as one between 'doing what the law commands', and 'believing the gospel message', is in the last resort one between flesh and spirit.²⁰⁴

In the first place, this is not the contrast that has been presented by Paul. His assault is not on the law but on certain 'works of the law'. Secondly, Paul's interest in the σάρξ/πνεῦμα contrast is eschatological. His emphasis here is on the fact that the kingdom has come, not that it is coming. Though the ἔργα νόμου are somehow associated with σάρξ,

201. See H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Hermeneia, 62; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 133-34.

202. And so Brinsmead, *Galatians*, p. 79; Ramsay, *Galatians*, p. 325; H.N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (trans. H. Zylstra; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 114.

203. O'Neill, *Recovery*, p. 47.

204. G.S. Duncan, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937 [1934]), pp. 80-81.

the two expressions are not interchangeable; nor can σάρξ speak of law in isolation from the Spirit.²⁰⁵ Paul uses σάρξ as an eschatological term that here suggests that the Galatians are heading from the old aeon, right through the new aeon, back into the old.

The word pairing of μαθεῖν (v. 2)/παθεῖν (v. 4) has definite associations with the religions of Asia Minor and Greek thought generally.²⁰⁶ παθεῖν usually denotes suffering, as it does in the same pairing found in Heb. 5.18. Burton understands παθεῖν as a neutral term (so RSV ‘experience’),²⁰⁷ but this meaning would be exceptional. Understanding this term to describe a positive experience would be unsustainable,²⁰⁸ an interpretation unnecessarily imposed upon the text because of an absence of external evidence of persecution. Bligh, on the other hand, is more concerned with the vanity of the suffering,²⁰⁹ though he relates it to a misappropriation of the gifts of the Spirit. On the basis of the manner in which Paul is using his language here, however, it is more appropriate to maintain that it is the opponents’ theology that makes this suffering for nothing, inasmuch as they are telling the Galatians that there is something more to experience.

There is justifiable cause for this emphasis. Paul speaks also of his labour ‘in vain’ (εἰκῆ) over the Galatians (4.11), with εἰκῆ having its usual connotations (i.e. ‘needlessly’). In 3.4, however, the emphasis is stronger. It is as though Paul is saying: ‘Have you taken on this circumcision and these other works of the law without consideration?’ In this, Paul ironically sees the possibility of re-entry into paganism. Nonetheless, in the case of Galatians 3, if suffering is understood, this would not necessarily presuppose an organized persecution of the churches of Galatia. It would have a more esoteric meaning related to the teaching of the opponents. The μαθεῖν/παθεῖν pairing undoubtedly plays some

205. Indeed, as Burton suggests, even the ἔργα νόμου are not in antithesis to πνεῦμα in v. 2 (*Galatians*, p. 148).

206. See, for example, D.J.A. Clines, ‘Sin and Maturity’, *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 5 (1977), pp. 183-96 (194). The reference here is in turn to J. Coste, ‘Notion grecque et notion biblique de “la souffrance éducatrice”’, *RSR* 43 (1955), pp. 481-523. Note also the references in Betz, *Galatians*, p. 134 n. 67.

207. Burton, *Galatians*, p. 149.

208. Contra Müssner, *Der Galatarbrief*, p. 206. We find in the remarkable observation that when παθεῖν is used ‘neutrally’, the only example occurs in the phrase κακῶς παθεῖν, and when παθεῖν is used ‘positively’ (i.e. of pleasant experiences), the only example is that of Gal. 3.4 (see BDAG, p. 785).

209. Bligh, *Galatians*, pp. 332-33.

part in the opponents' argument for the necessity of certain works of the law. The special emphasis that the opponents place on circumcision, with its cultic and physical significance, would make circumcision a possible subject for this pairing.²¹⁰ In this case, a shadow of the opponents' sacramental theology is expressed in Paul's appropriation of the *μαθεῖν/παθεῖν* pairing. Here Paul is not merely using cultic language against his opponents but, in doing so, is likely appropriating the very terms that the opponents have used in their argument to the Galatian converts.

