

God's New Creation in Romans 8:4

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In Rom 8:4, when Paul mentions how “the Law’s decree might be fulfilled in us,” he means not only an imputed righteousness but also the fullness of righteousness that a Christian is to become. For Paul understands that the proclamation of the gospel provides a continuum of the Creator’s Word (2 Cor 4:5–6), which both redounds toward the fullness of new creation life and creates a relationship between a Christian’s being and doing. This perspective of justification includes an ontological transformation of the inner person toward the fullness of spiritual health and well-being, namely the image of the Son (Rom 8:29).

Key Words: justification, new creation, righteousness, Romans 8:1–4, spiritual formation, the Love Command, the Law’s fulfillment

In Rom 8:4, when Paul mentions how “the Law’s decree might be fulfilled in us,” he means not only an imputed righteousness but also the fullness of righteousness that a Christian is to become.¹ This thesis is controversial and its field of play broad, encompassing various Pauline perspectives on justification held within Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. It does, however, fit within an interpretation, made by a diverse and growing group of Pauline scholars (e.g., Thomas Schreiner; E. P. Sanders), that the decree of the Law mentioned in 8:4 pertains to a Christian’s obedience.² It contends with the Magisterial Reformers’ interpretation of 8:4 that relied only on an “as if” righteousness—a perspective exemplified by John Calvin’s comment below:

You see that our righteousness is not in us but in Christ . . . sin

¹ Karl Barth believed that Paul referenced in 8:4 the “new existential man” (Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn Hoskyns, 6th ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1968], 282). My thesis, however, identifies with Brunner’s natural theology over Barth’s. An expanded defense of this thesis interacts with Luther’s “at the same time righteous and a sinner” (*simul justus et peccator*) and Barth and Luther’s critique of Augustine’s justification. I welcome communication sent to PDubbelman@gmail.com.

² So Kevin W. McFadden, “The Fulfillment of the Law’s *Dikaiōma*: Another Look at Romans 8:1–4,” *JETS* 52.3 (2009): 483nn1–2.

has been condemned in Christ’s flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:3–4). The only fulfillment he alludes to is that which we obtain through imputation. . . . To declare that by him alone we are accounted righteous, what else is this but to lodge our righteousness in Christ’s obedience, the obedience of Christ is reckoned to us *as if* it were our own?³

The thoughts in this essay do not challenge a foundational concept for 8:4—“to be declared righteous by faith” (*δικαιούσθαι πίστει*; 3:28)—nor the Reformer’s emphasis on faith. Instead, the argument here, as will be defended later, is that Paul understands that the proclamation of the gospel (2 Cor 4:5–6) provides a continuum of the Creator’s Word that both redounds—metaphysically and ontologically—toward the fullness of new creation life and creates a relationship between a Christian’s being and doing.

A few definitions are in order. First, Rom 8:4 mentions the fulfillment of the Law; this condition is associated in this paper with J. Christiaan Beker’s changed “human condition” of new creation life that is made possible by God’s triumph in life and thought.⁴ Second, within this essay, this changed “human condition” is caused by a great disturbance of God’s creational power that is “according to the Spirit” (*κατὰ πνεῦμα*) and “toward righteousness” (*εἰς δικαιοσύνην*).⁵ That is, God’s declaration of righteousness has an original starting point that is by faith through grace. It is also creative and teleological in nature, a process that contains an ontological transformation of the “inner being.” As such, the phrase “toward righteousness” relates to an initial and sustaining effort of “the righteousness of God” (*ὁ δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*) until

³ John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC 20–21 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 753 (emphasis added).

⁴ Johan Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 85. Augustine noted a “change of affections” (*Christian Instructions*, 17.16) and a “cure” of nature (*Nature and Grace*, xi.12), but he idealistically understood as the fulfillment of the Law mentioned in 8:4 (Aurelius Augustine and Paula Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Texts and Translations, Early Christian Literature Series 23.6 [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 21); see also Augustine’s *On the Spirit and the Letter, A Treatise Concerning Man’s Perfection in Righteousness*.

⁵ “Toward righteousness” is found in 4:3, 5, 9, 22; 6:16; 10:4, 10; cf. Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23. *Δικαιόω* is in Rom 2:13; 3:4, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30, 33; cf. Gal 2:16–17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4.

the *eschaton*, namely, the “last Day” of redemption in God’s plan. Third, Jesus mentions “a first and greatest commandment” and “a second like it,” namely, “Love your God” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Upon them “hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 22:34–40; cf. John 14:15–21). These two commandments were given in the context of an encounter with Jesus—once for all times but also ongoing. This same encounter is now possible through the proclamation of the gospel. These two commandments are known in this paper as the Love Command. For Paul, this second commandment brings together all the commandments (Rom 13:9) and love is the “fulfillment/completion of the law” (πλήρωμα νόμου; 13:10; cf. Gal 5:14).

Weightier studies than this one have contemplated how the Law’s decree might be fulfilled in us. I modestly hope to contribute to this conversation, primarily by a dialog with Douglas Moo, who argues in his Romans commentary that the only fulfillment Paul alludes to in Rom 8:4 is Christ’s perfect obedience to the Law that is transferred to the believer.

Three sections provide a skeleton base for the aforementioned thesis. Section one initially places this thesis within Romans. Section two extends this placement to include the Pauline corpus and Hebrew Bible. Section three concludes my thesis defense, by a discussion about “the righteousness of God.”

Romans 8:4 within Romans

Romans 8:4 does not explicitly mention either a changed “human condition” or that the Law is fulfilled only by imputation. Neither does Paul directly answer an implied question brought up by 8:1–3, namely, “What was the Law powerless to do?” He also does not fully describe what “no condemnation” means. Context is key and epistemological foundations matter; every interpreter presses them upon 8:1–4 to yield their perspective of this pericope.

Romans

Romans provides a declaration of the theology and praxis of Paul’s gospel (2:16). This gospel begins and completes the Christian’s pilgrimage.⁶ This proclamation to “the harassed and helpless” and “weary and

⁶ See, e.g., Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Herbert (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003; repr. 1931); Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); idem, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand

burdened” (Matt 11:28; 9:37) brings about an “obedience of faith” (ὕπακοὴν πίστεως; Rom 1:5b; 16:26; cf. 15:18) that Paul typifies elsewhere as “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6; cf. Rom 5:5). It emphasizes first God’s magnificence, power, and patient love to a people “bound to disobedience,” who do what they please and suffer horribly for it (1:19–24, 26, 28; 2:4; 6:23; 11:32). Along with Ernst Käsemann and Moo, but contra Martin Luther (see below) and Calvin, this perspective of the gospel takes “for” (γάρ) in 1:18 as explanatory.⁷

This “obedience of faith,” found at the beginning and end of Romans, acts as “a literary device that frames” Paul’s gospel (i.e., a rhetorical *inclusio* [inclusion, bracket]). Calvin interpreted this phrase exegetically, namely, as “an obedience which is faith”;⁸ however, a plenary genitive (source and exegetical) is also possible, a view that supports the thoughts in this essay.⁹ Richard N. Longenecker elaborates: it is a “genitive of source . . . as ‘obedience that comes [or springs] from faith’—though, possibly, as a genitive of apposition or definition . . . understood as ‘faith that consists of [or ‘manifests itself in’] obedience.’ . . . a genitive of source seems most probable here.”¹⁰ Similarly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and John Ziesler understood there to be an inextricable, inexplicable relationship between belief and obedience.¹¹ Moo also understands “obedience of faith” “to be mutually interpreting: obedience always involves faith, and faith always involves

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); F. F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans*, IBC (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985).

⁷ Käsemann, *Romans*, 36; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 99; John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 67n1. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: American Edition*, ed. C. Oswald Hilton, vol. 25, *Lectures on Romans* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 18, basically ignores this linkage.

⁸ Calvin, *Romans*, 48. So also all the Reformers and recently by Theodor Zahn, Anders Nygren, and C. E. B. Cranfield (Moo, *Romans*, 52n70).

⁹ So also James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC 38A (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 17; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 237.

¹⁰ Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 80.

