

**THE LIVING TRADITION OF LIVING IN THE LAW:
Paul's Use of Leviticus 18:5**

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Abstract

This essay addresses Paul's quotations of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians and Romans. Starting from the interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5, intertextuality between the quotation and the surrounding texts is traced along with echoes of Leviticus 18:5 throughout each epistle. It is demonstrated that Paul interpreted Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians in connection to the reward of life. In Romans, on the other hand, Paul interpreted Leviticus 18:5 as the law written on the hearts of those who are in Christ –thus fulfilling its covenantal function. Rather than implying inconsistency, Paul's different applications of Leviticus 18:5 are consistent with the unity of his view on the law.

Keywords: law, faith, righteousness, Paul, intertextuality, horizon fusion, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Romans, Galatians

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas kutipan Paulus terhadap Imamat 18:5 di Galatia dan Roma. Bermula dari tradisi penafsiran Imamat 18:5, intertekstualitas antara kutipan tersebut dan teks-teks disekitarnya akan ditelusuri bersama dengan gema Imamat 18:5 di dalam surat-surat tersebut. Artikel ini akan menunjukkan bahwa Paulus menafsirkan Imamat 18:8 di surat Galatia dalam hubungannya dengan ganjaran kehidupan. Dalam surat Roma, di pihak lain, Paulus menafsirkan Imamat 18:5 sebagai hukum yang tertulis pada hati mereka yang ada dalam Kristus – oleh karena itu, memenuhi fungsi kovenantalnya. Daripada menganggapnya sebagai inkonsistensi, aplikasi-aplikasi Paulu yang beragam terhadap Imamat 18:5 sebenarnya konsisten dengan keutuhan pemahamannya mengenai hukum.

Kata-Kata Kunci: hukum, iman, kebenaran, Paulus, intertekstualitas, fusi cakrawala, Imamat, Ulangan, Roma, Galatia.

One crucial aspect in Paul's view on the law is to identify Paul's use of the relevant Old Testament (OT) scriptures. There are four OT passages which Paul quoted in both Galatians and Romans: Genesis 15:6, Leviticus 18:5, Leviticus 19:18, and Habakkuk 2:4. By presupposing theological unity, one may assume that Leviticus 18:5 was used to convey the same message in both the epistles. However, theological unity does not imply that Paul always used it in the exact same manner.

Prior to E.P. Sanders, reading the law-faith antithesis from Galatians 3:8-14 and Romans 10:5-8 was natural. Building upon Sanders' work, James Dunn and N.T. Wright argued that what Paul opposed was not the law *per se*, but its sociological function as a boundary marker between the Jews and the Gentiles. This is how they interpret Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12. In this sense, the law is antithetical to faith. Dunn holds that Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5 is essentially of the same manner as in Galatians 3:12. Wright, on the other hand, finds Paul's use in Romans 10:5 as an expression of the new covenantal nomism in the new Spirit-empowered community. In this case, Leviticus 18:5 is not antithetical to faith.¹ Similarly, Richard Hays infers that Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:10-13 was intended to state the claim of the law to give life which "is incompatible with the gospel story."² In Romans 10:5-8, Hays holds the same reading as Wright since Christ is the goal of the law (Rom 10:4).³

According to J. Louis Martyn, Paul set up a "textual contradiction" in Galatians 3:11-12 as Christ has inaugurated the apocalyptic age of blessing which is antithetical to the law. Regarding Romans 10:5, Martyn argues that Moses conveyed the false promise of the law which was antithetical to faith.⁴ Francis Watson also claims that Paul's quotations in Galatians 3:11-12 and Romans 10:5-8 were attempts to bring out "inner-scriptural antithesis". In particular, Watson argues that Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:11-14 in Romans 10:5-8 represent human praxis in the voice of Moses and

¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary 38B, Romans 9-16* (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 600–601, 611–612; N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 190, 245–246.

² Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 179; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 109.

³ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 75–77, 109.

⁴ J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, Anchor Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 328–334, 316n.101–103.

divine praxis in the voice of faith.⁵ Simon Gathercole sees a shift in meaning of Leviticus 18:5 from the law as the rule of life to the source of eternal life. Gathercole claims that Paul refuted the law-based soteriology of his contemporaries which was embodied in Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians and Romans.⁶ Adopting Gathercole's methodology and presupposing Watson's antithesis of divine and human agency, Preston Sprinkle concludes that Leviticus 18:5 was quoted to highlight the soteriological role of human agency in both Galatians and Romans.⁷

Presupposing that Paul was a coherent interpreter of scriptures, the goal of this essay is to arrive at a hypothesis on how Paul interpreted Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians and Romans by taking into account the points of contact and departure between the two uses. In Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, Paul's use of OT is discussed along with our proposed methodology. The interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5 is covered in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** followed by Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians and Romans in Sections **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**, respectively. Section **Error! Reference source not found.** concludes the essay.

Paul's Reading of the Old Testament

Paul utilized the Second Temple hermeneutical tradition. In addition, Paul presupposed an inaugurated eschatology fulfilled in Jesus Christ which is to be consummated on the judgment day. The fulfillment in Christ implies that the church is also a fulfillment of the eschatological Israel.⁸ But to what extent did he rely on the tradition of his time?

Hans-Georg Gadamer argues that true understanding of a text comes from a communal conversation between the text and the interpreter. A temporal gap exists between the text and the interpreter. By placing oneself in an interpretive tradition, a horizon of meaning

⁵ Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2004), 329–341, 516–517.

⁶ Simon J. Gathercole, "Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament," in *From Prophecy to Testament*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004), 126–45.

⁷ Preston M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 170–172, 193–200.

⁸ Dan McCartney, "The New Testament's Use of The Old Testament," in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, a Challenge, and a Debate* (Baker Pub Group, 1988), 101–6.

that defines a boundary of understanding is formed.⁹ Then, one's understanding is revised upon a new act of reading through a process of *horizon fusion*. That is, the horizon of the interpreter fuses with the horizon of tradition to form a new horizon which entails the revision of meaning as well as tradition.

Regarding the extent of meaning, Gadamer holds that interpretation is not merely reproductive, but rather creative since revision and expansion of meaning take place in that process. Since an author is also an interpreter, multiplicity of meaning is expected as the meaning goes beyond the authorial intent.¹⁰ While a quest for finding the authorial meaning is beneficial, it is merely a part of the meaning captured within the interpretive tradition.