It is true that God gave the Spirit in power to the Galatians apart from the law. The opponents recognize this, but they claim that this reception of the Spirit is only a first step, and that other works of the law are necessary to bring the Galatians' experience to completion. *δυνάμεις* in 3.5 is usually understood to mean 'miracles'.²¹¹ Subsequently, the Galatians are understood to be, in some sense, ecstatics.²¹² If, however, the opponents were hailing their own mighty acts as *δυνάμεις*, or 'miracles', it is possible that Paul here has picked up the word but has given it his own interpretation.²¹³ That is, his interest is more in the mighty action of the Spirit—in contrast to the Spirit's charismatic manifestations—and in the Spirit being the byproduct of the all-encompassing act of justification achieved by the cross. The case is similar in Colossians where, as Lincoln observes, in speaking against those leaning towards 'legalistic observances, knowledge, visionary experiences, Paul insists that God has already done everything necessary in Christ'.²¹⁴ One is not justified through his or her action, much less perfected by a selective observation of the law. Brinsmead misses the point when he suggests that justification means 'all that the opponents mean by justification by faith plus justification by works of the law'.²¹⁵ Paul's emphasis, as always, is on the action of God, demonstrated sufficiently in the faithfulness of Christ, yet continually manifested in the new age by the *δυνάμεις* of God's Spirit.

210. Interestingly, in 6.12 we read of precisely the opposite, i.e. circumcision as a means of avoiding (Jewish or pagan?) persecution. However, we have no reason to assume that, in speaking of persecution (*διώκωνται*) in 6.12, Paul has in mind anything like the suffering (*παθεῖν*) of 3.4, which has more explicit cultic overtones.

211. And so RSV, KJV, NIV, NASB.

212. Schmithals, *Paul*, p. 47, sees here gnostic pneumatics. Burton, *Galatians*, p. 30, sees charismatic manifestations of the Spirit.

213. Only in 1 Corinthians 12 can *δυνάμεις* be understood as 'miracles' in Paul.

214. Lincoln, *Paradise*, pp. 133-34.

215. Brinsmead, *Galatians*, p. 201.

Had Paul's theology not allowed for a certain continued function of the law, his opponents would not have had a case. When Paul argues in Galatians 3 that 'works of the law' are not a means for receiving the Spirit, he is simply arguing that the Galatians are trying to earn something that they already possess. His polemic, at this point, is directed, not against the opponents, but against his own converts. What is important to him is that the Galatians understand that they participate in the new aeon solely on the basis of Christ's faithfulness—a truth they simply heard (ἀκοή) apart from any action of theirs. The Spirit, as part of that package, works in the same way. Therefore, no action, least of all any works of the law (which are dependent on the flesh), is required to perfect the work that has been done in them as a result of Christ's faithfulness. The law may well figure into it, but only in the context of its fullness in Christ's faithful act. There is no place whatsoever for a random selection of works of the law.

Paul, Qumran and the Jews of Asia Minor

Craig Evans correctly observes that '4QMMT's "works of the law" (מעשי התורה) is the linguistic equivalent of Paul's ἔργα νόμου (e.g. Rom 3:20, 28; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10)'.²¹⁶ Indeed, it seems to be the only extant equivalent. As such, it is crucial in the understanding of Paul's use of the phrase 'works of the law'. Evans offers the following translation from the fragment:

Now, we have written to you some works of the Law [מקצת מעשי התורה] those which we have determined would be beneficial for you and your people, because we have seen that you possess insight and knowledge of the Law.²¹⁷

The distinction of 'some works of the law' from the law itself is apparent. What is not so immediately apparent is the exact nature of that distinction. Martin Abegg introduces an important nuance in the translation as it is presented by translating מעשי instead as 'choice or select', on the basis of Gen. 47.2.²¹⁸ While, to a certain extent, this does support the understanding that, when Paul speaks of 'works of the law' in Galatians, he is referring to 'those practices that stand as outward symbols of Jewish

216. Evans, 'Paul and "Works of Law"', p. 221.

217. Evans, 'Paul and "Works of Law"', p. 221

218. Martin Abegg, 'Paul, "Works of the Law", and MMT', *BAR* 20.6 (1994), pp. 52-55, 82 (52).

distinctiveness',²¹⁹ it just as readily supports the idea that the 'works of the law' in question are distinctive in terms of the convictions of Paul's opponents. In fact, the total absence of the phrase in rabbinic literature in the first few centuries CE²²⁰ lends credence to this latter understanding, especially when the nature of Judaism in Asia Minor in the first century is factored into the equation. Nonetheless, Abegg's conclusion applies: 'MMT demonstrates that Paul was not jousting with windmills, but was indeed squared off in a dramatic duel—not with mainstream Judaism but a sectarian theology—that ultimately defined Christianity'.²²¹

The soteriological element in the Qumranites' use of the phrase 'works of the law' is well attested in de Roo's work. 'Works of the law' are not opposed to God's grace, because 'God graciously enabled them to perform works of the law in order to atone for their own individual sins and the sins of God's people as a whole'.²²² The selectivity of such a grace stands in contrast to Paul's emphasis on the all-encompassing grace that comes as a result of Christ's faithfulness. The easy access of the God-fearers to Jewish worship and the rise of the cult of Theos Hypsistos in conjunction with the Jews demonstrate the continued efforts of Anatolian Jews and pagans to find common ground, not only socially and culturally, but religiously. An intersection of those 'works of the law' that Jews deemed necessary to maintain their identity in Asia Minor with the cultic practices understood as leading to a unity with the divine would well explain the supplementary and perfecting rituals that Paul condemns.