¹¹ Romans 1:5; 6:17; 10:9–11; 10:16–17; 16:26; 2 Thess 1:8; 3:14. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller and Irmgard Booth (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 68; Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: The Law, Its Functions and Limits, Exposition of Chapter 7:1–8:4* (London: Banner of Truth,

obedience. They should not be equated, compartmentalized, or made into separate stages of Christian experience."¹² However, with the Reformers, Moo's thoughts conflict with the aforementioned connection in my thesis between a Christian's being and doing. With respect to the Christian's "state of being" (οἱ ὄντες) noted in 8:5–8, Moo interprets it "to connote the idea of 'realm,' with flesh and Spirit denoting those 'powers' that dominate the two realms of salvation history."¹³

Moo notes that 5:1 sums up the dominant teaching of chapters 1–4.¹⁴ Equally accepted is that Paul's gospel—concisely mentioned in 1:1:1–7, 16–19; 3:21–26; and 8:1–4—reaches its climax in Romans 8, which emphasizes the Spirit.¹⁵ For Moo, 5:1 provides "the first implication of our justification"; viz., not an internal dynamic "but the outward situation of being in a relationship of peace *with* God."¹⁶ This "peace *with* God" reverberates throughout 5:1–8:39, which, according to Moo, is an amplification of "the assurance provided by the gospel: the hope of salvation."¹⁷ For Moo, there is an emphasis on "justification as a past act . . . a new and permanent status . . . a once-for-all act."¹⁸

Moo's perspective on justification has a long and respected history. Luther's view of imputation also provided peace with God and remedied his sixteenth-century quandary—namely, a God he could not please, a system of *poenitentia* ("remorse, penance") he could not master. It also birthed his catechetical, agonizing-euphoric, Law-gospel dialectic of "the justice of God" (*iustitia Dei*) that represents first wrath then forgiveness, a Christian who is "at the same time righteous and a sinner" (*simul iustus et peccator*), and an interpretation of 8:4 that relies, with Moo, only on imputation.¹⁹ For Luther, the Christian is ontologically a

1973), 337–38, 340–41; J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, SNTSMS 20 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 168–71.

¹² Moo, *Romans*, 52.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 486.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 298–300.

¹⁵ David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, eds., *Pauline Theology III, Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 55; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 516; Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 516; Moo, *Romans*, 467–70.

¹⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 299 (emphasis original).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 483–84.

sinful being, though righteous by imputation. In his Galatians commentary (1535), Luther comments on Gal 3:6, a verse that parallels Rom 4:5:

Righteousness is not in us in a formal sense, as Aristotle maintains, but is outside us, solely in the grace of God and in His imputation. In us there is nothing of the form or of the righteousness except that weak faith or the first fruits of faith. . . . To take hold of the Son and to believe in Him with the heart as the gift of God causes God to reckon that faith, however imperfect it may be, as perfect righteousness . . . we are reckoned as righteous, even though sins, and great ones at that, still remain in us.²⁰

Luther states that the believer is "reckoned as righteous." The significance of Paul's continued use of this phrase is noted later. For now, it is important to accept that the promised new aeon is here (16:25–27), which includes the shift, for the believer, from "according to the flesh" to "according to the Spirit." This interpretation is not in dispute within Pauline theology. The promised Spirit is the presence of the future and the start of a promise-fulfillment continuum.²¹ That is, the deposit of the Spirit in a Christian's life associates closely with the fullness of what is to come; it also guarantees this future state.

What exactly does Paul mean by "according to the Spirit"? Could it be more than what Moo allows, namely, a realm with flesh and Spirit that denotes two dominions of salvation history? Perhaps. This raises a question. What does Paul mean in 8:4 that "the righteous decree/requirement of the law" (τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου) is fulfilled "in us" (ἐν ἡμῖν)?

"In Us"

According to 8:3, Christ effectively rectified "what the law was powerless to do." In 8:4, Paul states that the Law's decree is fulfilled "in us." The use of "in/by Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ) instead of "in us" would unquestionably secure a reformational interpretation of 8:4. But Paul used the phrase "in us." Moo interprets this prepositional phrase as a descriptive dative, where "Christian behavior is the necessary mark of those in whom this fulfillment takes place," and the Law's fulfillment

²⁰ Luther, *LW*, 26:234.

²¹ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 4. See also George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future; the Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

is understood only by the doctrine of imputation.²² Gordon Fee alternatively takes “in us” as a locative dative:

The Spirit himself fulfills Torah by replacing it, and he does so by enabling God's people to “fulfill” the “whole of Torah”—which in other contexts is expressed in the love command, the initial fruit of the Spirit. In bringing the time of Torah to an end, God did not thereby eliminate its purpose, but through the Spirit has brought that purpose to fruition. After all, Paul does not say that Torah is now “obeyed” or “kept” or “done”—the ordinary language for Torah observance—but that what Torah requires is now “fulfilled in us.”²³

A careful exegetical comparison of Moo's and Fee's interpretations of “in us” is not possible here. Moo, because of his reformational understanding of “to be declared righteous by faith,” presents his reasons toward that end; he roots the interpretation of 8:4 only in 8:3.²⁴ Fee presents a longer argument and grounds his understanding of 8:4 by what has come before and after it, namely, 7:7–25 and 8:5–11.²⁵ I suggest that Fee's interpretation provides the greatest cohesion within Paul's gospel, Romans, and the OT's promised New Covenant.

According to Luther, the Law's one requirement is that the heart worships God, turning its affections from the material to the eternal God.²⁶ The meaning of “righteous decree/requirement” (δικαίωμα; 8:4) is debated by scholars; Joseph Fitzmyer maintains it “most likely means ‘regulation, requirement, commandment’ of the law, i.e., what the law ideally required (as in 1:32; 2:26).”²⁷ Paul may hold a near consistent definition of “righteous decree” throughout Romans. If these statements are true, a connection of 8:4, by the repetitive use of “righteous decree,” to 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18, is noteworthy, especially given these verses' ethical contexts. Why? If this phrase has a meaning everywhere else in Romans that associates a Christian's behavior with the Love Command, it would be unusual that it did not have this same

²² Moo, *Romans*, 483–84.

²³ Fee, *God's Presence*, 536.

²⁴ Moo, *Romans*, 481–85.

²⁵ Fee, *God's Presence*, 534–38.

²⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann, vol. 35, *Word and Sacrament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 376; cf. Gal 5:13–16, with its behavioral aspect of “by the Spirit” (πνεύματι) that bears the fruit of love.

²⁷ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 487; cf. BAGD 198; K. Kertelge, *EDNT*, 1.335. With both Fitzmyer's above definition, for δικαίωμα, and my thesis in mind, δικαίωμα is henceforth abbreviated to “righteous decree.”

meaning in 8:4. The Love Command correlates to Luther's one requirement of the Law. But a heart turned toward the Lord is an impossibility: because it does not live “according to the Spirit,” it is turned either in upon itself (Luther) or turned to things (Aurelius Augustine). Additionally, because of the Law's operational setting of “according to the flesh,” the Law is unable to break sin's power and turn a person's heart toward the Lord. “But now” (3:21; 6:22; 7:6, 17), because of the changed “human condition,” what the Law required, namely, the Love Command, begins to be possible, “because God has poured out [ἐκκέχυται] his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (5:5).²⁸ The significance of this perfective verb, “poured out,” should not be missed: God's realized love, for the one who is “declared righteous by faith,” has a continual, present dynamic to it. Further, God's love in “our hearts,” by the indwelling Spirit, brings about a changed “state of being,” an ongoing ontological transformation. The Christian is now able to turn from selfishness and imitate Christ's humility that is demonstrated by their love for God and others (2:8; Phil 2:3–11).

Similar thoughts are found within Bonhoeffer's incarnational approach to ethics, where the phrase “to be declared righteous by faith” involves a dynamic where Christ “stands in my place . . . because I cannot . . . he stands at the boundary of my existence. This is an expression of the fact that I am separated, by a boundary that I cannot cross, from the self that I ought to be. This boundary lies between my old self and my new self . . . between law and fulfilment.”²⁹

Bonhoeffer's “Lectures on Christology” (1933) introduced a new question to theology.³⁰ The familiar question was “How does God relate to finite humanity?” Bonhoeffer asked, additionally, “Who is this person that addresses us as both God and human?”³¹ For Bonhoeffer, in part, Christ is “for-me” (*pro-me*).

