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ECHOES OF INTRA-JEWISH POLEMIC IN PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

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No one will need to be reminded that Galatians is one of the most polemical documents in all the Bible. The typically polite thanksgiving of the normal letter opening is replaced by the indignation and fiery anathema of 1:6–9. The Jerusalem Christian leadership is four times referred to with the distancing formula οἱ δοκοῦντες (2:2, 6, 9) and dismissed with a shrug—"what they once were makes no difference to me." The Jerusalem opposition is described with a series of weasel words—"false brothers smuggled in, who sneaked in to spy on our freedom" (2:4). Jerusalem itself is identified with Hagar and dumped in the slavery column in the opposing columns of 4:21–27, and the Galatians are encouraged to throw out the other missionaries as Sarah encouraged Abraham to throw out Hagar and Ishmael, alike expelled from the heritage of Abraham (4:30). The sharpness of polemic poses Christ and circumcision, grace and law as mutually exclusive antitheses (5:2–5) and reaches its climax in the coarse sexual humor of 5:12. And even in the postscript Paul cannot refrain from cheapening the motives of his opponents and denying their integrity (6:12–13).

Such language and tactics are typical of factional polemic the world over. In spirit and tone at least, it is not particularly Jewish or Christian.[1] At the same time, there are some elements that seem to echo more specifically intra-Jewish polemic, and it is these on which this paper focuses. Peter von der Osten-Sacken has already noted the parallel between 1:6–7 and CD 1:14–17 with its fierce polemic against "the congregation of traitors" and "the Scoffer."[2] But others are still more striking and call for more attention than they have hitherto received. It will suffice to refer to the most noteworthy passage and two others.

[1] See, e.g., L. T. Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *JBL* 108 (1989) 419–41.

[2] P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Die Heiligkeit der Tora: Studien zum Gesetz bei Paulus* (Munich: Kaiser, 1989) 142.

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I. Galatians 2:11–17

Hints of Intra-Jewish Polemic

The polemical character of the section is clear from the first. To say that Cephas "stood condemned" (2:11) means, of course, condemned from the perspective of Paul's position: typical of the polemicist is the attempt to prejudice the audience by implying that the view propounded has a universal validity. But the indications of more specifically Jewish character soon begin to appear.

(a) *2:12: Cephas "separated himself."* Is there here an echo of the nickname by which one of the main "sects" within contemporary Judaism was commonly designated (Pharisees = "separated ones")?[3] Pharisees and Essenes were known within Jewish circles as those who separated themselves from others precisely in the matter of table fellowship, for reasons of purity—even from others who no doubt regarded themselves as Torah faithful, but who were not so regarded by Essenes and Pharisees.[4] Cephas, like these other factions within Second Temple Judaism, had now made table fellowship a test case of covenant identity and faithfulness, and in concluding that the Gentile believers failed that test (or rather that their company caused *him* to fail that test) had withdrawn from table fellowship with them. In a verbal exchange between Jews on the subject of table fellowship such an echo would not have been difficult to hear. We might even paraphrase, "Cephas played the Pharisee."

(b) *2:12: "because he feared those of the circumcision."* The verb here will be at least partly polemical in force: even if Peter was in fact concerned about his personal safety, the reduction of his motives solely to those of fear is a polemical stratagem to discredit the action so described. More remarkable here, however, is the description of those "feared" as "of the circumcision." It is remarkable because Paul can thus describe them in summary fashion by reference to the act and fact of "circumcision." Elsewhere Paul can describe Jews at large as "the circumcision," in contrast to the rest of humanity,

[3] See, e.g., E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: Clark, 1979) 2. 396–97; A. J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1988) 215, 220–21. That Paul's use of the same word in 1:15 carries a similar echo has been suggested, e.g., by T. Zahn (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* [Leipzig: Deichert, 1905] 61–62) and F. Mussner (*Der Galaterbrief* [HTKNT; 3d ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1977] 83 n. 31).

[4] The point is disputed as to its detail, but the broad picture is hard to dispute. In addition to those cited in the first part of n. 3 above, see also, e.g., A. F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) 124–28; S. J. D. Cohen, *From Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 119, 129–32, 154–59, 162; and the several contributions by J. Neusner on the subject.

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characterized simply as "the uncircumcision" (2:7–8; similarly Rom 2:25–27; 3:30; 4:9–12). This characterization indicates clearly an identity determined by or focused in the act and fact of circumcision—hence the metonymy "the circumcision," not "the circumcised"—circumcision providing the fundamental and sufficient principle of classification. And equally clearly it indicates a Jewish perspective: "the uncircumcision" is hardly a self-designation by Gentiles. But here the term is used by a Jew in reference to another Jew and must indicate still other Jews distinguished from the likes of Peter and Paul in a way analogous to the distinction between Jew and Gentile. That is to say, they were a faction within Judaism who gave such emphasis to circumcision that they could even be distinguished from other Jews as "the circumcision."