The connection of language between Paul and 4QMMT is not limited to the phrase 'works of the law'. In a subsequent work, Abegg notes further topics unique to Galatians and 4QMMT, including 'reckoning of righteousness and Deuteronomic blessings and curses'.²²³ This is not accidental. Paul's use of language, as we see evidenced in his selection of

219. Hays, 'The Letter to the Galatians', p. 239. Here Hays refers to the similar position held by Dunn. See Dunn, *Galatians*, pp. 135-37. N.T. Wright's distinction that 'MMT defines one group of Jews over against the rest [whereas] works that Pauls opposes...define all Jews and proselytes over against the gentile, pagan world' misses the point ('Paul and Qumran', *BR* 14 [1998], pp. 18-54 [18]).

220. Abegg, 'Works of the Law', p. 53. Indeed, as Abegg notes here, 'only in Paul and MMT'.

221. Abegg, 'Works of the Law', p. 55.

222. See de Roo, *Works of the Law*, pp. 26-41 (41).

223. Martin G. Abegg, '4QMMT, Paul, and "Works of the law"', in P.W. Flint (ed.), *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 203-16 (216).

words in Gal. 3.1-5, deliberately reflects the language of the Anatolians to whom he speaks. If this is the case, then aligning the agitators with the group from Jerusalem is ironic at best. It is the pagan element of what the opponents advocate that is of concern to Paul.²²⁴ Paul's use of the phrase 'works of the law' in Galatians 2 in the context of those in Jerusalem may be construed as ironic. However, it must be remembered that Paul is relating this incident to Christians in Asia Minor—in particular, to those who are being influenced by opponents proclaiming what Paul sees as a return to paganism. Of course, the opponents' argument would hold little appeal if it advocated the incorporation of what were clearly pagan practices. The Judaism of Asia Minor, however, with its Essene roots and its syncretistic leanings, would not necessarily appear incompatible with the message that Paul proclaimed—especially if it were linked to the Judaism of those who were known as 'pillars'. Paul's point is simple: if he publicly opposed Peter when Peter selectively appealed to the law (i.e. when Jewish Christians from James were present), then how much more should he oppose the Galatians' selectivity under pressure from less credible sources? It is not on the specific 'works of the law' that Paul and 4QMMT intersect, nor on the nature of such works. Dunn contends that 'the מעשים of MMT are all highly technical issues, principally related to the cult, whereas in Galatians the ἔργα νόμου seem (from a Christian perspective) to focus on much weightier issues'.²²⁵ Yet Paul's language in Galatians 3 suggests that he does the very same thing as the author of 4QMMT by focusing on matters specifically related to the cult. As appealing as Dunn's contention might be that both the writers of 4QMMT and Paul use the phrase to designate practices 'of such importance as to necessitate...separation',²²⁶ it is the selectivity of these works, not their exclusivity, that is at issue.

224. Contrary to Wright, who suggests that 'the Galatians are under pressure from the agitators to show, simply, that they are no longer pagans, and are fully part of Israel' ('Paul and Qumran', p. 18).

225. James D.G. Dunn, '4QMMT and Galatians', in his *The New Perspective on Paul*, pp. 339-46 (339) (reprinted from *NTS* 43 [1997], pp. 147-53). Dunn spells out the nature of these technical issues as 'the series of halakhic rulings, chiefly relating to temple, priesthood sacrifices and purity' in his essay 'Noch Einmal "Works of the Law": The Dialogue Continues', in his *The New Perspective on Paul*, pp. 413-28 (413) (reprinted from Ismo Dunderberg, Christopher Tuckett and Kari Syreeni [eds.], *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen* [NovTSup, 103; Leiden: Brill, 2002], pp. 273-90).