The being of Christ's person is essentially related to me. His being-

²⁸ “Righteous decree” as a reference to the tenth commandment mentioned in 7:7, versus the Love Command, is not problematic. Luther understood all nine commandments as organically connected to the first: they show nine ways to live out the first and nine assaults on God when violated. If true, a similar, albeit reverse, approach can be taken for the tenth, which makes the tenth a reverse way to state this Love Command.

²⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, ed. Larry L. Rasmussen, trans. Isabel Best and D. W. S. Higgins, vol. 12, *Berlin: 1932–1933* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2009), 324.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 12:299–360.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12:305.

Christ is his being-for-me. This *pro-me* is not to be understood as an effect that issues from Christ . . . but is to be understood as the being of his very person. . . . This is not a historical, factual, or ontic statement, but rather an ontological one: that is, I can never think of Jesus Christ in his being-in-himself, but only in his relatedness to me. . . . Christ stands for his new humanity before God, . . . If this is so, then he *is* the new humanity. . . . That means he *is* the church-community. He is no longer acting *for* it, on its behalf, but rather *as* it.³²

Even Luther confessed, “It is one thing if God is present, and another if he is present in you.”³³ Bonhoeffer’s ontological understanding of the salvific event should not be ignored. Bonhoeffer continues,

Christ is the church-community by virtue of his being *pro-me*. He takes action as the new humanity. The church-community, between his ascension and his second coming, is the form he takes. Word [as Word of God that is God’s revelation] . . . exists in time and space . . . the mighty Word of the Creator. By speaking, it creates the form of the church-community.³⁴

Christ, as “for-me,” was Bonhoeffer’s “regained center,” from start to finish.³⁵ He is also “the center of human existence, history, and *nature*—these are never abstract matters and are never to be separated from each other. . . . Christ as the center means that Christ as mediator for the creation in its servitude, is the fulfillment of this law, the liberation from this servitude for the whole human being.”³⁶

Both Bonhoeffer’s thoughts and my proposed fulfillment of Rom 8:4 identify with Augustine’s “change of affections.”³⁷ Augustine declares, “[We] are justified freely by His grace—not that it is wrought without our will; but our will is by the law shown to be weak, that grace may heal its infirmity; and that our healed will may fulfill the law.”³⁸ Augustine mentions, here, a sanative element of justification, namely, spiritual health and well-being of the inner person.

³² Ibid., 12:314–15 (emphasis original).

³³ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Robert H. Fischer, vol. 37, *Word and Sacrament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1961), 68.

³⁴ Bonhoeffer, *DBW*, 12:323 (emphasis original).

³⁵ Ibid., 12:324.

³⁶ Ibid., 12:324, 327 (emphasis added).

³⁷ Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* I.17.16; NPNF, Series 1; Vol 2.

³⁸ Aurelius Augustine, *Saint Augustin’s Anti-Pelagian Works*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Peter Holmes, Robert Ernest Wallis, and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, vol. 5, NPNF1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 89 (ix.15).

This above ontological change in the “human condition” is typically not found in a traditional Reformed doctrine of justification.³⁹ The church and its members are the body of Christ (12:5; 1 Cor 12:27). If Rom 8:4 does not associate with the start of an ontological continuum of new creation life toward its “end” (*telos*), then when does it begin? If 8:4 does associate with the start of a new creation, an exchange still happens, but imputation and a change of realms/status may not fully encompass what Paul means in 8:4. My proposed interpretation of 8:4 may find further support and definition by Paul’s Abrahamic faith (4:17), which is explored next.

Romans 4

Abraham is Paul’s fundamental example of what it means “to be declared righteous by faith”—Paul’s ideal figure for his monotheistic, gospel that unifies all of humanity (Eph 2:11–22).⁴⁰ He was both the father of the Jews and the one who turned from astral-worship to worship the Creator.⁴¹ And, for many scholars, Abraham’s life also represents both a prototype of the belief that declares a person righteous (Rom 3:21–8:33; Gal 3–4) and an antitype of the disbelief that leads to disobedience (Rom 1:18–3:20).⁴² Both examples involve a response to God’s revelation as omnipotent Creator (1:20; 4:17b, 20).⁴³ According to Edward Adams, “The implication of the contrast pattern . . . is that Abraham’s faith and God’s reckoning of it . . . reverses the Gentile folly, and God’s judgment upon it.”⁴⁴ For Halvor Moxnes, Abraham’s faith is exemplary—a faith that encases in a person the “reversal of the structures of the world.”⁴⁵

Paul knows salvation for the believer as a past, present, and future event, namely, a salvation that has a defined point of origin, dynamism, and future aspect (10:9–13; 1 Cor 1:18; Eph 2:5, 8), where faith represents both assent and surrender. The Law wanted “to impart life”

³⁹ E.g., Michael S. Horton “Traditional Reformed View,” in *Justification: Five Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 83–111.

⁴⁰ Moo, *Romans*, 79; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 196.

⁴¹ Edward Adams, “Abraham’s Faith and Gentile Disobedience: Textual Links between Romans 1 and 4,” *JSNTSup* 65 (1997): 55.

⁴² For this list, see Adams, “Abraham’s Faith,” 47n1.

⁴³ Achtemeier, *Romans*, 15–22.

⁴⁴ Adams, “Abraham’s Faith,” 63.

⁴⁵ Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul’s Understanding of God in Romans*, NovT 53 (Boston: Brill, 1997), 273, 278.

(ζωοποιῆσαι; Gal 3:21) but could not. For before Christ the truth was suppressed and exchanged for a lie, by those who rejected their Creator and relied on their own efforts (Rom 1:18–3:20). But now, Abraham's faith involves the impartation of life. How? Abraham believed in God, "who gives life to [οὐ τοῦ ζωοποιούντος] the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (4:17).

Romans 4 represents a present-future, promise-fulfillment continuum that concludes with 4:23–25:⁴⁶ the cross and resurrection as one event that is "for our acquittal" (διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν; 4:25). Dunn writes, "The justifying grace of God is all of a piece with his creative, life-giving power. . . . to provide the eschatological breakthrough which his resurrection demonstrated."⁴⁷ Paul clarifies this thought in 5:16–18: the one act "brings a life-giving acquittal" (εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς; 5:18). The connection of 5:16–19 to 8:4, by Paul's use of "righteous decree" in these passages, should not be overlooked: Christ's declaration that "it is finished" reverses the impossible human condition of a heart change, with an emphasis on resurrection power.⁴⁸ This life-giving continuum is only further established by Moxnes's point that the contrast of Law and promise in Romans 4 morphs into new terms in 5:1–8:39: death and life, "according to the flesh" and "according to the Spirit"—a movement accomplished by God, "who raised Christ from the dead" (8:11).⁴⁹

Against all hope, Abraham actually "became the father of many nations" (4:18). Likewise, Christians, with "the firstfruits of the Spirit," hope for their full redemption (8:22–25), a hope that is based on an actuality. The Reformers, however, considered their righteousness hypothetical, an "as if" condition. But Abraham's status as a father was not "as if" he was a dad, he actually became a dad on the way to becoming "the father of many nations."

N. A. Dahl affirms a similar view, by means of Paul's Adam-Christ typology (5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:22).⁵⁰ For him, "the *superiority* of the new

⁴⁶ Gordon D. Fee emphasizes the Spirit as the key element of conversion and Christian living (*Galatians*, Pentecostal Commentary Series [Dorset, UK: Deo, 2007], 200–2). This Spirit, per Fee, is "dynamically experienced as the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham" (ibid., 201).

⁴⁷ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 241; cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 129; Käsemann, *Perspectives*, 94–95.

⁴⁸ Käsemann, *Perspectives*, 95.

⁴⁹ Moxnes, *Theology*, 276.

⁵⁰ N. A. Dahl, "Christ, Creation and the Church," in *The Background of the*

creation" is validated because God's new creation "brings about not only a restitution but also a *transformation* of the first one."⁵¹ Dahl continues by noting that this eschatological change "is thought to be 'in process of realization'; the last things which correspond to the first are no longer merely future, they are also present, actual realities."⁵²

The above view of Romans 4 is contra Moo and not without difficulty. For Moo, the particle ὡς (*hōs*) of Rom 4:17c creates a possible grammatical escape from this position. To Moo's objection we now turn.