(c) *2:13: "they played the hypocrite."* In Greek the verb meant simply "to play a part." But in Jewish use it gained a regularly negative note—"pretend," "deceive" (as in Sir 32:15; 33:2; *Pss. Sol.* 4:20, 22). A particularly poignant parallel is the memory of Eleazar, the Maccabean martyr, who *refused* to pretend to eat pork and food sacrificed to idols as a way of escaping execution (2 Macc 6:21, 24; 4 Macc 6:15, 17).[5] If Paul, in addressing Peter, was looking over his shoulder at the "group from James," he could well have intended to evoke this classic example of covenant faithfulness. Peter and the other Christian Jews ought to have had the strength of character (to resist the temptation to abandon the truth of the gospel) which Eleazar had shown. Since one would have expected the example of the Maccabean martyrs to be cited by the people from James rather than by Paul, there is at least the suggestion here that Paul was trying to counter the sort of factional argument which in the two hundred years following the Maccabean revolt must regularly have appealed to the example of the Maccabean martyrs.

(d) *2:13: ". . . their hypocrisy."* The charge is, of course, once again polemical: in polemic a genuine disagreement can easily be represented as hypocrisy by those who see the issues either differently or more intensely. More to the immediate point, U. Wilckens notes that ὑπόκρισις in diaspora Judaism was used as equivalent to the Hebrew חֹנֶף, denoting "a wickedness which alienates from God."[6] Here too, given the context of bitter denunciation, the overtone may have been present to Paul and his Jewish disputants.

(e) *2:14: "they were not walking straight toward the truth of the gospel."* The verb (ὀρθοποδεῖν) is a *hapax legomenon* for this period, but the imagery is obvious and would hardly have been misunderstood. More significant here is the fact that the metaphor "walk" = conduct oneself was typically Jewish

[5] See also U. Wilckens, ὑποκρίνομαι, *TDNT* 8. 563–65; and H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 109–10.

[6] Wilckens, ὑποκρίνομαι, *TDNT* 8. 564.

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(הָלַךְ) and atypical of Greek thought. Moreover, the characteristic Jewish use was in commendation of a "walk in the law/statutes/ordinances/ways of God" (hence "halakah").[7] In no doubt deliberate contrast, Paul speaks of a walk toward the truth of the gospel. Evidently he was implying with polemical intent that "the truth of the gospel" provided a different and superior beacon for conduct; but in effect he was engaged in a halakic dispute.

(f) *2:14: "how is it that you compel the Gentiles to judaize?"* "To judaize" was a quite familiar expression, in the sense "to live like a Jew," "to adopt a distinctively Jewish way of life"—with reference to Gentiles taking up Jewish customs like observance of the sabbath.[8] The polemical note sounds in the verb "compel." Judaism at that time was notably uninterested in evangelism, though open to and accepting of Gentile God-fearers and proselytes.[9] The element of compulsion would enter because there were Gentiles who were making claims, or for whom claims were being made, to enter into what generations of Jews had always regarded as their exclusive privileges (in terms of the argument of Galatians, into the direct line of inheritance from Abraham). To safeguard the character of these privileges it was evidently seen as necessary to ensure that such claimants conformed fully to the traditional notes of the covenant people.[10] This Paul regarded as compulsion. There is no doubt an echo of the earlier usage in 2:4, and the implication that Peter was being as coercive, and on an equivalent issue, as the "false brothers" Peter himself had resisted earlier on in Jerusalem.

All these are at best hints. In themselves they would not be sufficient to demonstrate that Paul was using and echoing characteristic intra-Jewish polemic. But there are clearer indications than these, and when taken together with these the case becomes very strong.

Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic

(a) *2:15.* The most obvious of these is the reference in 2:15 to "Gentile sinners." The word "sinner" is, of course, characteristic Jewish language: רָשָׁע = "the one guilty of sin, the wicked."[11] As regularly in the Psalms (e.g., Pss 50:16–20; 109:2–7; 119:53, 155), it denoted those who disregarded the law and whose conduct was condemned by it. This was why it could be used, as here, as more or less synonymous with "Gentiles" (Ps 9:17; Tobit 13:6; *Jub.*

[7] See, e.g., the data illustrated in my *Romans* (WBC 38; Dallas: Word, 1988) 315–16.

[8] See the data, e.g., in my *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK; Louisville: Westminster, 1990) 149–50.

[9] See now particularly S. McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); P. Fredriksen, "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2," *JTS* 42 (1991) 537–40.

[10] The classic parallel is, of course, the episode of Izates in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.2.4 §§38–46.

[11] See, e.g., BDB *s.v.* רָשָׁע.

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33:23–24; *Pss. Sol.* 2:1–2; Matt 5:47//Luke 6:33).[12] For Gentiles were by definition "law-less," without (outside) the law, and in consequence their conduct was inevitably in breach of the law (sinful).

More to the point here, however, the same epithet was evidently often used in the intra-Jewish factional disputes that seem to have wracked the last two hundred years of Second Temple Judaism, at least if our sources from that period are anything to go by. Typically one faction would claim to be "righteous" and condemn others as "sinners" (e.g., 1 Macc 1:34; 2:44, 48; *1 Enoch* 5:4–7; 82:4–5; 1QH 2:8–12; 1QpHab 5:4–8; *Pss. Sol.* 4:8; 13:6–12). Here clearly the usage was polemical. For while "sinner" still denoted sustained disregard for and breach of the law, the disregard and breach were evidently more often in the eye of the beholder than not. The point is underlined when we recall that the targets of such criticism in the texts just cited include, by general consent, both Sadducean and Pharisaic parties.[13] What was at issue, in other words, was sectarian (or factional) interpretation of the law, halakic dispute of such intensity that the issues were regarded by the "righteous" as make or break, as determinative of the others' acceptability or unacceptability to God.