One may see the relevance of Gadamer's hermeneutical model for our problem. As Paul believed that the OT scriptures are imbued with transcendent meanings, Paul understood that fuller meaning may be unfolded as the scriptures were appropriated in different horizons.¹¹

Richard Hays claims that Paul consistently alluded to the OT scriptures, and hence wrote in continuation with his scriptural tradition.¹² Such allusions were often used to set the stage for a quotation. This is an attempt to "allow this dialectical process to continue without premature disclosure."¹³ Such intertextuality in Paul's letters echoes Gadamer. Yet Hays goes further by offering a platform in which fuller meaning of a text may surface. Here the text is read in conjunction with the other OT quotations and allusions which is itself a horizon fusion.

Some may argue that Paul would not have expected such a degree of sensitivity from his readers. Implicit in such a denial is a presupposition that the text must only carry a single meaning attainable to the lowest stratum of the readers. Yet this ignores the fact that Paul's mind and life were shaped by scriptural categories and tradition. So quotations and allusions could be used in a short-hand manner and the lack of explanations on his use of scriptures does not necessarily imply an absence of deeper meaning. If, as Gadamer claims, there are grades in understanding, expecting grades of meaning as a function of the reader's response is on target.

⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Donald Marshall and George Weinsheimer (New York, NY: Continuum, 1975), 290–291.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 290, 296–297, 396.

¹¹ Note that in Gadamer's model, extracting meaning apart from application or significance for the sake of its constancy is inapplicable.

¹² Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 18–21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 177–178.

To shed some further light into Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians and Romans, the above insights are applied as follows. First, it is presupposed that Paul started from the interpretive tradition as he quoted the OT scriptures. This includes meaning in the original OT context and reception history of Leviticus 18:5. Second, how would the Christ-events and the formation of the community of faith interact with the interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5 and its meaning? Third, how is the quotation *locally* situated within the discourse? Here interaction between the quotation with its surrounding texts (scriptural quotations or allusions) is considered. The primary focus at this stage is the intertextual effect of other texts on the meaning of the text of interest. Fourth, how are the quotations situated within the larger context? This includes a hypothesis on the *Sitz im Leben* of the epistle. Furthermore, allusions to ("echoes" of) the Leviticus 18:5 quotation of interest will be sought in other parts of the epistle. In contrast to stage 3, the focus of this stage is the effect of the Leviticus 18:5 on other texts. This is aimed at bringing to bear some additional exegetical data especially when several conflicting interpretations are possible.

Tracing echoes of the quotation throughout the epistle is justified for at least two reasons. As mentioned before, Leviticus 18:5 is one of the four OT quotations that appear in two epistles where the relation between faith and the law is expounded. This testifies its importance in Paul's view on the law. In addition, the pervasive OT intertextuality in Paul's major writings points to the possibility of interconnectedness of OT scriptures in Paul's arguments. Hence, it is quite likely that Leviticus 18:5 engages most of Paul's discussion of the law to a significant extent.

We will start from the interpretive tradition of Paul's contemporaries and then look at each of the two uses (Gal 3:12 and Rom 10:5).

Interpretative Tradition of Leviticus 18:5

To reconstruct an interpretive tradition (especially from Second Temple Judaism) of Leviticus 18:5 available to Paul, we will examine two textual traditions – Greek translation and Hebrew – in light of its original context. While Paul used a Greek translation for this purpose, as a Pharisee he was familiar with at least one Hebrew version. Therefore, utilizing LXX and a Hebrew version (from MT) for reconstructing an interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5 is reasonable. This, however, does not negate the priority of a Greek

translation of Leviticus 18:5 as a starting point for Paul's interpretive use in two of his epistles.

(LXX) τὰ κρίματά μου ποιήσετε καὶ τὰ προστάγματά μου φυλάξεσθε πορεύεσθαι ἐν αὐτοῖς· ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν. καὶ φυλάξεσθε πάντα τὰ προστάγματά μου καὶ πάντα τὰ κρίματά μου καὶ ποιήσετε αὐτά, ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς·

את־משפטי תעשו ואת־חקתי תשמרו ולכת בהם אני יהוה אלהיכם (MT)
ושמרתם את־חקתי ואת־משפטי אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם

How should ζήσεται or וחי be interpreted in its original context? Although the Greek future tense and the Hebrew *w-qatali* form may have an epistemic ('and he will live') or an imperative ('and he must live') sense, the following suggests that an imperatival 'he must live' is more precise:

1. Three verbs in future tense which are best rendered as imperative precede ζήσεται. The same holds in the MT version where those three verbs, either in imperfect or *w-qatali* form, are commandments.¹⁴
2. The imperative sense is consistent to its situatedness in the *Holiness Code* (H). ζάω appears three times in its indicative form in the LXX of H (Lev 18:5, 25:35-36) where all the occurrences are ζήσεται. In Leviticus 25:35-36, ζήσεται is best rendered as a commandment. The same holds for חי in its *w-qatali* form.

Assuming an imperatival rendering, ἐν αὐτοῖς (בהם) may be best translated 'in them.' Israel as God's covenant people must conduct their lives within the sphere of the law. The commandments are intended to maintain the purity of the land and to avoid extirpation from the people and the land. However, such a volitional use of חי in relation to obedience to legal codes in H is rare.¹⁵ Such rarity might have been perceived so *special* that development of meaning in its interpretive tradition ensued.

Another peculiarity is apparent in the LXX version where ποιήσας does not seem to correspond to anything in the MT version. In addition, the third-person singular subject of יעשה is translated into

¹⁴ Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblio, 1991), 396–400.

¹⁵ In fact, as its use in Leviticus 25:35-36 pertains to a specific commandment to live with one's paralytic brother, there is only one such occurrence throughout H.

a second-person plural in ποιήσετε.¹⁶ Regardless, the rendering of ποιήσας depends on the sense of ζήσεται. If ζήσεται is a commandment, ποιήσας can be rendered as a cause ('since having done') or a temporal antecedent ('after having done'). However, if ζήσεται is epistemic, ποιήσας is better rendered as a condition ('if having done') or means ('by having done') which also suggests that ἐν αὐτοῖς should be rendered as an instrumental modifier ('by them').