God's Creative Power

Moo interprets οὐ . . . καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα (4:17) as "the one who calls things as though they were." He believes that had Paul meant to say, "the one who calls into existence the things that do not exist," he would have written, "οὐ . . . καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα εἰς τὸ εἶναι";⁵³ i.e., primarily because ὡς can denote a comparison, Moo "hesitantly and reluctantly" concludes that "the clause cannot refer to God's creative power as such, whether general or spiritual. It is, then, the nature of God as . . . 'summoning' that which does not yet exist as if it does that Paul must mean."⁵⁴ This position is not without merit, and it fits nicely within an "as if" view of the Christian's righteousness. Besides what was noted in "Romans 4," there are more factors against Moo's interpretation of 4:17c.

First, for Moo's above interpretation, ὡς must be defined as a particle of comparison. However, ὡς does not consistently denote comparison, and it is often used to introduce "a quality" of being (1:21; 3:7).⁵⁵ Further, it can, even if not typically, denote result or purpose, as is the case of its first appearance in Romans (1:9).⁵⁶ Only the use of ὡσεὶ (*hōsei*; cf. 6:13) instead of ὡς necessitates a condition of comparison for 4:17c.

Second, Mark A. Seifrid notes that 4:17 links to "the Isaianic message of the God who brings into existence and effects his purposes by

New Testament and Its Eschatology, ed. W. D. Davies and David Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 422–43.

⁵¹ Ibid., 426 (emphasis original).

⁵² Ibid., 430.

⁵³ E.g., Moo, *Romans*, 282. So also Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 237.

⁵⁴ Moo, *Romans*, 282.

⁵⁵ BAGD 1104(3).

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1105(4).

his creative word alone. . . . Paul stands especially close to Isaiah in that he understands 'calling' (*verbum efficax* ["the effective word"]) as the creative act of God."⁵⁷ If Seifrid is correct, it is not irrational to believe, contra Moo, that Paul's use of "call" in 4:17c does refer to God's creative power.

Third, J. R. Daniel Kirk extensively argues that Second Temple Judaism confessed "God as creator-resurrector."⁵⁸ Fourth, Jesus's resurrection is both central to Paul's conversion and at the heart of Romans.⁵⁹ Fifth, an association between 4:17 and Gen 1:1–3 is accepted widely by Romans scholars and is effectively defended by Moxnes⁶⁰—a position adopted by most English Bibles.⁶¹ These last three points equally encourage the interpreter to resist Moo's view of Rom 4:17, namely, that it "cannot refer to God's creative power . . . whether general or spiritual."

Since Bultmann, it is not uncommon to insist that, for Paul, "world" (*κόσμος*) is strictly a historical term.⁶² This perspective has been corrected by Adams, who argues persuasively that Paul's use of "world" (*κόσμος*) and "creation" (*κτίσις*) are of a "certain ad hoc nature."⁶³ Indeed, Paul can use them affirmatively within his soteriology and eschatology (e.g., 4:13; 8:8–25; 11:12, 15; 2 Cor 5:19). If Rom 4:17 does associate with Gen 1:1–3, then in Romans Paul does not put physical creation and salvation in antithesis.⁶⁴ Additionally, creation and new

⁵⁷ Mark A. Seifrid, "Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 626; 607–85.

⁵⁸ J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 70; 67–72.

⁵⁹ Richard B. Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 216–38; Kirk, *Romans*.

⁶⁰ Moxnes, *Theology*, 241–53. For this list of scholars and their rationale, see Moo, *Romans*, 281n64; Käsemann, *Romans*, 121–24; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:244–45; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 96–97; J. A. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPINTC (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1989), 131–32; Longenecker, *Romans*, 516–19.

⁶¹ E.g., CEB, ESV, CSB, NASB, NIV11, NJB, NLT, NRSV.

⁶² Rudolf Bultmann and Robert Morgan, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM Press, 1952), 254.

⁶³ Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 242–44, 246. Moo, *Romans* predates Adams's work.

⁶⁴ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 218.

creation may even share a continuum, by means of a miraculous exchange (cf. 1 Cor 15), that is different than the Reformer's "as if" great exchange. With both this section and the one before it in mind, I posit that some of Paul's intent in Romans 4 is missed, and therefore also 8:4, if the Abrahamic faith that Paul exemplifies does not tangibly reverse the impossible and begin an ontological transformation typified metaphorically by Abraham, who first became Isaac's dad before he became heir of the world (4:13).

The Pauline Corpus and Hebrew Bible

Paul's Creation-Gospel Proclamation

Second Corinthians 4:5–6 correlates Paul's gospel with Gen 1:1–3: "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus. . . . For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts." Paul parallels the creation account with the proclamation of the gospel. This analogy should not surprise anyone, as the ensuing four reasons suggest.

First, Gen 1:1–3 presents a formation by God that is primordial, consistently demonstrated in the Bible (e.g., 1:26–27; Mark 1:17; John 11:38–44), and conceivably even a thesis statement for all that follows it. God "speaks" material change into existence! Vern Poythress emphasizes this point when he states, "Divine action always includes divine speaking."⁶⁵

Second, God as the source (*ἐκ*), sustainer (*διά*), and goal (*εἰς*) of all things was accepted by both Stoic philosophers and Jews as part of their creation theology.⁶⁶ This "exit and return" (*exitus et reditus*) structure emphasizes that everything comes from God and returns to him; it sums up the essence of the Christian life. In Romans, Paul uses these Greek prepositions in Rom 1:5a, 11:36, and 16:25. Like the phrase "the obedience of faith," they too act as "a literary device that frames" the essence of life in Christ: God's "exit and return" arrangement manifests by Word (1:18–11:36) and resultant deed (12:1–16:27).

Third, Paul's gospel and apostolic call, which are nearly synonymous, are by God's "command." Note the connectivity between Paul's gospel and call, by the word "command" (*ἐπιταγή*; 16:26; 1 Tim 1:1;

⁶⁵ Vern S. Poythress, *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1999), 146.

⁶⁶ With Rom 11:36 in mind, Moo comments, "Paul borrows this formula" from Hellenistic Jews who applied it to Yahweh (*Romans*, 743).

Titus 1:3). Further, Paul's use of call (*καλέω*; e.g., Gal 2:6, 11–12) customarily refers to God's effectual call that includes a promise-fulfillment dynamic initiated by God's spoken word.⁶⁷

Fourth, this gospel creates a new creature⁶⁸—a view that finds support from Augustine. His conversion experience informed his spiritual-formation theology, both of which are significantly dependent on his emphasis of God as Creator.⁶⁹ He confessed,

*Sharp arrows of the mighty one . . . They pierce hearts! But when human hearts are transfixed by the arrows of God's word, the effect is not death but the arousal of love. . . . He shoots to turn you into his lover. . . . converted to the Lord they pass from death to life.*⁷⁰

You pierced my heart with the arrows of your love, and we carried your words transfixing my innermost being. The examples given by your servants whom you had transformed from black to shining white and from death to life, crowded in upon my thoughts. They burnt away and destroyed my heavy sluggishness preventing me from being dragged down to low things. They set me on fire with such force that every breath of opposition from any “deceitful tongue” had the power not to dampen my zeal but to inflame it the more.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Schreiner, *Romans*, 237.

⁶⁸ Käsemann, *Romans*, 219.

⁶⁹ E.g., in Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions I Books 1–8*, trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, LCL 26 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 411–13 (VIII.12.30); Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions II Books 9–13*, trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, LCL 27 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 5–7 (IX.2.3), 21–23 (IX.4.10), 135–39 (X.27.38–29.40), 193–95 (XI.2.3), 197–99 (XI.3.5), 273–75 (XII.10.10), 333–425 (XIII.1.1–38.53), which is encapsulated by 351–53 (XIII.9.10).

⁷⁰ *Ex. Ps.* 119.5 as quoted in Aurelius Augustine, *Essential Expositions of the Psalms*, ed. Michael Cameron, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2015), 66–67; both the italics and “God's word” are original.