One of these great issues was what can be summed up most simply as the issue of table fellowship—not surprisingly, since a number of concerns regarding clean and unclean foods, eating blood, food contaminated by idolatry, and potentially other purity issues all came to focus in the meal table. We need only recall the way the Maccabean crisis brought such concerns to the fore as tests of covenant loyalty (1 Macc 1:62–63), and the degree to which the heroes and heroines of the Second Temple period were lauded in the popular literature of the time precisely for their refusal to eat "the food of Gentiles" (Dan 1:8–16; Tobit 1:10–13; Jdt 10:5; 12:1–20; Add Esth LXX 14:17; *Jos. Asen.* 7:1; 8:5). The clear implication for those who used the vocabulary is that fellow Jews who maintained these standards were "the righteous" and that those other Jews who failed to maintain these standards, who failed the test issues posed by table fellowship, were "sinners."

Jesus himself had evidently been caught up in disputes in this area and had come under the critical lash of "the righteous." To accuse (the tone is one of accusation and criticism) someone of "eating with sinners" and of being

[12] See K. H. Rengstorf, ἁμαρτωλός, *TDNT* 1. 325–26, 328. This, to the Jew, self-evident association of the words "Gentile" and "sinner," undermines the attempts of H. Neitzel ("Zur Interpretation von Galater 2,11–21," *TQ* 163 [1983] 16–30) and A. Suhl ("Der Galaterbrief—Situation und Argumentation," in *ANRW* 2.25.4 [1987] 3099–3106) to introduce a break between ἐξ ἐθνῶν and ἁμαρτωλοί: "We, of course Jews by nature and not stemming from the Gentiles, are nevertheless sinners (as much as them)" (Suhl). In the historical context, the antithesis is much more naturally taken as between "by nature *Jews*" and "from Gentiles *sinners*," a contrast of status by reason of origin—Jews by birth, sinners because Gentiles.

[13] See, e.g., R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in *OTP* 2. 642, and those cited in Saldarini, *Pharisees,* 279 n. 6.

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a "friend of sinners" (with reference to table fellowship), as in the traditions of Mark 2:16 and Matt 11:19//Luke 7:34, was to accuse him of consorting with those regarded by the critics as law-breakers. To be noted once again is the fact that the accusation is factional polemic: those so accused might well have included individuals who were wholly law-abiding in their own eyes; but because they did not conform to the halakah of the critics on the sensitive issue of food and purity laws, they were categorized as "sinners" no less than the much more obviously "wicked." The implication is also clear: for Jesus to consort with such people in precisely the area of such halakic sensitivity (table fellowship) was to tar himself with the same brush—"sinner" by association, equally disregarding of important halakot.[14]

We need simply recall the evidence of Acts 10–11 that the issue of table fellowship had also been very sharp among the earliest Jerusalem Christians (Acts 10:14; 11:3). Presumably, then, whatever the earlier agreement in Jerusalem amounted to (Gal 2:6–9), it had not clarified, or at least not clarified sufficiently, questions relating to table fellowship. Only at Antioch did it become clear to more conservative believers from Jerusalem what was happening—that fellow Jews were sitting light to or actually departing from one of the central traditions of Torah piety, a tradition hallowed by the blood of the martyrs and fully sanctioned by the examples of the great heroes and heroines of Israel's history.

This then is the context of the incident at Antioch[15] and fully explains the atmosphere of suspicion, bitter accusation, and savage denunciation. The language ("Gentile sinners") is the language of Jews who regarded the law as definitive of righteousness and who therefore took it for granted that Gentiles "by nature" were outside the law, out-laws, and therefore "sinners," unacceptable to God by definition. As such it is hardly likely to have been Paul's own choice of language, given his own much more pro-Gentile stance. Almost certainly, therefore, he is echoing the language of more traditional Jews. And in the case in point (the Antioch incident) that must mean the group from James. In other words, Paul here is probably echoing in ironic fashion the accusation and criticism brought by James's people against Peter and the other Jewish believers in Antioch "How can you, Peter, being a trueborn Jew, eat with Gentile sinners?"

[14] For fuller treatment of these and related points, I refer to my "Pharisees, Sinners and Jesus," *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, chap. 3; also *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991) chap. 6. It should perhaps be noted that E. P. Sanders has not yet responded to my critique of his treatment of Jesus and "the sinners" in his *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985) chap. 6. In contrast, despite criticism on specific points, Sanders agrees with the main thrust of my earlier analysis of the Antioch incident (see below n. 15) in his "Jewish Association with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14," in *Studies in Paul and John In Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990) 170–88.

[15] See further my "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11–18)," *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, chap. 6.

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To be noted once again is the fact that, as in the case of Jesus, the accusation was being brought by Jews against fellow Jews. Although the language referred to non-Jews ("Gentile sinners"), the issue was still an intra-Jewish one—the issue of covenant loyalty, of Torah piety, of avoiding contamination by the "sinner." And since it involved disagreement between Jews on what was and what was not permissible in associating with Gentiles, the issue was in fact one of intra-Jewish factional dispute. The issue and language used were of a piece with similar language and polemic present in such as 1 Maccabees and *Psalms of Solomon*, where "sinner" can be used both of Gentiles as such and of other Jews who were regarded by the writers as apostates but who were actually other Jewish factions. The dispute at Antioch could carry such echoes of intra-Jewish polemic, precisely because it was a further example of the same kind of intra-Jewish polemic which characterized that period.