While the theme of living in the law is pervasive throughout the OT, a few explicit quotations have been identified in Ezekiel 20 and Nehemiah 9:29. In Ezekiel and Nehemiah, the history of Israel's multi-generational failure to obey God's law was recounted. A contrast between life and death is found in Ezekiel 20:25. As Israel disobeyed, God gave them anti-statutes and anti-judgments. Hence, the last clause of Ezekiel 20:25 is a result of God's action: "they may not live by them." The same can be said regarding Nehemiah 9. Hence, some expansion of meaning of Leviticus 18:5 occurred when it was quoted in Ezekiel and Nehemiah.¹⁷

How did an epistemic meaning arise? As the remnant lost their ownership of the land, they were faced with circumstances different from the original setting of Leviticus 18:5. By utilizing the potential semantic expansion of Leviticus 18:5 along with blessing-curse and life-death antitheses from Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut 28, 30) and H (Lev 26), the epistemic sense of וְחַיָּאrose from Leviticus 18:5: the law will grant life to the obedient. Here the reward of life was understood as the "deuteronomical lengthening of days" in the land.¹⁸

If an epistemic rendering of Leviticus 18:5 is assumed, the different emphasis on agency is apparent if we compare Leviticus 18:5 to the deuteronomical promise of life upon obedience. In D (the Deuteronomist source), "God grants life as a reward for obeying his

¹⁶ Alternatively, it is possible that אַ ποιήσας represents פִּשְׁעִי and ποιήσετε was added. Sprinkle points out that Theodotion's version is closer to the MT than what is available in Rahlfs. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul*, 46–49.

¹⁷ John E. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary 4, Leviticus* (Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 293, 300–301; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB)* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 1521–1523. The priority of Lev 18:5 over Ezek 20 and Neh 9 is assumed based on the canonical arrangement of the Pentateuch in relation to Ezekiel and Ezra-Nehemiah.

¹⁸ Dunn claimed that this is the only sense of life-giving power of the law within Israel's covenantal nomism: James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub Co, 2006), 151–152.

laws, but only H states that the laws themselves have the inherent power to grant life.”¹⁹

Gathercole pointed out that in several late Second Temple writings, the reward of life in Leviticus 18:5 is interpreted as life in the world-to-come or eternal life.²⁰ But is this an expansion rather than a shift in meaning in the late Second Temple period? We will examine *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss. Sol*), CD iii, *Targum Onqelos*, and the Gospel of Luke, which represent different sectarian groups.

Psalms of Solomon was perhaps written by a devout Alexandrian Jew to encourage obedience to God’s law in the midst of paganism.²¹ A reference to Leviticus 18:5, imbued with an epistemic meaning, is seen in *Pss. Sol.* 14:1-5:

[Author’s translation] The Lord is faithful to those who love him in truth; who endure his discipline; who walk in the righteousness of his statutes, in the law (ἐν νόμῳ) that he commanded us for our life. The *pious* ones of the Lord *will live* (ζήσονται) by it (ἐν αὐτῷ) *forever* (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα): the paradise of the Lord, the trees of life, his pious ones. Their plant, having been rooted forever, will not be pulled out all the days of heaven since the portion and inheritance of God is Israel.

The author appealed to God’s faithfulness to his faithful ones who were marked with righteousness by the law. The metaphor of the paradise refers to eternal life. So a shift in meaning from deuteronomic lengthening of days (irrelevant for a sojourner in a foreign land) to eternal life is apparent. Here, Leviticus 18:5 is interpreted as a promise of eternal life to the obedient.

The Damascus Document is Qumran’s sectarian document. The text below (CD iii.12-20) falls under the Exhortation section which is a compilation of expositions on “how God has always judged the wicked and rewarded the faithful.”²²

¹⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB), 1522–1523.

²⁰ Gathercole, “Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament.”

²¹ David A. DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 131, 135.

²² James C. VanderKam and Peter W. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 215–216. The Hebrew text is taken from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition Vol. 1:Q1-4Q273 - Vol II: 4Q274-11Q31 CD*, 1997, 554 (VOL.1).

[Author's translation] ⁽¹²⁾ But with those who held fast onto God's commandments, ⁽¹³⁾ those out of them who remained, God established his covenant for Israel forever to reveal ⁽¹⁴⁾ to them secret things in which all Israel had erred <*vacat*> his holy Sabbaths and his glorious festivals, ⁽¹⁵⁾ his just covenant stipulations, his faithful ways, and the wishes of his will ⁽¹⁶⁾ *that the man shall do and will live by them* (אשר יעשה האדם וחייה בהם). <*vacat*> He opened before them and they dug a well for plenty water. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And anyone *who rejects them will not live* (ומואסיהם). (לא יחיה). But they soiled themselves in human transgression and impure ways ... ⁽¹⁹⁾ Yet he built for them a safe house in Israel that nothing like it has ever stood before, even until ⁽²⁰⁾ now. Those who hold fast onto it {are} *toward eternal life* (לחיי נצח) and all the glory of man is for them.

The clause וחייה בהם may be safely translated 'and (he) will live by them' instead of rendering it as an imperative because iii.17 carries an epistemic sense. Although Israel was unfaithful, God preserved the Qumran community (iii.13). A reference to Leviticus 18:5 is found in iii.15-16 which, in its context, is better rendered as above ('the obedient will live'). This is also confirmed in iii.20. While the present covenantal life could be considered a blessing in itself, the end goal was eternal life. In this case, Leviticus 18:5 is used to highlight Israel's apostasy and the election of the Qumran community as the faithful remnant who will be granted eternal life upon their obedience.

Targum Onqelos is a Babylonian Targum of Torah which is dated before 200 C.E.. It offers the following Aramaic rendering of Leviticus 18:5:²³

[Author's translation] And you must keep my statutes and my judgments, which if (דאם) the man does, he *will* live by them in life eternal (ייחיי בהיון בְּחַיֵּי עֶלְמָא).

Compared to MT, two differences are apparent. First, the Aramaic compound connective דאם renders the subsequent clause into a protasis. Second, 'in life eternal' was added to clarify what it means to live by them which points to the epistemic sense. It is clear that the translator interpreted Leviticus 18:5 as the promise of eternal life contingent upon obedience.

A reference to Leviticus 18:5 is also present in Luke 10:25-28:

²³ Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project and Hebrew Union College, *Targum Jonathan for the Prophets*, 2000.

[Author's translation] "...What should I do (τί ποιήσας) to inherit (κληρονομήσω) eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ)? How do you read it?" And he answered, <Citation of Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18> He said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live! (ζήση)."

Responding to a question regarding eternal life, Jesus (as narrated by Luke) affirmed that the law expert will live (ζήσεται) by doing the law. So for Jesus, the inheritance of eternal life was at least included in the promise of life in Leviticus 18:5. The same question was asked by a rich ruler in Luke 18:18-30. Jesus replied with some stipulations related to Leviticus 19:18 and a command to sell all his belongings to follow Jesus. The ruler's refusal exposed his failure to obey Deuteronomy 6:5. Here again, Jesus linked eternal life with the obedience to the law.