⁷¹ Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 156 (IX.2.3). See also Augustine, *Confessions II*, 351, 353; XIII.9.10; Aurelius Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin, 2003), 262–63 (XI.28); 593–94 (XIV.28); James Wetzel, “Augustine on the Origin of Evil: Myth and Metaphysics,” in *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide*, ed. James Wetzel, Cambridge Critical Guides (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 167–85.

Augustine's “you pierced . . . transfixing my innermost being,” according to Carolyn Hammond, “combines the idea of impaling (i.e., piercing) with securing (i.e., transfixing): God's words (Scripture) are both making and unmaking Augustine. His symbol in art combines these two images into a flaming heart pierced by an arrow.”⁷² The “making and unmaking” of Augustine's inner being may align with Paul's “inner person” (*ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος*) that prior to Christ lived in condemnation (Rom 7:22) but subsequently renews to the image of its Creator by means of a transformation of “our inner being” (*ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν*; 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16; cf. Col 3:10). According to Paul Kolbet, Augustine's emphasis on God's speech made him jettison Plato's “beautiful words.”⁷³ Kolbet concludes that Augustine “contended that the eloquence of this humble word [the incarnation of the Word of Jesus Christ] spoken by God in Jesus Christ . . . created a community that took its character [of love] from the very speech that constituted it.”⁷⁴ This Augustinian tradition accentuates God's gracious, efficacious call into his divine life that is representative of the Word that became flesh.

This creation-gospel view—with God's perfective, creative love in mind (Rom 5:5)—makes the Word the seamless thread of the Christian's life, from its foundation (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20) to its “end” (Rom 8:39; cf. 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17–18). This perspective finds both added definition and reinforcement from the promised New Covenant and Paul's related OT/NT *locus classicus*.

Paul's *Locus Classicus*

Second Corinthians 2:12–4:18 is Paul's most authoritative pericope, namely, his *locus classicus* that distinguishes the Old and New Covenants and their “preaching” (*kerygma*).⁷⁵ Four things are noteworthy in this passage. First, it contains a gospel declaration addressed above in “Paul's Creation-Gospel Proclamation” (4:5–6). Second, Paul states in 3:3–6 that a Christian's competency only comes “by the Spirit of the living God . . . that gives life [ζωοποιεῖ].” This latter assessment is an

⁷² Augustine, *Confessions II*, 4n6.

⁷³ Paul R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 17* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 207.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁷⁵ C. H. Dodd, “Natural Law in the New Testament,” in *NTS* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), 141.

essential element in Paul's gospel (Rom 8:18–39; 2 Cor 4:16–18; 12:9).⁷⁶ Further, one easily notes a connection between 3:3–6 and Rom 4:17 by their shared use of “gives life.” Third, Paul records a receptivity of the gospel that encompasses both a state of “freedom” (ἐλευθερία; 2 Cor 3:17) and a transformation of “our inner being” “from one point of glory to still a higher point” (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν; 3:18; cf. Col 3:10; Rom 8:17, 29–30).⁷⁷ Fourth, Paul refers to the New Covenant promise, when he mentions Christians, who have the Law “written” on their hearts “by the Spirit of the Living God” (2 Cor 3:3).⁷⁸ Paul's use of a perfect tense verb to describe this act of writing (ἐγγεγραμμένη) signals to the reader that this is a completed past action whose effects are felt in the present. Three OT prophecies—from Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—inform the immediately preceding three points.

In Deuteronomy, the imperative to “circumcise your hearts” (Deut 10:16) is met by God's prophetic promise, “The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts . . . so that you may love him” (30:6). Jeremiah's command to “circumcise your hearts” (Jer 4:4) is similarly met by God's promise, “I will make a new covenant . . . I will write their law in their minds and write it on their hearts . . . I will forgive their wickedness” (31:33–34). Ezekiel analogously declares, “A new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes” (Ezek 36:26–27; cf. 11:19; Isa 44:3–5; 59:21). These prophecies announce that the promised indwelling Spirit marks the dawn of the eschatological age that resolves Israel's plight of Law disobedience and allows them to fulfill the Love Command. For the indwelling Spirit creates a “new heart” upon which the Law is written.

The Promised New Covenant in Romans

By the use of two particles found in Rom 8:1a, namely, “therefore now,” Paul proposes that 8:1–4 should be read in light of Romans 7, which describes a state of condemnation brought about by living “according to the flesh.” Similarly, by an explanatory “for” (γάρ) in 8:5 an expansion of 8:4 continues until 8:11, which presents a contrasting “state of being” between those who live “according to the flesh” and those who live “according to the Spirit.” These connections are not in

⁷⁶ Käsemann, *Perspectives*, 39–40.

⁷⁷ Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC 40 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 71–72.

⁷⁸ So *ibid.*, 52; Dodd, “Natural Law in the NT,” 141.

dispute.

For Moo, this “state of being,” which Paul mentions in 8:5, 8, represents “two realms of salvation history. . . a ‘positional’ rather than a ‘behavioral’ concept.”⁷⁹ Similarly, Moo notes with respect to 8:4, “flesh and Spirit stand against each other not as parts of a person (an anthropological dualism), nor even as impulses or powers within a person, but as the powers or dominating features, of the two ‘realms’ of salvation history.”⁸⁰ With respect to 5:9–11, he writes, “To be indwelt by God's Spirit means to be ‘in the Spirit’ and *not* ‘in the flesh.’ Paul's language is ‘positional’: he is depicting the believer's status in Christ, secured for him or her at conversion.”⁸¹ The following three, possibly four, reasons suggest that other discussions in Romans may conflict with Moo's strict division between a Christian's position and their behavior.

First, the Hebrew plight-solution pattern, noted in the previous section, “Paul's *Locus Classicus*,” arguably continues within Second Temple literature, Galatians, and Romans.⁸² For example, in 7:7–25, Paul rejects a Jewish view that found strength from the Law;⁸³ he declares that the “law of sin” (7:23) both dominates the unbeliever's “state of being” and creates the “according to the flesh” ethical, condemning dilemma—an ethical cul-de-sac of failure from which there is no escape without Christ. But now the “law of the Spirit” has “freed” (ἠλευθέρωσέν; 8:2) the believer from this “law of sin.” This Spirit induced “freedom” can identify with Paul's OT/NT *locus classicus*, which also mentions a “freedom” that is by the Spirit—a freedom that resolves Israel's plight of Law disobedience. How does this new “state of being,” which includes a behavioral and ontological aspect, come about for Paul? The Law is “written on human hearts” (2 Cor 3:3).

Second, Paul mentions Gentiles, who demonstrate that “the Law is written upon their hearts” (Rom 2:14–15). He also references “a man,” who keeps the “righteous decrees of the Law” (δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου) and is inwardly circumcised (2:25–29). For Moo, these Gentiles are “very unlikely” Christians, and the “man” in 2:27 is an “allusion.”⁸⁴ For others, they are genuine Gentile Christians, depicted by Jer 31:33 and mentioned in Rom 11:3 and 15:9. Paul's mention of them critiques

⁷⁹ Moo, *Romans*, 486.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 485.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 489–90.

⁸² Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

⁸³ Käsemann, *Romans*, 216.

⁸⁴ Moo, *Romans*, 150, 174.

Israel's behavioral failure and expounds upon God's solution that rescues the whole created order.⁸⁵ If this latter position is true, it is not unreasonable to thematically correlate parts of 2:12–29 with Paul's OT/NT *locus classicus* and the promised New Covenant. This association would allow the plural "righteous decrees" (2:26), with its behavioral aspect, to correlate with the singular "righteous decree" (8:4), with its suggested Love Command emphasis. Prior to Christ, the Jews had, by the Law, a "form of knowledge" (2:20). This Law, summarized by the Love Command, is now poured into the heart of the believer (5:5), and Christ is both the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24) for holy living.