Finally here we should observe the likelihood that the same language of the group from James is probably echoed again in 2:17: "if in seeking to be justified in Christ we find that we too are 'sinners' . . . ." Evidently the James faction's insistence that the Gentile believers at Antioch were still to be categorized as "sinners" drew the corollary, obvious to all the Jewish factions represented, that those Jews who consorted with such "sinners" and thus conducted themselves in ways repugnant to Torah loyalists would find themselves regarded by the Jewish "righteous" as equally "sinners."[16] In which case, Paul points out, the Christ who accepted Gentile (sinners) by faith would have to be described as "a servant of sin"![17] Impossible!

In short, Paul's use of the term "sinners" in 2:15 and 17 is best explained as an echo of the language used by the group from James when they successfully persuaded Peter to withdraw and separate himself from the table fellowship of the Christian Gentiles in Antioch. And the term itself is clearly used with the same polemical thrust as in the intra-Jewish factional polemic of the time.

(b) *2:16.* A second fairly clear echo of intra-Jewish factional polemic is present in the phrase "works of the law." There is no need to recall in detail here how this phrase has traditionally been understood by Christian

[16] The point is taken by, e.g., E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Galatians* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1921) 125, 129; H. Feld, "'Christus Diener der Sünde': Zum Auslegung des Streites zwischen Petrus und Paulus," *TQ* 153 (1973) 126; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 176 n. 41; and J. Rohde, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (THKNT 9; Berlin: Evangelische Verlag, 1988) 113. Whereas J. Lambrecht ("The Line of Thought in Gal 2:14b–21," *NTS* 24 [1977–78] 493), F. F. Bruce (*Commentary on Galatians* [NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster, 1982] 140–41), and Suhl ("Galaterbrief," 3108–9) assume too hastily that the issue is simply one of justification by faith in its classic terms.

[17] The possibility that Paul and the Galatians were aware of the tradition of Jesus eating with "sinners" can by no means be excluded, especially in view of the other possible allusions to Jesus' self-accepted "servant" role in the same verse (cf. Mark 10:45 par.; Rom 15:2–3, 7–8).

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commentators as a description of human effort and achievement.[18] I have argued the point elsewhere, sufficiently I hope, that the phrase denoted for Paul rather the acts of obedience required by the law of all faithful Jews, all members of the people with whom God had made the covenant of Sinai—the self-understanding and obligation accepted by practicing Jews which E. P. Sanders encapsulated quite effectively in the phrase "covenantal nomism."[19]

In the immediate context here it is evident that the phrase had in view the obligations accepted by the group from James and assumed by them to be binding on all Jews—that is, in particular, the food laws and other traditions that gathered round the whole practice of table fellowship within a Jewish context. What Peter and the other Christian Jews in effect were affirming—that observance of such obligations ("works of the law") was a continuing necessity for them (hence their conduct in 2:12–13)—Paul now emphatically denies (2:16).[20] This is not to say, as I have been understood to say, that by "works of law" Paul meant only such obligations as the food laws (and circumcision and sabbath observance).[21] It is simply that the larger commitment and sense of obligation to live within the terms laid down by the law, to perform "works of the law," came to focus in particular test cases like circumcision and food laws (as here).[22]

[18] E.g., Betz, *Galatians*, 117: "any and all works as works-of-merit"; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990) 86: "merit-amassing observance of Torah"; D. Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 38: "social and cultural achievements . . . brought about by law—in principle, by any law."

[19] See my "The New Perspective on Paul" and "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal 3:10–14)," both with additional notes in *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, chaps. 7 and 8; also *Romans*, 153–55; *Partings*, 135–38; and below n. 22. The reference is to E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM, 1977) 75, 420, 544. See also R. Heiligenthal, "Soziologische Implikationen der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre im Galaterbrief am Beispiel der 'Werke des Gesetzes,'" *Kairos* 26 (1984) 38–53; J. Lambrecht, "Gesetzesverständnis bei Paulus," in *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament* (ed. K. Kertelge; Freiburg: Herder, 1986) 114–15; J. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1988; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 78, 82; G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 102–3, 114. In 1968 K. Kertelge was a lone voice in maintaining that "works of the law" were an expression of "Jewish consciousness of election" ("Zur Deutung des Rechtfertigungsbegriffs im Galaterbrief," *BZ* 12 [1968] 215–16; reprinted in his *Grundthemen paulinischer Theologie* [Freiburg: Herder, 1991] 115–16).

[20] However the syntax of 2:16 is construed, Paul's concern was evidently to move the argument from a position where "works of the law" could be insisted on (as at Antioch) to a position where faith and works would be seen as standing in antithesis. See also my *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 212; and "Once More" (below n. 22).

[21] As particularly by C. E. B. Cranfield, "'The Works of the Law' in the Epistle to the Romans," *JSNT* 43 (1991) 89–101; D. Moo, *Romans 1–8* (Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1991) 210–11, 214–15; F. Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 63.