In light of the above four examples, it is quite likely that a *shift* of meaning from the deuteronomic lengthening of days in the land to eternal life to have occurred in the late Second Temple era. Post-exilic remnants might have longed for their repossession of the land. Yet as they witnessed consecutive foreign occupations within the period of five centuries, they realized that the land was lost. This reality became a new horizon which collided with the interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5. The promise of eternal life became a prominent *reinterpretation* that replaces the deuteronomic lengthening of days in the land.

To recap, the interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5 developed over time from living daily in the sphere of the law to the promise of deuteronomic lengthening of days in the land. These two were synergistic: by living daily in accordance to God's law, Israel would enjoy longer life in the God-given land. Such a development was catalyzed by inner-biblical exegesis and the new life of the post-exilic community. Yet upon realizing that they have lost their land, living longer in the lost land was no longer relevant which was then *eschatologized* to eternal life. This reinterpretation eventually became a prominent understanding of the promise of life upon obedience as embodied in Leviticus 18:5.

Paul's Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians

A. Possible echoes of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians

The Gentile believers in Galatia were seduced by some Judaizing teachers to embrace the works of the law in order to bridge a bond of

solidarity with the Jerusalem church, that is, to be reckoned as the true “children of Abraham.” Paul countered such teaching by pointing to the Abrahamic promise which was fulfilled in Christ. Those who are in Christ are Abraham’s children. Therefore, how Gentiles are included in Abraham’s family in relation to the law is the key issue. Galatians was written to prevent the Gentile believers from embracing the works of the law. Paul’s first statement regarding the law is *negative*: no man will be justified ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but through Christ-faith (Gal 2:16, cf. LXX Ps 142:2). Why? Since Christ died, righteousness cannot be through the law which implies that the law was not given to *give life* (Gal 2:21, 3:21). So Paul argued the inability of the law to justify from the fact that Christ had to die “for our sins so that he might rescue us from the present evil age.” (Gal 1:4)

So if the law does not give life, what is its purpose? The law was given to be the custodian or guardian of Israel before “the faith came” (Gal 3:19-24). Here Paul was conversing with the interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5. As we have seen in the previous section, when Leviticus 18:5 is interpreted as ‘a man will live by them’ (epistemic sense), it implies that the law is able to grant life. So Paul argued that although the law had its *positive* function for Israel before Christ died, it was never meant to grant life.

Paul used the metaphor of re-enslavement for Gentiles who “wanted to be under the law” (Gal 4:21-5:4). Yet to demonstrate what freedom in Christ is, Paul quoted Leviticus 19:18, the second greatest commandment (Gal 5:14). Then again, Paul contrasted “being led by the Spirit” and “being enslaved under the law” (Gal 5:18). But Paul associated the love commandment with fulfillment of the law and being led by the Spirit (Gal 5:19-33). Therefore, Paul viewed the law negatively only when it was reckoned as a life-giver. Since the law does not grant life to start with and its custodial function for Israel was made obsolete after Christ died, embracing the works of the law entails re-enslavement for the free Gentile believers. Such a refutation of the life-giving function of the law (Gal 3:21) is an allusion to Leviticus 18:5, or at least a refutation to an interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 within Paul’s contemporary tradition.²⁴

²⁴ Out of the 11 occurrences of ζῳοποιεῖν in the NT, seven are in the Pauline corpus. Other than Gal 3:21, the other uses are attributed to divine agency.

B. Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12

In Galatians 3:6-14, Leviticus 18:5 is quoted as a part of a series of OT quotations interspersed with comments which resembles the rabbinic method of concatenation. Paul explained what it meant to be Abraham's children by utilizing Genesis 15:6 and a collation between Genesis 12:3 and 18:18 as follows:

Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” (Gen 15:6) You know, then, that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you all the nations (τὰ ἔθνη) shall be *blessed* (ἐνευλογηθήσονται).” (Gen 12:3, 18:18) So then, those who are of faith are *blessed* (εὐλογοῦνται) along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Applying the Genesis quotations to Gentile believers, Paul argued syllogistically: Abraham was justified by faith and those who are justified by faith are Abraham's sons. God justifies the Gentiles by faith as Scripture foresaw. Therefore, the Gentiles are Abraham's sons. Here Paul equates justification with the promise of blessing to Abraham which is appropriated by faith. In Genesis 12:3 God promises to bless Abraham and those who bless him, and curse those who curse him. Hence, the covenant promises only blessing, without curse, to Abraham.

Then Paul contrasted the Abrahamic promise to the *nomistic curse*.

- 10 ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι **Ἐπικατάρatos** πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου **τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά**. (Deut 27:26)
- 11 ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως **ζήσεται**. (Hab 2:4)
- 12 ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ' Ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ **ζήσεται** ἐν αὐτοῖς. (Lev 18:5)
- 13 Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρas τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρas, ὅτι γέγραπται, **Ἐπικατάρatos** πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, (Deut 21:23)

14 ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

As Paul associated Abraham with faith and the law with curse, an antithesis between faith and the law is evident: “But the law is not from faith” (Gal 3:12a). Hence Leviticus 18:5 is interpreted as an adversary of Habakkuk 2:4 although the two passages are in harmony in its original context when πίστις is understood as faithfulness. But in what way did Paul view Leviticus 18:5 as an antithesis to Habakkuk 2:4? Observe that Paul created three intertextual links using *gezerah shawah*:

1. Deut 27:26 in Galatians 3:10b is linked with Deuteronomy 21:23 in Galatians 3:13b by ἐπικατάρατος.²⁵
2. Hab 2:4 in Galatians 3:11b is linked with Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12b by ζήσεται.
3. Deut 27:26 in Galatians 3:10b is linked with Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12b by ποιεῖν αὐτά.²⁶

While God’s promise to Abraham only carries blessing, the law promises blessing for the obedient and curse for the disobedient. Yet notice that Paul’s two quotations from Deuteronomy only embody the curse of the law which was initially intended for the lawbreakers. Overall, this seems to be in conflict with Galatians 3:10a where Paul claimed that the curse was actually upon those who attempted to observe the law. This tension can be alleviated by supplying the “missing” presupposition. A common solution is the inability to perfectly obey the law. However, this requirement is absent in all the Pauline epistles and goes against the provision for atonement. Alternatively, the relationship between Galatians 3:10a and 3:10b (Deut 27:26) can be understood as follows:

1. Paul charged those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (the Judaizers and their followers) as transgressors of Torah.²⁷ This is consistent with

²⁵ Replacing κεκατηραμένος (LXX) by ἐπικατάρατος in Gal 3:13b facilitates a cleaner application of *gezerah shawah*.

²⁶ Wakefield and Revneau correctly identify the second but miss the significance of the third which is lost when Gal 3:6-14 is read linearly (Andrew Hollis Wakefield, *Where to Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul’s Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2003); Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, “Leben Im Gesetz: Die Paulinische Interpretation von Lev 18:5 (Gal 3:12; Röm 10:5),” *Novum Testamentum* 50, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 105–19.)