226. Dunn, 'Noch Einmal', pp. 418-19.

Romans and 'Works of the Law'

Some insight into Dunn's understanding of ἔργα νόμου in Rom. 3.20 is apparent in his critique of Hays's understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Rom. 3.21-25.²²⁷ Dunn suggests that the problem with Hays's treatment of the passage is the result of isolating it from the context of 3.19-20 and 3.27-31, both of which contain the phrase ἔργα νόμου, which, Dunn maintains, is the phrase against which Paul is polemicizing and must therefore be 'something on the human side of the process'.²²⁸ As we saw in Dunn's similar analysis of Gal. 2.16, however, the strength of the theological point that Paul makes argues in favour of understanding the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ from the divine perspective. Again, it is God's righteousness that is at the heart of this passage, as Paul contrasts his use of 'works of the law' in Rom. 3.20 with the expression 'faithfulness of Jesus Christ' in Rom. 3.22. Paul does not merely express 'that all human beings are sinners... whose only possibility of being righteous before God is by God's free gift accepted by faith',²²⁹ but rather he makes the point that Christ adhered to the law in its entirety and not selectively, and it is by participating in that sort of faithfulness that both Jew and Gentile are made righteous and are rescued from their God-less condition. Although Paul does not suggest here, as he does in Galatians, that this selectivity involves a movement to circumcise Gentile believers, to impose cultic rituals upon them or otherwise to compel the Gentiles to live like Jews (Gal. 2.14), he does dispute the Jews' claim to a special status under the law, since, like the Gentiles, the Jews are not righteous (Rom. 3.9-18) and, hence, cannot be justified by selective works of the law (Rom. 3.20).

In his critique of Dunn's understanding of 'works of the law' in Romans, C.E.B. Cranfield makes some pertinent observations with regard to attaching special meaning to the phrase ἔργα νόμου in Galatians. He notes that:

The fact that both ἔργα and νόμος are both very common words in the New Testament... and that the combination of ἔργα with νόμος in the genitive is a very natural formation seem to make it extremely unlikely that Paul would use ἔργα νόμου in a special restricted sense without giving a clear sense that he was doing so.²³⁰

227. See R.B. Hays, 'PISTIS and Pauline Theology: What Is at Stake?', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, IV, pp. 35-60 (44-47).

228. Dunn, 'Once More, PISTIS CHRISTOU', p. 80.

229. C.E.B. Cranfield, "'The Works of the Law' in the Epistle to the Romans", *JSNT* 43 (1991), pp. 89-101 (93).

230. Cranfield, 'The Works of the Law', p. 92.

Yet, as we have seen, the cultic language in which the phrase is surrounded gives it a more restricted sense. It is true that the particulars of that sense are more obvious in Galatians, which is rife with cultic themes, but, in linking Jew and Gentile together under sin, the same point appears to be made more subtly in Romans. And, being a natural formation of two such common words in the Pauline epistles, one would expect this phrase to appear more frequently rather than being found only in two chapters of Galatians and in Rom. 3.20, 28. This does, however, call for a closer examination of the context of the Romans passage.

As we have noted, Paul's use of the phrase ἔργα νόμου in Rom. 3.20 is found in close proximity to the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ in Rom. 3.22. Likewise, we find the phrase ἔργα νόμου in Rom. 3.28 preceded by πίστις Χριστοῦ in Rom. 3.26, this time with the earlier verse expounding on the righteousness of God in Christ's faithfulness standing in contrast to the fruitless attempt at righteousness through a selective participation in the law, in which the Jews fall short just as much as their pagan counterparts.²³¹

Cranfield systematically refutes Dunn's contention that other uses of ἔργα without νόμου in Romans have similar specialized meanings akin to the genitive phrase, particularly with regard to boasting.²³² While this is a powerful argument against Dunn's interpretation of ἔργα νόμου, it must be noted that a cultic reading of the rare genitive construction does not necessarily extend to the much more common use of ἔργα in isolation. In fact, Paul may well be borrowing the phrase in Romans 3 from his own diatribe in Galatians to convey the irony of the Jewish situation in the Roman church, wherein, even if an argument could be construed for the inclusion of Jewish law in their worship, the point is that, based on their track record, the efficacy of their practice of law differs in no way from that of the Gentiles, who are without the law.²³³

231. For this particular dilemma, brought to its climax in Romans 7, see Barry F. Parker, 'Romans 7 and the Split between Judaism and Christianity', *JGRChJ* 3 (2006), pp. 110-33 (128-32).