[22] See now my "Yet Once More—The Works of the Law: A Response," *JSNT* 46 (1992) 99–117. Contemporary issues which function in the same way to bring to focus larger attitudes and perspectives include women's ordination, inerrancy, and speaking in tongues.

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Here however it is the factional overtones of the phrase which call for most attention. For it is now clear that the closest parallels to the Pauline phrase are to be found in the Qumran literature, in the phrase מעשי תורה, "deeds of Torah," and others similar to it. Presumably, as with "works of the law," the Qumran phrase denotes the obligations laid upon the Qumran covenanters by the Torah. What is significant for the present discussion, however, is that these phrases are actually used to denote the specific obligations laid on the covenanters by their membership of the (Qumran) covenant or, to be more precise, the interpretations put upon the Torah by the Qumran covenanters which marked them out in their distinctiveness from other Jews and Jewish factions. Thus it is by reference to his "deeds," his "deeds with regard to the law," his "observance of the law" as understood within the community, that the individual's membership of the covenant was tested (1QS 5:21, 23; 6:18). And it was precisely their "deeds of the Torah" (מעשי התורה) which marked out their community in its distinctiveness from outsiders and enemies (4QFlor = 4Q*174* 1:1–7). Most striking of all is the fact that the recently publicized 4QMMT, entitled מקצת מעשי התורה, "some of the deeds of the Torah," contains a series of distinctive halakic rulings.[23] "Deeds or works of the law," then, was evidently itself a factional phrase, embodying both the claim that the conduct therein called for was required by God and the denial that alternative conduct was acceptable to God; or, alternatively expressed, embodying the claim that the group's interpretation of the Torah at disputed points was the correct and only legitimate enactment of what the Torah laid down at these points.

But this is precisely where we find ourselves in the dispute between Paul and Peter, and behind him the James faction, at Antioch—a dispute over what the law actually required as essential for the Jewish sect of the Nazarene. There is no need to argue that Paul or the group from James were influenced by Qumran usage.[24] It is sufficient that Qumran usage expresses a similar attitude in similar circumstances of halakic dispute. Whether the phrase was more widely current need not be determined. Either way it remains significant that in just such a context of dispute over the extent and detail of Torah obligation binding on Christian Jews, Paul uses a phrase that was used elsewhere in the Judaism of the time in similar intra-Jewish factional dispute over points of halakah.

In short, here too we catch a distinct echo of the sort of intra-Jewish factional claims and counterclaims that evidently were a feature of this period

[23] The description was drawn primarily from L. H. Schiffman, "The Temple Scroll and the Systems of Jewish Law of the Second Temple Period," in *Temple Scroll Studies* (ed. G. J. Brooke; Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989) 245–50; but see now R. Eisenman and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1992) 182–200.

[24] The fact that Paul uses the phrase as self-evident in meaning suggests that it had not been peculiar to the Qumran covenanters.

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in Second Temple Judaism. What Paul characterizes by this phrase, in other words, is in effect a sectarian interpretation of the obligations laid by the law on members of the covenant people—the attempt to define, too narrowly in Paul's perspective, what membership of the seed of Abraham necessarily involved.

(c) *2:14.* The third and most interesting echo of intra-Jewish polemic in this section comes in the phrase "live like a Gentile"—Paul's actual words to Peter at the confrontation in Antioch: "If you, a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew . . . ." Two features have proved difficult for generations of commentators. The first is the present tense of the verb: Why does Paul speak as though Peter was still "living like a Gentile" when by that time Peter had withdrawn from Gentile company? The second is the force of the phrase: Does Paul imply that Peter had totally abandoned all characteristic and distinctive Jewish practices?

Some have attempted to explain the present tense by taking it literally as a reference to Peter's continuing conduct at the time Paul spoke to him, after he had abandoned mixed table fellowship. In particular, T. Zahn, R. Kieffer, and G. Howard have suggested that even after withdrawing from table fellowship Peter had continued to "live like a Gentile" in other matters.[25] But since the Jewish way of life was a total package in the eyes of conservative Christian Jews, such a compromise would have been most unlikely to satisfy the group from James. The characteristic Jewish perspective at this point is given by the quotation from Deut 27:26 in Gal 3:10 and was almost certainly shared by the Christian Jews from Jerusalem, if Matt 5:18–19 and Jas 2:10 are any guide.

The second puzzling feature, that Peter "was living like a Gentile," has been seen as a decisive rebuttal of any suggestion that prior to the coming of the James people, the table fellowship at Antioch had in fact shown respect for the principal Jewish scruples against, say, eating blood and pork. Against my own earlier thesis at this point the question can be fairly asked: How could even a modest degree of Torah observance of the food laws be described as "living like a Gentile"?[26] As D. R. Catchpole had put it earlier: "It would be quite impossible to describe existence under the (apostolic) Decree as living like a Gentile."[27]

The solution to both difficulties probably lies along the lines of the present thesis: that the language is the language of factional polemic, and that in

[25] Zahn, *Galater,* 118; R. Kieffer, *Foi et Justification à Antioche: Interprétation d'un conflit (Ga 2.14–21)* (Paris: Cerf, 1982) 33; G. Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia. A Study in Early Christian Theology* (SNTSMS 35; 2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) xxi–xxii.