²⁷ See, e.g. Moisés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 191.

Galatians 5:3 and 6:13 as well as Paul's goal of preventing the Galatians from embracing the works of Torah.

2. Hence, Paul relativized any difference between "observers" and "non-observers" of the law.²⁸ If, according to scriptures, observing the works of Torah does not make Gentiles the children of Abraham, any appeal of the Judaizers' gospel is disarmed. Indeed, this is the new "canon" for the community where there is no difference since all are one in Christ and new creations (Gal 3:28, 6:15-16).

Starting from these observations, we now proceed with the three links identified above. In the *first link*, Deuteronomy 21:23 offers a resolution to the curse inflicted by Deuteronomy 27:26 which was an impediment to fulfilling the promised blessing for the Gentiles (Gal 3:14). By taking on an accursed state, Christ has delivered them from this curse. Hence, Christ has fulfilled the Abrahamic promise of blessing. Within this context, the transgressors were those who ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. But in what way was the curse an impediment to the Abrahamic promise? The *second link* partially answers this:

1. In Galatians 3:11, justification is equated with life which is appropriated by faith. For Paul, justification is an eschatological event of God's reckoning his saints as righteous, yet has become a present reality due to the death and resurrection of Christ. Since ζῆσεται links Habakkuk 2:4 and Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:11-12, ζῆσεται in Galatians 3:12b carries the same nuance: living in the *present reality* of a future anticipation of *eternal life*.
2. From the allusion to Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:21, Paul used ζῆσεται in Galatians 3:12b to refer to the life-giving power of the law. Therefore Galatians 3:12a says that life-giving is God's prerogative and hence the law *per se* does not give life. So when Galatians 3:11-12 is taken together with Galatians 3:21, Paul taught that the God-given life is appropriated by faith. Since the law is not from faith, the law cannot give life.

So if "the one who does the works of the law shall live by them" (Lev 18:5) but the law cannot give life, what will happen to "the one who does them"? This leads us to the *third link*. Note that Galatians 3:10 carries a present state while Galatians 3:12 renders a present state in anticipation of a future state. This intertextuality gives us the following: doing or not doing the works of the law results in a curse for those who presently live by them. Since the present living is a proleptic anticipation of the life to come, presently living in an accursed state is inconsistent with the future living in blessedness that

²⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 310–311.

is promised to Abraham. Therefore, when the Gentile believers lived ἐξ ἔργων νόμου which was characterized by curse, they became an impediment to the realization of the Abrahamic promise which was characterized by blessing. By doing so, they were regressing against Paul's vision of living in the Spirit (Gal 3:2-5, 14). The law was the custodian of Israel. But even such a purpose had become obsolete upon the death and resurrection of Christ (cf. Gal 3:13, 19-24) – thus how much less would the works of the law be relevant for the Gentile believers!

So Paul interpreted Leviticus 18:5 *negatively* in Galatians. First, it was used to set the law *antithetically* to faith. Faith is the means of appropriating life in the present age which anticipates the life in the world to come. This life was promised to Abraham so that the Gentiles may partake of it. The law, on the other hand, does not give life. Second, in light of the Christ-events, living in the law incurs deuteronomic curse in the present age which anticipates divine judgment on the last day. As Paul used Leviticus 18:5 in his letter, new meaning arose from the intertextual web of Galatians 3:6-14 along with the allusion in Galatians 3:21. This new meaning, which enriches the Christian interpretive tradition, surfaces upon a second reading as an echo of and a pointer to the role of the law throughout the epistle.

While we have presented an exegetical account on Paul's negative use of Leviticus 18:5, how do we reconcile this with his positive accounts on the law in Galatians? Some appeal to the difference between doing and fulfilling the law (embodied in Lev 19:18) by positing that the moral components of the law are still binding to Christians but the components that are particularly Jewish are abolished.²⁹ Yet this is not in Galatians and read into the text. In fact, any attempt on harmonizing Paul's negative and positive attitudes toward the law cannot be inferred internally. Neither does the interpretive tradition offer any help. All that can be said is that Paul's attitude toward the law in Galatians was multifaceted, and that Paul's discourse was sufficient for achieving his polemical purpose against the Judaizers' gospel. We now turn to Romans where the other quotation of Leviticus 18:5 is found.

²⁹ Ibid., 488–491; Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach*: (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 139–142.

Paul's Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans

Some commentators argue diachronically that one of the main reasons Paul must have set Leviticus 18:5 *antithetically* to the collated deuteronomic texts in Romans 10:6-8 is because Paul set Leviticus 18:5 against Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 3:11-12. Yet others argue that Leviticus 18:5 and the deuteronomic texts in Romans are *supportive* rather than antithetical.³⁰

A. Possible Echoes of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans

The epistle of Romans was partly written to raise support for Paul's mission to Spain. Yet Jewish-Gentile tension occurred among the Roman Christians. This strife should be addressed so that they might be united for mission.³¹ Added onto that was the tension between God's faithfulness and the persistent rejection of his gospel by the Jews (Rom 9:1-4, 10:1-3). If God indeed revoked his covenant with Israel, he could do the same to the Gentile believers. Having searched the OT scriptures, Paul found that the unbelief of many Jews was a part of the recurring pattern in the redemptive history and such "partial hardening" allowed the ingrafting of many Gentiles into God's olive tree. To be effective in his persuasion it is unlikely that Paul would drive any unnecessary wedge between the law and faith as it would undoubtedly be detrimental to the Jewish-Gentile unity. This is one major difference between Galatians and Romans.

In Romans 2:6 and 2:13, Paul said that "God will give back to each according to his works" and "the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified." An allusion to Leviticus 18:5 is present in Romans 2 as Paul affirmed the interpretation of Second Temple tradition.³² Yet the interpretive key is

³⁰ For *antithetical* relation see, e.g. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 647; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 554. For *supportive* relation see, e.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans 9-16*, ICC (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1975), 521-522; Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 624. Note that many who argue for a supportive relation do not suggest that Paul changed his view from Galatians to Romans. Rather, they argue that Paul used Leviticus 18:5 differently in response to different needs.

³¹ The purpose of Romans can be found in, e.g. Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 80-90; Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans 9-16*, 814-822.