232. Cranfield, 'The Works of the Law', pp. 96-99.

233. Indeed, the number of parallels between Galatians 3 and Romans 3, 4 suggests that the latter letter expounds on the former, albeit for a different audience. An additional parallel in these passages is the introduction of Abraham, although he, too, represents something somewhat different for each audience. In both letters, however, Paul emphasizes the faithfulness of Abraham, not on the basis of his works (even if such works should be based on a correct understanding of the law), but on the basis of Abraham's trust in the promises of God. Genesis 15.6 is used to introduce the

Conclusions

In Galatia, the historical evidence indicates that Jews there overstepped the bounds of contemporary Judaism gradually, but certainly did so under the influence of external culture, political manipulation and religious pressure. In such a Judaism, issues such as circumcision and Abraham, or law and covenant, would represent doctrines only tangentially related to mainstream Judaism. Indeed, the pagan religions of Asia Minor show the prevalence of a ritual circumcision that is more appropriately condemned by Paul's language than the normative Jewish practice. In the light of such a situation, Paul's use of the phrase 'works of the law' in Galatians 3 refers to the selective works of the law that represent the practice of his opponents. These works bear a common name in Judaism and paganism, but are practiced distinctively. The Jews of Galatia who opposed Paul have, to some degree, lost a sense of that distinctiveness.

When Paul emphasizes the faithfulness of Christ, he establishes a common ground from which he can expound the full implications of justification in response to the perfectionism that has been preached by his opponents. The array of major and minor points that emerges from Paul's cultic language concerning law in Galatians 3 shows that he is acutely aware of his opponents' theology. In Galatians 3, he is in the process of adapting Anatolian concepts and language to his own polemic. The aim of his polemic is an apology for Judaism through which he can demonstrate the common status of Jew and Gentile under the gospel of Christ, and the sufficiency of Christ's faithful death in opposition to the believer's 'works of the law'. As such, Paul condemns the main argument in the opponents' praise of the law, which is concerned with stages of perfection.

In Galatians 3, Paul places the question of the law within the greater context of justification. Paul and his opponents have not only a different theology of the law, but a different understanding of the role of the law in the new age as inaugurated by Christ's faithfulness. He attacks both his opponents' definition of the law and the implications of that definition in contrast to what has been accomplished by the crucified Christ. The key to understanding Paul's language concerning the law lies in the

discussion of Abraham in both epistles. The promises of God focus on the Abrahamic blessings. Abraham's faithfulness to God, as seen in his trust in the promise of these blessings, foreshadows the faithfulness of Christ, which likewise results in blessings that are shared by those for whom both Abraham and Christ mediate. De Roo provides a useful analysis of perspectives on Abraham in this context in *Works of the Law*, pp. 99-128.

significance of the law, not to Paul, but to those to whom he speaks. Paul's opponents in Galatia have twisted the purpose of the law almost beyond recognition, and Paul has no tolerance for their view. Notably, he condemns their emphasis on selective works of the law. Ironically, however, Paul's language in Galatians 3 appears to disparage the law because it is dictated by the perverted view of the law that he encounters in Galatia. His emphasis is actually on the spiritual nature of the law. Though inadequate to impart righteousness, the law is shown to be the gracious gift of God, given in cooperation with the promise until the fulfillment of the promise. In Galatians 3, Paul speaks to those seeking means outside of Christ's faithfulness to complete their salvation.

In short, when the historical framework is established, Paul's language concerning law flows consistently. The more disparaging language concerning law in Galatians 3 does not refer to the Torah per se, but to a perversion of it. Paul does not present the law as greater than the promise, but rather as in keeping with it. The law fails only in its inability to impart righteousness. In light of the historical factors, there is no need to defend Paul's view of the law by dismissing his negative statements as a condemnation of 'legalism'. For polemical reasons Paul offers in Galatians 3 a salvation-historical argument against a perverted view of the Torah by using cultic terminology and images. Social, political and religious pressures had befallen the Jews in Asia Minor just as they had afflicted the early Christian church from the beginning.

The first recourse for the Anatolian Jews under such pressure was not an appeal to 'legalism', but to 'selective works of the law', as is implied by the phrase ἔργα νόμου. The only appearance of this phrase from that time outside of Paul is found in 4QMMT. The use of 'works of the law' there confirms both that Paul is in (indirect) dialogue with those familiar with Essene terminology and that selectivity is in view. Although he speaks to a different audience about a different problem regarding the law in Romans, when Paul uses the phrase ἔργα νόμου in Romans 3, the immediate context is quite similar to what he addresses in Galatians. It is, in both cases, a matter of the righteousness of God, as expressed in the faithfulness of Christ (πίστις Χριστοῦ). This faithfulness of Christ suffices for both Jew and Gentile (pagan), who are equally condemned—in Galatians they are condemned for trying to supplement that faithfulness with a perverted version of the law, and in Romans they are condemned for perverting the law by their very efforts to fulfill it through a selective participation in it.