[26] T. Holtz, "Der antiochenische Zwischenfall (Galater 2:11–14)," *NTS* 32 (1986) 351–52.

[27] D. R. Catchpole, "Paul, James and the Apostolic Decree," *NTS* 23 (1976–77) 441. P. C. Böttger gives up the attempt to understand the phrase in its context at this point (in relation to table fellowship) and attempts to find a solution most implausibly by reference to 1 Thess 4:5 ("Paulus und Petrus in Antiochien: Zum Verständnis von Galater 2.11–21," *NTS* 37 [1991] 80–81).

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using it Paul was again echoing what the group from James had said to Peter. The fact is that accusations by one group of Jews against other Jews, that the actions of the latter group were like those of the Gentiles, were not uncommon within intra-Jewish factional dispute. So the author(s) of *Jubilees* condemn(s) both the sons of Israel who failed to circumcise their sons as "making themselves like the Gentiles," and also those Jews who used a different calendar to calculate the feast days for "forgetting the feasts of the covenant and walking in the feasts of the gentiles, after their errors and after their ignorance" (15:33–34; 6:15). And the *Psalms of Solomon* condemn in even stronger terms their opponents (probably Sadducees): "Their lawless actions surpassed the gentiles before them"; "there was no sin they left undone in which they did not surpass the gentiles" (1:8; 8:13).[28]

None of this should occasion any surprise. As experience of religious sectarian infighting from all periods of history shows, feelings can run so high over particular test issues, that failure to conform to a sect's interpretation of disputed points can easily result in total and wholesale denunciation of those who hold the "false" interpretation. Indeed it is characteristic of sectarian polemic generally that when a group's boundaries are threatened, a wholly natural response is to attack those who pose the threat as beyond the pale, as polar opposities, with the aim thereby of reinforcing the group's own identity and boundaries. So, for example, the tendency of the conservative right at all times (whether political or theological) has been to characterize the whole spectrum of those who disagree with them as far to the left—in current polemics, "communists" and "liberals."

So here, the key to the most plausible solution to the phrase "live like a Gentile" probably lies in the recognition that this was *not* the language of objective description but, once again, the language of inter-Jewish factional dispute. To the traditionalists among the group from James, Peter's action in eating with Gentiles was tantamount to his living like a Gentile: in their perspective Peter had abandoned key distinctives which (in their perspective) should continue to mark out the Jew from the Gentile. In other words, when Paul says "If you, a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew," he was probably deliberately picking up the actual words used by the James group in their rebuke of Peter, "How can you, Peter, a Jew, live like a Gentile?"

We may most simply conclude by reading Gal 2:11–17 with the polemical features italicized and the echoes of the language of the James group in bold type:

> But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood *condemned*. For before certain individuals came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he gradually drew back and *separated himself, fearing* those of the circumcision. And the other Jews also

[28] We may compare CD 12:8–11 and 13:14–16, where commerce with "the sons of the Pit" is almost as tightly controlled as commerce with Gentiles.

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joined with him in *playing the hypocrite,* so that even Barnabas was carried away with *their hypocrisy.* But when I saw that they were *not walking straight* towards the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before everyone "If '**you being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew,**' how is it that you *compel* the Gentiles to judaize?" We are "**Jews by nature**" and not "**Gentile sinners,**" knowing that no human being is justified by *works of the law* but only through faith in Jesus Christ, so we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by *works of the law,* since by *works of the law* shall no flesh be justified. But if in seeking to be justified in Christ we find that we too are "**sinners,**" is then Christ a servant of sin? Surely not.

II. Galatians 4:10

Gal 2:11–17 provides the fullest echoes of intra-Jewish factional polemic. But two other passages are worthy of note in the same connection. The first is 4:10—Paul's rebuke to the Galatians for "observing days and months and special times and years." Here too insufficient weight has been given to two factors: that Paul clearly has particularly Jewish festivals in mind; and that disagreements regarding the proper observance of such festivals was a regular feature of intra-Jewish factional dispute. The claims can be easily documented.

By "days" Paul would no doubt mean particularly the sabbath, but also other special days like the Day of Atonement. The sabbath was another of the Jewish laws that was seen to mark out Israel as distinctive and to function as a boundary between Jew and Gentile (e.g., Exod 31:16–17; Deut 5:15; Isa 56:6). Indeed, it was probably one of the main "works of the law" which Paul presumably had had in mind earlier (2:16). Already before the Maccabean crisis, at least from Josephus's first-century CE perspective, "violating the sabbath" ranked with "eating unclean food" as the two chief marks of covenant disloyalty (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.8.7 §346). And the increasingly elaborate halakah attested in *Jubilees* (2:17–33; 50:6–13), in the *Damascus Document* (CD 10:14–11:18) and in the Gospels (Mark 2:23–3:5 par.), indicates the importance of the sabbath as a test of covenant righteousness within the factionalism of late Second Temple Judaism.[29]

"Months" almost certainly refers to the new moon festival which was part of the Jewish cult (Num 10:10; 28:11; 2 Kgs 4:23; Ps 81:3; Ezek 46:3, 6–7),[30] as the parallel with Col 2:16 certainly confirms. Since the moon was one of the "elemental forces" (understood to include the planets, 4:3), a parallel between pagan religious practice[31] at this point and nomistic covenantalism could readily be drawn.[32] The "special times" were probably the "appointed

[29] See further, e.g., my *Romans,* 805–6.