³² The exposition in Rom 2 bears some similarity to *Ps. Sol* 11-15 (e.g. Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 211-212.) Some argue that Rom 2 represents the

given in Romans 2:14-16 as Paul alluded to LXX Jeremiah 38:31-33 (MT 31:31-33), that is, “the law written in their hearts” which refers to those who are in the new covenant.³³ Observe that Paul stated the relevance of doing the law for *all* believers (cf. Rom 2:26-29). Hence, doing the law in Romans 2 is the “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5, 16:26) fulfilled through the Spirit which plays some role in justification on the last day.

In Romans 3:20a Paul, repeating Galatians 2:16, wrote: “because no flesh will be justified by the works of the law.” But in Romans 3:9-19, Paul offered an explanation for the inability of the law to grant life which was absent in Galatians: the universality of sin to which the law can only testify. Yet the law also testifies to the solution of this problem: the righteousness of God apart from the law, but through Christ-faith for all who believe. Regardless of one’s ethnicity, one is justified by faith apart from the works of the law through the redemption in Christ (Rom 3:21-30). So faith did not nullify the law, but in fact, faith upholds it (Rom 3:31) as the law itself testifies about faith. The tension between Romans 2:13 and 3:20 or 3:28 is readily resolved: one is justified by faith apart from doing the law. This present justification is a trusting anticipation of the verdict on the last day which is according to doing the law –another echo of Leviticus 18:5.

Paul also affirmed the intrinsic holiness of the law which, due to sin, enslaves humanity and gives birth to death (Rom 7:5, 12-14) and hence cannot grant life. Paul contrasted “the law of God” to “the law of sin” (Rom 7:22-25). Later in Romans 8:2-9, Paul associated the law of God with “the law of Spirit of life” which is antithetical to “the law of sin and of death.” Just as the holy law could be abused by sin to produce death, so the same law may produce life through the Spirit in Christ. Here the requirement of the law may be fulfilled in them who walk not according to flesh but according to the Spirit onto obedience to the law of God (Rom 8:4-7, 13).

So believers “are not under the law” (Rom 6:14) since they are not under the condemnation of the law which was manipulated by sin. The law in itself does not carry the blessing of life, nor is it intrinsically imbued with the curse of death. It is the Spirit that grants eternal life which is fulfilled in the obedience to the law. The law in Galatians

view of a Jewish interlocutor rather than Paul’s himself. Yet Rom 2 lacks any dialogical structure of Paul’s diatribe. In addition, it breaks the flow of Paul’s argument in Rom 1:18-3:19 where Paul wanted to establish the fact that Jews and Gentiles are on the same boat.

³³ So C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans 1-8*, ICC (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1975), 158–159; Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 215; Wright, *Justification*, 191–192.

(abused by the Judaizers) was associated with flesh and set against the Spirit. In Romans, the law of the Spirit onto life in Christ liberates them from the enslavement of the law abused by sin.

Before we proceed, it is necessary to compare the theme of equality in Galatians and Romans. In Galatians, equality is perceived for those who are in Christ and live in the Spirit (Gal 3:28, 6:15). In Romans, however, equality is also found in the sinfulness of humanity as well as there being only one solution to this universal plight. Stressing equality on a wider ground is supportive to his goal of bolstering the *Jewish-Gentile unity* so that they might “accept one another just as Christ also accepted [them] for the glory of God” (Rom 15:7).

Paul said that many Jews were responsible for falsely pursuing the law of righteousness “not by faith, but as though by works” (Rom 9:30-33). So the antithesis is not between the law and faith, but works and faith. In relation to unbelieving Jews, they were ignorant and sought to establish their own righteousness (Rom 10:1-3). The law was God’s gift to Israel to be observed within a covenant with God. But many Jews departed from this. Their zeal of God was misdirected into the zeal of the law where obedience leads to self-boasting.

The law also appears explicitly in Romans 13:8-10 where Leviticus 19:18 is quoted. It is said that “love is fulfillment of the law” (cf. Gal 5:14). So loving one another is a necessary condition for genuine ecclesial unity. Just as in Galatians 5:14, so Leviticus 19:18 is seen as a fulfillment of the law in Romans.

To summarize, Paul established that all are transgressors of the law. Yet all who believe are reckoned as righteous through Christ-faith and may anticipate future vindication as their obedience of faith is evidenced on the judgment day. The holy law has no power to grant life. It can be abused by sin to give a payback of death or it can be fulfilled in the Spirit into life. Echoes of Leviticus 18:5 are pervasive throughout Romans as Paul interpreted this passage in light of human sinfulness along with its solution: righteousness by faith apart from the law which, according to Paul, is evident from his exegesis of the law itself.

Lastly, right after Romans 10:4-8, Romans 10:16-21 deals with the irony of Israel’s apostasy. Here Paul said that the Jews who rejected the gospel have indeed heard but did not obey. They knew but were ignorant of it. Here we see a parallel between this irony and Romans 2:13, that it is the doers of the law, not the mere hearers of the law, who will be justified. But is a plea to obey the gospel calling an echo of Leviticus 18:5?

B. Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5

Paul maintained that righteousness by faith can be inferred from his interpretation of the law along with the Prophets (Rom 3:21-22). Yet Paul's direct quotes from Leviticus and Deuteronomy (the core of Torah codes) are not numerous. Although Paul quoted the same two passages from Leviticus in both Galatians and Romans, Paul's use and choice of deuteronomic passages is quite different in Romans compared to Galatians. In Galatians, Paul employed Deuteronomy to set forth the curse of the law. In Romans, however, Paul's use of Deuteronomy shows a diverse fulfillment motif.³⁴ Furthermore, we have previously noted that faith establishes the law (Rom 3:31) since the law testifies about the faith that justifies. Yet is there any other relation between faith and the law which further explains the meaning of Romans 3:31? This question can be addressed by looking into Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:4-8. In particular, Romans 10:4-8 contains Paul's quotation of Leviticus 18:5 along with a collation of several deuteronomic texts:

4 τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῶ πιστεύοντι.

5 Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. [Lev 18:5]

6 ἢ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει,

Μὴ εἶπης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου [Deut 8:17/9:4],

Τίς ἀναβήσεται εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; [Deut 30:12]

τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν.

7 ἢ, Τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; [Deut 30:13]

τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν.

8 ἀλλὰ τί λέγει; Ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, [Deut 30:14]

τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν.