Third, Rom 6:16–17 describes a Christian who "having been set free" (ἐλευθερωθέντες) from sin's power obeys God "from the heart" (ἐκ καρδίας; cf. 1:9; 8:10, 16). This "obedience from the heart" displays a "freedom" (ἐλευθερία) that definitely identifies with the Christian who "has been set free" (ἠλευθέρωσέν; 8:2) and feasibly so with Paul's OT/NT *classicus* distinction, where the new state of the Christian is "freedom" (ἐλευθερία; 2 Cor 3:17) for the "inner being" (4:16) that includes transformation toward the likeness of Christ (3:18). If true, this "obedience from the heart" may both contrast with a person's inability to submit to God's Law (Rom 8:8), who lives "according to the flesh," and identify with the New Covenant's promise of obedience from a "new heart." The psalmist confessed, "I will run in the way of your commandments, when you set my heart free" (Ps 119:32). Moo does not engage with this "obedience from the heart" in Rom 6:17;⁸⁶ his three other discussions that involve 6:17 consistently refer to a believer's new status and transfer from an old to a new realm.⁸⁷

As noted previously, God promised the indwelling Spirit; this Spirit would create a "new heart" because the Law would be written upon it. This new "state of being" also involved "freedom" and transformation. These same characteristics are noted within the immediately preceding

⁸⁵ So Augustine, *On the Spirit*, xxvi.43–xxvii.47; H. Köster, φύσις, TDNT 9:273; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:156; Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 158; N. T. Wright, "The Law in Romans 2," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 134; 131–50; N. T. Wright, "Romans 2:17–3:9: A Hidden Clue to the Meaning of Romans?," *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 2.1 (2012): 1–25; for more, see Fitzmyer, *Romans* and Köster, TDNT 9:273n218.

⁸⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 400–2; cf. 174.

⁸⁷ E.g., *ibid.*, 201; 359, 755; cf. 51, 359, 397, 403, 405, 407, 930.

three points. Minus this indwelling Spirit, Paul insists, there is neither a Christian (8:9) nor a transformation of the "inner being" (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16). For Herman Ridderbos, Paul's gospel "signifies a radicalizing of the concept of Jew, and thereby of the definition of the essence of the people of God."⁸⁸ For Käsemann, Paul's gospel, which reveals "the righteousness of God," presents "the God who brings back the fallen world into the sphere of his legitimate claim."⁸⁹ Righteousness is granted to faith as a gift that is forensic, apocalyptic, and efficaciously powerful. Both forgiveness and new creation, for Käsemann, bring about "a change in existence," which represents a constant earthly change (Phil 3:7–12).⁹⁰ If the thoughts of this section are true, they provide one more reason that "fulfilled in us" (πληρωθῆ ἔν ἡμῖν; Rom 8:4) could also describe a new essence for Paul's "inner being." Romans 1:16–17 may add to this rationale.

For Moo, the "faith" mentioned in Hab 2:4 "probably *modifies* 'the one who is righteous,' [but] Paul appears to give the words a different meaning. . . . In both the meaning of the terms and their connections, then, Paul's quotation differs from the meaning of the original. But the differences should not be magnified."⁹¹ Additionally, for Moo, "from faith to faith" (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν; Rom 1:17) presents a rhetorical combination, "intended to emphasize that faith and 'nothing but faith' can put us into right relationship with God."⁹² My suggestion that 8:4 refers to a changed "human condition" adds to the possibility that the meaning of Hab 2:4 is echoed in Rom 1:17 and not significantly modified. This perspective of 8:4 also joins the majority view that "from faith to faith" depicts some type of progression.⁹³

The Righteousness of God

As noted, a reformational interpretation of 8:4 only relies upon an "as if" righteousness that is outside of a Christian that comes only by imputation. Further, the declaration of God's righteousness that brings justification for the believer represents a past act, a new and permanent status; it is a "once-for-all" act. Last, it does not refer to God's creative power, whether general or spiritual. A rereading of 8:4 continues to be offered here.

⁸⁸ Ridderbos, *Paul*, 334.

⁸⁹ Käsemann, *Romans*, 29.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Moo, *Romans*, 75, 77, 78 (emphasis added).

⁹² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 76nn56–61.

First, in Paul's letters, the phrase "the righteousness of God," or its equivalent, is found nine times: Rom 1:17; 3:5, 21–26 (4x); 10:3 (cf. 9:14); 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9. Placed within a pericope whose emphasis is the great commission, 2 Cor 5:21 states, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ)." Arguably, Wright defends a behavioral, ontological component for "the righteousness of God" in 5:11–6:2.⁹⁴ Moreover, the ethical implications of "the righteousness of God" are undeniable outside the Pauline corpus (e.g., Matt 6:33, Jas 1:20; 2 Pet 1:1). Last, its parallel with God's faithfulness and Israel's unbelieving, unfaithful lifestyle in Rom 3:1–8 is also sure.

Second, in continuation with and building upon the preceding point, the phrase "toward righteousness" is used with respect to an obedient life lived under Christ's lordship that is contra sin and instead "leads to righteousness" (6:16). This expression also references a believer's behavioral shamelessness and Christ's faithfulness, resurrection, and lordship (10:4, 9–11). For Paul, Jews boast in their possession and performance of the Law as well as their relationship with God (2:17, 23; 4:2; 5:3). Their lives, however, fail to establish genuine righteousness (10:3). Instead, they live lives of shame and reflect a people not in covenant with the LORD (2:24–25; 6:21; 9:33). On the other hand, a Christian boasts in the Lord and the righteous lifestyle he creates (5:2–3, 11; 10:10–11; cf. 1 Cor 1:29–31). Within this latter claim, the heart of a person "believes toward righteousness" (καρδία πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην; Rom 10:10), namely, they trust in and surrender to their Creator, who by grace through faith "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that did not exist" (4:17).

Third, as noted, Paul's gospel, which reveals "the righteousness of God" and climaxes in Romans 8, impacts one's understanding of 8:4. Longenecker's "three principal foci of the Christian gospel" are "righteousness of God" as "an attribute of God and a gift from God," the "faithfulness of Jesus," and the believer's faith.⁹⁵ This outlook unites Perspectives on Paul, Old and New. By now, the reader has noted an emphasis in this essay on a gospel that "is the power of God" (1:16) and Käsemann's perspective of "the righteousness of God": Paul's term that describes God's powerful activity (1:16) that brings back a

⁹⁴ For Wright's view of justification, see N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (2011): 49–63.

⁹⁵ Longenecker, *Romans*, 457–60.

collapsed world into the realm of his legitimate rulership.⁹⁶ H. Schlier clarifies this rescue operation: "The righteousness of God" both acquits and empowers, for "neither in its commencement nor its continuation is the justifying action of God quietistic; it is always teleological."⁹⁷ If these men are correct, justification is not just a past act.

Fourth, Paul's theological passive, "it has been determined" (ἐλογίσθη; 4:3, 9–11, 22–23) and his ethical imperative, "determine" (λογίσεσθε; 6:11) can display a continuum of God's creational decree toward the fullness of new creation life—a "righteous decree" empowered "according to the Spirit," the same Spirit that creates the "new heart." This continuum, after all, even may find support in 4:5 and Paul's pneumatology. The present tense verb and participles of 4:5 can represent continual action. Likewise, the "deposit" (ἄρραβών) of the Spirit guarantees what is to come. The definition of "deposit" includes an obligation toward additional payments.⁹⁸

Fifth, Paul personifies both sin and righteousness as determinative powers that influence toward dissimilar ends (6:15–23):⁹⁹ sin, which strengthens its obedient servant's identification with depravity, finalizes in death (6:12, 16, 21, 23); the transformative power of righteousness creates a new inner being, whose "end" is eternal life (6:5, 8, 22–23; 8:11). Paul has received "grace and apostleship to call people . . . to the obedience of faith" (1:5). He believes that the declaration of "the righteousness of God" should be accompanied by an Abrahamic faith that allows the Law to be obeyed "from the heart." This gospel "is the power of God" (1:16), a creational power that is "toward righteousness" for the Christian. Romans 4:24 supports this perspective. Paul arguably presents in 4:24 a teleological framework, which has a future aspect to it, by his use of the phrase "to whom it will be determined" (οἷς μέλλει λογίζεσθαι).¹⁰⁰ As such, his argument in 4:23–25 can relate to an initial and sustaining effort of "the righteousness of God" until

⁹⁶ Käsemann, *Romans*, 21–32; John Henry Paul Reumann, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Jerome D. Quinn, *Righteousness in the New Testament: Justification in the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 83; H. Schlier, *δικαιοσύνη*, TDNT 2:209–10.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁹⁸ 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13–14; cf. Rom 8:23; BAGD 134.