[30] See G. Delling, μήν, *TDNT* 4. 639–41.

[31] Ibid., 638–39.

[32] See also Bruce, *Galatians,* 204.

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feasts" (regularly linked with "sabbaths and new moons" in 1 Chr 23:31; 2 Chr 2:4; 31:3; Neh 10:33; Isa 1:13–14; Hos 2:11), that is, the three pilgrim festivals in particular, presumably called "(special) times" or "festal seasons," from the regular usage in the Pentateuch (Exod 13:10; 23:14, 17; 34:23–24; Lev 23:4; Num 9:3). Since the degree to which diaspora Judaism observed such feasts is still disputed (almost no one could have made the three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem), this text provides a valuable indication that some sort of observance was maintained in the diaspora (cf. Col 2:16). More puzzling is the reference of the final item on the list—"years." The sabbatical year of Lev 25:1–7 is unlikely: it would hardly seem to be relevant outside Palestine; though it could possibly have had relevance as part of sectarian dispute (cf. 1QS 10:6–8). But the analogy of "months" for new moon festivals suggests that annual festivals were in mind, presumably (on the analogy of "month" denoting "first of the month") the disputed new year festival (cf. 1QS 10:6).[33]

Here again it must be noted that, as with the sabbath, the issue of the right observance of these feasts was a matter of sectarian dispute within the Judaism of the period. This was principally because the calendar by which the dates of these feasts were reckoned (solar or lunar) was not agreed on by all parties. Hence the polemical denunciation already noted above: to observe a feast on the wrong date was *not* to observe the feast, but to "forget the feasts of the covenant and walk in the feasts of the gentiles, after their errors and after their ignorance" (*Jub.* 6:32–35), to commit "sin like the sinners" (*1 Enoch* 82:4–7; see also 1QS 1:14–15; CD 3:14–15). That such disagreement lies behind the present passage is suggested by such parallels as *Jub.* 2:9 ("The Lord set the sun [solar calendar] as a great sign upon the earth for days, sabbaths, months, feast (days), years . . . and for all the (appointed) times of the years") and *1 Enoch* 82:7, 9 ("True is the matter of the exact computation of that which has been recorded . . . concerning the luminaries, the months, the festivals, the years and the days. . . . These are the orders of the stars which set in their places seasons, festivals and months").[34] In view of the *1 Enoch* passage, it is probably also significant that the verb used ("observe") would usually have the force of "watch closely, observe carefully, scrupulously observe,"[35] so that Paul may very well have chosen it in order to evoke the careful calculations of feast dates ("calendar piety")[36] which such disputes entailed.[37] Of particular relevance for us here is the evident integration of "Torah piety" and "calendar piety"

[33] See further, e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 234; Rohde, *Galater*, 181–82; J. Morgenstern, "New Year," *IDB* 3. 544–46; Schürer, *History*, 3.2 (1987) index "New Year."

[34] See further H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (KEK; 4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1965) 204–5; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 298–301.

[35] J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (1865; 10th ed. 1890; London: Macmillan) 172; BAGD *s.v.* παρατηρέω; Schlier, *Galater*, 203 n. 3.

[36] Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 301.

[37] Josephus, however, also uses it for observance of sabbath and festival days (*Ant.* 3.5.5 §91; 11.6.13 §294; 14.10.25 §264).

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achieved within such Jewish groups, and the importance of the heavenly bodies in determining the right dates for such Torah observances (Josephus could even claim that the Essenes prayed to the sun [*J.W.* 2.8.5 §128). Against such a background Paul's association of the Torah with "the elemental forces of the world" becomes an inviting and plausible rejoinder on his part: "under the law" = too dependent on the movements of the heavenly bodies.

Here too, then, as in 2:14–15, we probably have to allow for an element of Jewish factionalism to have been in play in the Galatian crisis.[38] In particular, the proper observance in the diaspora of a festival whose correct timing depended on the actual sighting of the new moon[39] was likely to add a further twist to the disputes reflected in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* (above), even though tradition has it that the responsibility for fixing such dates during the final decades of the Second Temple rested with the Sanhedrin (*m. Roš Haš.* 2:5–3:1). In other words, Paul was not necessarily confronting a uniform Jewish position on such matters. His was a further alternative (observance not necessary) *within* the spectrum of Jewish opinion, as Paul would have insisted, itself part of the factionalism that marred the latter decades of Second Temple Judaism.

If these insights to the climax of Paul's line of argument in 3:19–4:11 are sound, then they also help explain Paul's line of argument through the section. As already indicated, Paul was arguing in effect that for the Gentile Christians in Galatia to put themselves "under the law" was tantamount to putting themselves back in their old (Gentile) position of slavery under the elemental forces (4:9). In other words, Paul was doing what other Jewish factions of the time did: he was accusing those who disagreed with his understanding of God's purpose and God's law of "living like Gentiles," that is, in this case, of reverting to their old Gentile status (see above on 2:14).