Many Jews were trapped into a pursuit of self-righteousness due to their ignorance of the fact that "Christ is the τέλος of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4). Notice that Paul never attempted to demonstrate that Christ is the τέλος of the

³⁴ There are seven quotations of Deut in Romans 10:6-8, 10:19, 11:8, 12:9, 13:9, and 15:10. They are used to demonstrate the gospel, Israel's unbelief, conversion of the Gentiles, and applicability of halakhic components of the law in the church.

law. Rather, Romans 10:4 is Paul's exegetical axiom for reading of the OT. Two alternatives of the meaning of τέλος have been proposed: end/termination and goal/fulfillment. While fulfillment carries a sense of ending in some respect, termination does not necessarily carry any sense of fulfillment.³⁵ Apart from Romans 10:4, τέλος is used 11 other times in the Pauline epistles where ten of them exhibit a sense of fulfillment.³⁶ Two possibilities exist in relation to Leviticus 18:5.³⁷

1. Adversative: 10:6-8 is antithetical to 10:5. Here, an A-B-A'-B' pattern applies where 10:5 elaborates on 10:1-3 and 10:4 on 10:6-8.
2. Supportive: 10:6-8 complements 10:5. Here, a C-D pattern applies where 10:5-8 is a continuation of 10:4 and 10:4-8 is contrasted to 10:1-3.

Here, Leviticus 18:5 represents what "Moses writes regarding the righteousness from the law" preceding "what the righteousness from faith says". In relation to the adversative and supportive interpretations, two alternatives on the meaning of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5 are as follows:

1. Paul interpreted Leviticus 18:5 in the same manner as that in Galatians 3:12. That is, Paul repudiated the Jewish interpretive tradition of his time and denied the life-giving power of the law. So righteousness from the law in Leviticus 18:5 is antithetical to righteousness from faith.
2. Paul interpreted Leviticus 18:5 by presupposing Romans 10:4. As Christ has fulfilled the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, the righteousness from the law in Romans 10:5 is the covenantal nomism for the Spirit-empowered community. So Paul restored the "original" imperative meaning of Leviticus 18:5 but applied it to the church in place of the ethnic Israel. Hence,

³⁵ Examples of scholars who prefer 'end/termination' are Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary 38B, Romans 9-16*, 590–591; Thomas R. Schreiner, "Paul's View of the Law in Romans 10:4-5," *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993): 118–12. Those who opt for 'goal/fulfillment' are Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 75–77; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 205; Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 619–620.

³⁶ Two occurrences in Rom 13 (tax) are excluded. Other than 2 Cor 3:13, Rom 6:21-22 (2x); 1 Cor 1:8, 10:11, 15:24; 2 Cor 1:13, 11:15; Phil 3:19; 1 Thess 2:16; 1 Tim 1:5 (Deutero-Pauline) carry a sense of fulfillment. In addition, all the 13 occurrences (one in Rom 13 is excluded, four in Deutero-Pauline are included) of its cognates (τελεῖν, τελειοῦν, and τέλειος) are best interpreted as completion or fulfillment.

³⁷ Analysis on the use of γὰρ...δέ... construction in Romans does not favor any option.

righteousness from the law in Leviticus 18:5 establishes righteousness of faith and vice versa (cf. Rom 3:21).

In the collation of multiple deuteronomic texts in Romans 10:6-8, the law testifies about righteousness from faith. The first quotation (Deut 8:17/9:4) brings forth God's covenant faithfulness as the source of blessing for unrighteous people and prohibition against self-boasting. With such a backdrop, the second quotation (Deut 30:12-14) comes in the context of the covenant renewal in Moab. Circumcision of the heart that enables Israel to obey God's law is mentioned as a future event (Deut 30:6). Analogous to his contemporaries yet with an apologetic intent, Paul interpreted the descent of the law as Christ's incarnation and the ascent of the law as Christ's resurrection.³⁸ As those Christ-events were divinely initiated and proclaimed in the gospel, it was near in their mouth and heart. Here, Paul's reinterpretation would look arbitrary and incompatible with the backdrop if law and faith were antithetical in this context.

Paul's quotation includes two major parts: changing *διαπεράσει ἡμῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης το καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον*, and removing the three references to works. The first change in Romans 10:7 set a vertical contrast between the heaven and the abyss. The removal of the three references to works can be explained in one of the following ways:

1. Paul radically changed the meaning of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 by using the language of the law to speak *against* doing the law. This presupposes law-faith as well as law-gospel antithesis. The "law in the heart" in Deuteronomy 30:14 is replaced with the gospel.³⁹
2. As the giving of the law has been fulfilled in Christ's incarnation and resurrection (the core of the gospel), Paul highlighted parts of the text that speak the loudest about the Christ-events and removed reference to works in accordance to the faith-works antithesis in relation to justification (Rom 9:32). Works are still relevant but now put in its place, that is, in the Spirit-empowered obedience of faith in Romans 10:5 (by quoting Lev 18:5).

Each alternative corresponds to one alternative associated with Romans 10:5. Combining the exegesis of Romans 10:5 and 10:6-8 together, we are left with two alternatives:

³⁸ Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary 38B, Romans 9-16*, 604–606.

³⁹ Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 339–341; Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul*, 179–183.

1. Adversative: Presuming law-faith antithesis, Leviticus 18:5 speaks about righteousness from the law which Paul denied. On the other hand, the rewritten deuteronomistic texts speak as the righteousness from faith in the form of the gospel which was divinely given to them in Christ's incarnation and resurrection in which the element of works is now irrelevant. Upon the Christ-events, the nomistic texts are now turned against *nomos* itself.
2. Supportive: Since Christ is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness, Leviticus 18:5 utters the obedience of faith in the Spirit for those whose hearts are circumcised and written with the law of God. This is in harmony with what the righteousness by faith speaks through the law in the gospel which was divinely given to them in Christ's incarnation and resurrection in which the element of works is now placed in its proper sphere.

Observe that Leviticus 18:5 and the collation of the deuteronomistic texts are linked in two ways: 1) the law: both text units were taken from the law codes; 2) the use of preposition ἐν. Nicole Chibici-Revneanu points out that Leviticus 18:5 signifies "*man in the law*" whereas Deuteronomy 30:12-14 represents "*the law in man*." While Revneanu perceives this as a contrast without engaging Romans 10:4, her observation can yield some further insight.⁴⁰ If Romans 10:6-8 logically precedes Romans 10:5, Romans 10:5 can readily be interpreted as the obedience of faith. If the law is internalized (written on the heart) obedience flows from heart to hands. Hence, it is works from righteousness rather than righteousness from works. This suggests that Romans 10:5 should be read (or rather, reread) in light of Romans 10:6-8. In this sense, Romans 10:6-8 provides a proper antecedent for Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5: the law in man's heart (and mouth) is the law in which a man must live.

God's commandment in the mouth and the heart, which Paul interpreted as the gospel, functions as the link to Paul's gospel statement in Romans 10:9-10. At the same time, the internalization of God's commandment in the circumcised hearts of the gospel community (Deut 30:6, 14) reinforces Paul's earlier allusion to LXX Jer 38:31-33 (MT 31:31-33) in Romans 2:15. So when Leviticus 18:5 is read together with Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans 10:5-8, it teaches Christian obedience to the law in the circumcised hearts indwelt by the Spirit.