⁹⁹ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 354.

¹⁰⁰ G. Mussies, *The Morphology of Koine Greek as Used in the Apocalypse of St. John: A Study in Bilingualism* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 307; contra Moo, *Romans*, 287, whose reason is theological not grammatical.

that “last Day.”¹⁰¹ Moo’s reason against this rendition of 4:24 is theological not grammatical;¹⁰² however, BAGD defines μέλλει as an action that is “inevitable” and “subsequent to another event.”¹⁰³ Elsewhere in Romans, Paul consistently uses μέλλει to refer to a future event (5:14; 8:13, 18, 38) and even, per Moo, to a “final state.”¹⁰⁴ This teleological aspect for God’s declaration of righteousness is also supported by Paul’s use of δικαίωσις (4:25), which BAGD describes to be an “acquittal as a process as well as its result διὰ τὴν δικαίωσις [because of this acquittal].”¹⁰⁵

Sixth, the above teleological aspect of “the righteousness of God” gives consistency to all of Paul’s usages of both “toward righteousness” and “determine.” A reformational perspective furnishes different meanings to these phrases that are dependent upon their context; e.g., Moo associates “toward righteousness” in 4:5 with an imputed righteousness and in 6:16 it correlates with a “moral’ righteousness, conduct pleasing to God.”¹⁰⁶

The above argument, in its totality, does not discount a forensic righteousness but argues that 3:30 (“God is One, who will call righteous [δικαιώσει] the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith”) involves a gospel proclamation by and toward the image of Christ that creates and sustains new life in the believer. Within this view, Christians are not, per Barth’s criticism of Augustine, their “own creator and atoner” but grow “toward righteousness” (6:16; cf. 10:4, 10), by God’s decree of love (8:35–39)¹⁰⁷—something the Law was after all the time. By grace a person reigns “in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (5:16–18; 8:28–34) toward God’s “end.” Here, “to be declared righteous by faith” includes “a life-giving righteous acquittal” (εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς; 5:18) that provides an ontological transformation of the “inner being.” The “power of God,” which is the Word of the gospel (1:16), provides the initial and sustaining effort of this change until that “last Day.” This new creation life inextricably and inexplica-

¹⁰¹ Dunn, *Romans*, 1–8, 223.

¹⁰² Moo, *Romans*, 287.

¹⁰³ BAGD 627.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 511; cf. 334, 494, 545.

¹⁰⁵ BAGD 198.

¹⁰⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 262, 400.

¹⁰⁷ Karl Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*, trans. R. Birch Hoyle, Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 60; see also 3–6, 20–23.

bly links a Christian’s being and doing, belief and obedience. Truth progresses toward reality “through the righteousness of God provided by faith” (διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως; 4:13),¹⁰⁸ as God powerfully fulfills his promise toward the imitation of Christ (8:29).

The Spirit’s very ontology (love, wind) reinforces this movement that births the singular but multifaceted fruit of love (8:9; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:22). God’s unconditional love and freedom creates the changed “human condition” that loves God and neighbor, which is to declare by word and deed that “Jesus is Lord!” Paul’s first statement in Romans about the gospel, which declares “the righteousness of God,” highlights this declaration of lordship (Rom 1:1–7). He emphatically insists upon Christ’s lordship by repeating this truth in 5:1, 11, 21; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39. As noted earlier, Abraham is a prototype of faith that determines a person “toward righteous” and an antitype of disbelief that leads to disobedience. Moreover, Paul’s proclamation of the gospel, from start to finish, presents an Abrahamic faith through which the gospel is both “making and unmaking” the believer. As such, the declaration of “the righteousness of God,” which proclaims Christ’s lordship, either enflames toward life (3:21–8:39) or dampens to death (1:18–3:20).

Mortificatio and Vivificatio

By Calvin’s time, the rubric of the Christian life sprang from systematic categories of “killing” (*mortificatio*) and “quickenning” (*vivificatio*), of which Barth’s criticism seems fair, “What we have called the divine call to advance is in Calvin so overshadowed by the divine summons to halt that it can hardly be heard at all.”¹⁰⁹ Of course, the gospel involves repentance and forgiveness (*mortificatio*); however, an ongoing gospel minus a coequal, united “quickenning” is contra Paul’s meaning in 6:5.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Faith in this phrase is translated as a genitive of source. A similar congruence between a Christian’s belief and lifestyle is displayed by a phrase in Acts 26:18, namely, “those who are being sanctified by faith” in Christ (τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει). In 26:18, “faith” is understood as an instrumental dative.

¹⁰⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley, vol. IV.2, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation Part 2* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 575 (§ 66.4).

¹¹⁰ Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 228–29. Campbell’s thoughts on Paul’s related σύν compounds (cf. 228–36) are summarized on page 425: “Paul reiterates that participation in his death results in participation with him in life.”

In 6:5, Paul explains how the believer walks in newness of life: “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Paul not only strongly contrasts death with resurrection, but he unites these two concepts;¹¹¹ there cannot be one without the other. He presents not a probability but a certainty: The unification of the believer with Christ in his death guarantees the certainty of their resurrection.¹¹²

The epistemological foundation of 6:5, namely vv. 6–7, includes a phrase that may also affirm this “killing” and “quickenings” structure and its identification with God’s declaration of righteousness. Romans 6:7 states that the one who has died has been *δεδικαιώται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*. Most English Bibles translate this phrase as “freed from sin” (e.g., CEB, ESV, CSB, NASB, NIV, NKJ, NLT, NRSV) rather than “justified from sin” (RSV). I suggest that the declaration of “the righteousness of God” contains the stark reality that “no one will be declared righteous” (*οὐ δικαιοθήσεται*; 3:20) by works, and the jubilant truth that the believer has been “freed” into a new “state of being” that is “toward righteousness.” In support of this perspective, when Paul explains the meaning of 6:1–7, he states that the believer is no longer a slave to sin but “has been freed [*ἐλευθερωθέντες*] . . . toward holiness [*εἰς ἁγιασμόν*], whose end [*τέλος*] is eternal life” (6:22).¹¹³ As noted, this state of freedom can equate with an “obedience from the heart,” a new “state of being.” As such, the declaration of the “righteousness of God” begins and completes the great disturbance. This process involves a continuum of new creation life, where a person’s transforming “state of being” is portrayed by “killing” and “quickenings”—an activity that starts, continues, and ends by means of God’s promise and fulfillment “toward righteousness.”

Dahl states, “The purpose of the Creator is realized in the new creation, that is in Christ, who is . . . the mediator of creation . . . the beginning and archetype of the new creation.”¹¹⁴ Though the Reformers valued an “order of salvation” (*ordo salutis*), this term was not used until the eighteenth century. I cannot here discuss in detail an order of salvation. Hopefully, it is sufficient to note that it involves a continuum that is both ontological, transformational, and teleological; its “end” is

¹¹¹ BAGD 38(3).

¹¹² BDF 448(6); cf. Rom 5:19.

¹¹³ Like the concept understood by “toward righteousness,” this process that is “toward holiness” is equally affected by God’s righteousness (6:19, 22)—a concept that cannot be expounded here.

¹¹⁴ Dahl, “Creation,” 441; Rom 6:1–14; 8:18–39; Eph 4:13–16.

“conformity [*σύμμορφος*] to the image of his Son” (8:29). A. T. Robertson’s thoughts on “conformity” affirm this view. He notes that “conformity” starts with “an inward and not merely superficial conformity . . . here we have *morphe* [‘form’] and *eikon* [‘image’] to express the gradual change in us till we acquire the likeness of Christ the Son of God.”¹¹⁵ According to Walter Grundmann, this “includes a transformation of the being of man.”¹¹⁶ Within this purview, from the first declaration of “the righteousness of God” to its last, the gospel can be understood as the Word of new creation. Similar to the first “Let light shine out of darkness,” the gospel transforms the fallen “image of God” (*imago Dei*) to its restored eschatological perfection by “killing” and “quickenings” in union with Christ. By this great disturbance, a heart now says with Christ, “Sacrifices you do not desire; here I am, I have come to do your will; your law is within my heart” (Ps 40:6–8; 51:16–17; Heb 10:5–10). God’s love that is poured “in our hearts” allows for a life that is both filled with hope and void of shame (Rom 5:5). There is continual hope and no shame because of God’s unwavering love that forgives, changes, and assures the Christian of the fullness of what is to come (8:9, 23), namely, conformity to the image of the Son.