⁴⁰ Chibici-Revneanu, "Leben Im Gesetz: Die Paulinische Interpretation von Lev 18:5 (Gal 3:12; Röm 10:5)," 117.

The introductory formula in Romans 10:5 is “For Moses writes about the righteousness from the law,” while in Romans 10:6 is “And the righteousness from faith says thus.” Presupposing either inner-scriptural antithesis or Paul’s antipathy against Moses, some infer that this is a clue for the perceived antithesis between Leviticus 18:5 and the deuteronomic texts.⁴¹ However, this formula could also be Paul’s clue for the readers to consider what Leviticus 18:5 originally said. Rather than giving Israel a means for attaining life, Moses commanded Israel to live daily in the sphere of God’s law. In Romans 10:5, such covenantal nomistic understanding is in harmony with the obedience of faith that Paul preached throughout the letter.

We have traced echoes of Leviticus 18:5 throughout the letter: the necessity of obedience of faith for future vindication (Rom 2), the law testifying to righteousness by faith (Rom 3:21), and the law of Spirit of life in Christ which liberates and fulfills the requirement of the law (Rom 7-8). These echoes testify that faith establishes the law (Rom 3:31). Paul also used the deuteronomic motif to prescribe life within the new covenant community in Romans 2 and 8:1-18 as well as the Decalogue and the love commandment in Romans 13:8-10. The law is perceived negatively in Romans only in relation to sin. But this is absent in Romans 10 which focuses on God’s faithfulness despite Israel’s unbelief. This coheres with Paul’s effort in promoting Jewish-Gentile unity for the sake of the gospel. Hence, the second alternative coheres better with the echoes of Leviticus 18:5 throughout the letter.

In Philippians 3:9, Paul set the righteousness ‘from the law’ against ‘through Christ-faith’. Therefore, one may expect that the law-faith antithesis in Galatians (written before Romans) and Philippians (written after Romans) implies antithesis in Romans 10:5-8. However, the above cumulative evidence internal to Romans speaks against the adversative interpretation. Diachronic reading is less persuasive. Furthermore, the use of possessive adjective ἐμὸς in Phil 3:9 points to Paul’s past self-righteousness as a blameless Jew (Phil 3:4-8) in comparison to his opponents (Phil 3:2). Here it is reasonable to assume that Paul was facing a similar group of teachers and hence using his past qualification as a foil (cf. Gal 1:13-14). So Paul would react in the same way in Philippians as in Galatians but differently from Romans. This simply shows that Paul acted consistently in two separate occasions when facing a similar threat.

⁴¹ For instance, Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 332; Martyn, *Galatians*, 316n.101–103.

However, Jewett pointed out that the formula “Moses said” was used in other Jewish writings positively (Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 624.)

Therefore, we find that interpreting Leviticus 18:5 as *supportive* to the deuteronomic texts in Romans 10:5-10, together with Paul's hermeneutical axiom in Romans 10:4, to be more coherent. Here, Leviticus 18:5 is used positively and read in light of Christ's fulfillment and the adaptation of the deuteronomic texts to represent the righteousness by faith. Hence, the law testifies not only for the righteousness from faith apart from the law, but also for the righteousness from the law being fulfilled by Christ for the new community.

So Paul's affirmation of the holiness of the law and mankind as its transgressor was rooted in the interpretive tradition of his day. Yet due to Paul's new horizon (pastoral and missional goals in relation to the Roman church, death and resurrection of Christ with the birth of a new Spirit-empowered community, and the irony of Israel's apostasy), obedience to the law in Leviticus 18:5 was interpreted in a fresh manner thereby resulting in the growth of meaning. This gave birth to an expanded interpretive tradition for the Christian community. Unlike in Galatians 3, the law in Leviticus 18:5 is no longer interpreted as a quest for self-righteousness or reward of eternal life. In Romans 10, the law in Leviticus 18:5 is the life and living code of the obeying community of faith but now written on the tablets of fleshly hearts instead of the tablets of stone.

Conclusion

So what is Pauline nomism in view of Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5? It is obedience of faith to the law written on the circumcised hearts of those who believe in Christ. Yet it is the Spirit who grants life, not the law. The law was holy. But due to the universal sinfulness of humankind the law produced death. In light of the death and resurrection of Christ who is the fulfillment of the law, the Spirit empowers believers to live in this law. To refute the Judaizing teachers in Galatia, Paul used Leviticus 18:5 to set the law (observed in flesh) in *antithesis* to faith. On the other hand, to unite the Jews and the Gentiles in Rome, Paul used Leviticus 18:5 to set the law (written on the hearts and lived in the Spirit) in *support* of faith. Rather than implying inconsistency, Paul's different readings of Leviticus 18:5 are consistent with the coherence of his view on the law.

How do we arrive at that conclusion? Starting from the interpretive tradition of his day, Paul read the OT scriptures in light of Christ as their fulfillment. Then a horizon fusion occurs between the interpretive tradition and Paul's reading given the *Sitz im Leben* of the

epistle. As Paul concatenated multiple OT passages and engaged in intertextuality (consciously or not), the meaning of Leviticus 18:5 grew. So Paul's view on the law is better seen as a coherent fusion of diversified responses. As a result, the gap between the law-faith antithesis and Paul's positive remarks in Galatians may be filled by Romans 10:4-8 –properly interpreted– and echoes of the law throughout the letter.

The above observation also demonstrates that Paul was able to flexibly exploit the diversity of the interpretive tradition of Leviticus 18:5. As argued in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, the “original” sense of Leviticus 18:5 is imperative: “a man must live in the sphere of the law.” However, due to changes in circumstances, Leviticus 18:5 was gradually interpreted as epistemic: “a man will live by (doing/obeying) the law.” In Paul's time where the Jews had lost their land and lived under foreign occupation, this life was perceived as eternal life in the world to come.

Faced with two different circumstances, Paul reproduced some meanings available in the interpretive tradition yet not without redefinition. As Paul engaged in a polemic against the Judaizing teachers in Galatia, he drew from the epistemic sense of Leviticus 18:5 and refuted it by setting the law against faith. Yet when he wrote to a divided Christian community in Rome, Paul's seemingly fresh reading of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5 is in fact a return to the “original” imperative sense of Leviticus 18:5, but in light of Christ as the fulfillment of the law onto righteousness for the Christian community. In this sense, a (believing) man must live in the sphere of the law, but the law written on the heart as a rule of living for the new covenant community.

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