Wrapping up “the Righteousness of God”

Sin was able to reign because of an “according to the flesh” human condition. “But now . . . grace abounds even more” (3:21) and creates the new creation “human condition,” where obedience is “from the heart,” the “perfectly written” law upon the heart. “The righteousness of God” dethrones sin. God’s grace “reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (5:20–21). When this happens, the purpose of God’s decree begins for the Christian community: living within a “killing” and “quickenings” dynamic, “they think the things of the Spirit” (8:5) and participate in the good work that God’s Word brings to completion on that “last Day” (Phil 1:6). “Christ’s love compels . . . he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves” (2 Cor 5:14–15).

John’s gospel declares, “In the beginning was the Word, . . . This Word became flesh” (John 1:1–14). Further, the Christian grows up “toward him” [*εἰς αὐτόν*], namely, Christ who is the head of the body,

¹¹⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1930), 4:377.

¹¹⁶ Walter Grundmann, “Compounds in *Σύν*- Which Develop the *Σύν Χριστῶ*,” *TDNT* 7:786–94.

in every way (Eph 4:15). As such, the believer is not externally conformed by an exterior law but inextricably transformed by the indwelling, empowering Spirit—that incorruptible seed of Christ implanted as new creation life by the spoken Word. Here, a Christian—with an inward desire to bear another's burden—“fulfills the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2) and demonstrates the “completed law, the one that gives freedom [τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας]” (Jas 1:25).¹¹⁷ For God's “righteous decree,” which was once by a written code, is now by the Spirit that “imparts life” (ζωοποιεῖ; 2 Cor 3:5–6; cf. Gal 3:21). As such, the declaration of “the righteousness of God” triumphantly progresses toward its complete fulfillment by means of a new creation miracle until that “last Day.” This triumphant love, with its perfective aspect, is poured into the human heart (Rom 5:5), by an Abrahamic faith (4:17) that produces the great disturbance. This disturbance “gives life” (ζωοποιεῖ), according to 4:17 and 8:11, from the moment of new creation life within the believer until its *telos*. Resultantly, until that “last Day,” a life once short of God's glory (3:23) bears fruit toward the character of Christ and God's glory (5:1–4; 8:18; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; 2 Thess 2:13–14).

Within this view of “the righteousness of God,” being is not separated from doing, and the Christian's faith constitutes more than a change of status and realm. Here, Paul contrasts a perspective of disbelief and disobedience (Rom 1:18–3:20) with “The one who believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous” (τῷ πιστεύοντι ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ; 4:5). “But now” the Law's goal, which was to turn a person's heart to the Lord, is fulfilled “in us.” This creation of new life happens by the proclamation of the gospel, with its Abrahamic faith. This “enthused” (ἔνθεος; cf. 2 Thess 1:1; Rom 2:17; literally, “in God”) person, this new creation human in continuity with God's decree, ontologically is transformed (12:2; 2 Cor 3:18) by the Word until that “last Day.” Here, in view of God's merciful great disturbance, similar living sacrifices as Christ's (Rom 12:1–3) efficaciously reflect “genuine rather than hypocritical love” (12:9–21). To some degree, they imitate Christ (15:2–3) because they fulfill the Law's requirement of a heart lovingly directed to God and neighbor.

Paul states, “By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me” (1 Cor 15:10; cf. Eph 2:1–10; Phil 2:12–13). This confession is found within his explanation of the gospel. God's grace had a behavioral effect on Paul that was rooted in his new “I,” namely, his changed “state of being.” That is,

¹¹⁷ In this translation, “freedom” is taken as an attributive genitive.

both Paul's “I” and his efforts were effected by grace, saving grace, from start to finish.

My thesis brings congruence to all of Paul's mentions of Law-fulfillment (Rom 8:4; 13:8; 2:26; 3:31). Within this perspective of 8:4, obedience does not bring about justification for works do not play a meritorious role, and vindication is not on the basis of them. Instead, human faithfulness is a divine act, first and foremost, and an “obedience from the heart” is part of an ontological transformation that is by grace through faith. This “obedience of faith” is evidence of, but not instrumental toward, the Creator's pronouncement of righteousness that produces new creation life. As such, my thesis may also unify all of Paul's thoughts on justification, including his first statement of it in 2:13.

Romans 2:13 has long plagued Protestant, Pauline scholars. Since the Reformation, it is typically not noted as a reference to Christians, for it asserts that “the doers of the law will be declared righteous (δικαιωθήσονται).”¹¹⁸ However, when the proclamation of “the righteousness of God” provides a continuum of the Creator's Word toward the fullness of new creation life, this verb's future tense and theologically passive voice can reference God's final verdict on that “last Day.” On that Day, the good work started by the Creator's Word, which manifests by deed in a believer's life, will have reached its “end” (Phil 1:6).

Conclusion

The Spirit of God creates new life in a person. From the first declaration of “the righteousness of God” to its last, the gospel, which is the power of God, commissions and ethically empowers a person to turn his or her heart both affectionately to love God and neighbor. This proclamation, when united with an Abrahamic faith, symbiotically transitions the Christian toward the image of Christ, “from one point of glory to still a higher point.” Peter understood this decree as a call to participate in the divine nature, namely, God's glory and “goodness” (2 Pet 1:3, 5; ἀρετή).¹¹⁹ He too rooted this viewpoint in an atonement that

¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, Augustine's *On the Spirit and the Letter* notes that 2:13 refers to Christians (Augustine, *Anti-Pelagian*, 5:402; XVI.45).

¹¹⁹ Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49, 237 references the “aretegenic power of the cross,” a dynamic that involves “participatory action” and is “virtue producing.” Aretegenic derives from a transliteration of ἀρετή, namely, *arete*. For this aretegenic progression, see also Andreas

brought health, which enabled the Christian to live “for what is right” (1 Pet 2:24; τῆ δικαιοσύνη).

There is no condemnation for those in Christ (Rom 8:1), for God graciously brings about forgiveness and freedom. This path of freedom is lived in union with Christ and represented by a process of “killing” and “quickenings,” promise and fulfillment. Possibly we can hear Paul say, “I no longer live. Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by the proclamation of the righteousness of God and its accompanying Abrahamic faith. ‘Christ died and returned to life, so that he might be the Lord’ of even the Christian’s ethical struggles” (14:9; cf. 7:7–24; 8:37–39; Gal 2:20). Christ’s victory over sin provides forgiveness and begins an ontological change of the Christian’s “inner being” toward the image of the Son. This change is sustained by an “exit and return” structure of “God, the one who declares righteous” (θεὸς ὁ δικαιῶν; Rom 8:33). This Abrahamic, worshipful life is accompanied by hope, joy, and “groaning as in the pains of childbirth” (8:22)—a prayerful life offered “from the heart” of the believer, by the Spirit, and in union with Christ Jesus (8:23, 26–27, 34).

Paul’s prayer and a psalmist’s confession are most appropriate within this outlook of 8:4.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead . . . Because of his great love for us, God . . . made us alive with [συνεζωποίησεν] Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved [σέσωσμένοι]. . . . For this reason . . . I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of power. . . . I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being [εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον], so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And . . . being rooted and established in love . . . that you may know this love of Christ that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or think or imagine, according to his power, that is at work within us, to him be glory in the

church (Eph 1:18–20; 2:4–5; 3:1, 7, 16–19, 20–21; NIV 1986)

Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. . . . the glory due his name. . . . The voice of the LORD . . . is powerful . . . majestic. . . . It breaks . . . makes . . . shakes . . . and gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with *shalom* (“peace”). (Ps 29:1–11).