This in turn enables us to see more clearly the force of Paul's earlier argument in 3:19ff. For there he was arguing in effect that the law functioned in relation to Israel in the role of a heavenly power: Israel was "under the law," "under a slave custodian," "under (slave) stewards."[40] In Paul's perspective that was essentially a positive role (3:19, 23, 24; 4:1–2).[41] His criticism, however, was that Israel had overemphasized that role: clinging to it when they ought to have been maturing to the fuller inheritance of heirs (4:1–7) and in effect treating the law as a kind of guardian angel which defended and kept Israel separate from the other nations. Here too, it would appear, Paul was taking up a traditional Jewish theologoumenon and turning it to his own account

[38] See Schlier, *Galater*, 205–7; H. Riesenfeld, (παρα)τηρέω, *TDNT* 8. 148; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 301–2; the possibility is dismissed too quickly by Bruce (*Galatians*, 205).

[39] T. C. G. Thornton, "Jewish New Moon Festivals, Galatians 4:3–11 and Colossians 2:16," *JTS* 40 (1989) 97–100.

[40] D. B. Martin notes that in the Roman Empire as a whole at this time the οἰκονόμοι were usually of servile origin (*Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990] 15–17).

[41] See further my *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 262 nn. 41, 42.

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in polemical fashion. Israel was accustomed to the thought that Yahweh had appointed angels over the *other* nations but had kept Israel for himself (Deut 32:8–9; Sir 14:17; *Jub.* 15:31–32; *1 Enoch* 20:5; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 11:7–8). Paul's argument is to the effect that Israel's overevaluation of the law had interposed the law between God and Israel and, far from distinguishing Israel from the other nations, had simply made Israel like the other nations, as being under a heavenly power which limited and prevented its entering into the full maturity of its sonship to both Abraham and God.[42]

However much individual points in the above may be open to debate, the basic point seems to be sound enough: that the polemical character of the argument of 3:19–4:11, particularly in its climax in 4:10, reflects typical elements of the intra-Jewish factional disputes of the period and is itself of a piece with such dispute.

III. Galatians 4:17

The other passage on which light can be shed by recognizing the echoes of factional polemic is 4:17: "They [the other missionaries opposed to Paul] are zealous over you for no good purpose, but wish to shut you out, in order that you might be zealous over them." The puzzle comes with the twice-repeated verb—ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς . . . ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε. Bauer offers the meanings "strive, desire, exert oneself earnestly," and with a personal object, "be deeply concerned about, court someone's favour," or negatively, "be filled with jealousy or envy towards someone," and modern translations follow this lead.[43] But the negative tone which the verb conveys in reference to the Torah loyalists in Galatia, together with the use of the corresponding noun ("zealot") in 1:14 to indicate the characteristic attitude of the Torah loyalist, which Paul himself had once embraced, suggests the strong possibility that Paul had in mind the same attitude here. We may also note the parallel of Rom 10:2, with a similar qualification:

> Gal 4:17: "They are zealous over you for no good purpose. . . ."
> Rom 10:2: "They have a zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge."

It may even be that the language had been used by the other missionaries themselves: in Acts 21:20 "zealot" is used by James in effect in self-definition, just as Paul had used it in self-definition in Gal 1:14.

In other words, Paul may well have had in view the kind of zeal that characterized the unique relation Israel claimed to exist between Yahweh and his people—Israel's zeal for Yahweh corresponding to Yahweh's own zeal

[42] For fuller treatment of this much-disputed section I must refer to my forthcoming commentary on Galatians (Black NT Commentary; London: Black, 1993).

[43] BAGD *s.v.*, ζηλόω. I refer particularly to RSV/NRSV, NEB/REB, NJB, NIV.

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(jealousy) in regard to Israel (Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15)—in each case denoting a burning desire to preserve the uniqueness of that relationship. In Jewish tradition such zeal for God was best exemplified by Simeon and Levi (Genesis 34; Jdt 9:2–4; *Jub.* 30:5–20), by Phinehas (Num 25:6–13; Sir 45:23–24; 1 Macc 2:54; 4 Macc. 18:12), by Elijah (1 Kgs 19:10, 14, 40; Sir 48:2; 1 Macc 2:58), and by Mattathias, the father of the Maccabean rebellion (1 Macc 2:19–27; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.6.2 §§270–71). The Maccabean rebels prized highly this "zeal for the law" and themselves epitomized it (1 Macc 2:26, 27, 50, 58; 2 Macc 4:2), as had Paul in his persecution of "the church of God" (Gal 1:13–14; Phil 3:6). The common denominator in each case was unyielding refusal to allow Israel's distinctiveness as Yahweh's alone to be compromised, whether by intermarriage, which breached Israel's ethnic identity, or by syncretistic influences, which diluted Israel's dedication to Yahweh alone and the purity of the cult. It was evidently such fear of the compromises involved in the spread of the Nazarene teaching to Gentiles that had provoked Paul's zealot-inspired attempt to stamp out the Hellenist wing of the new sect.

The suggestion is close to hand, then, that Paul saw the other missionaries in Galatia as motivated by the same zealotlike concerns to maintain and defend Jewish covenant prerogatives.[44] The claim made for and by Galatian Gentiles to full participation in the covenant of Israel, without regard for the distinctive "works of the law," would be precisely the challenge likely to arouse a Phinehas-like zeal—a challenge met, in the case of the other missionaries, by the attempt to eliminate such a breach of covenant boundaries by fully incorporating the Gentile converts in question.[45] The fact that an intransitive verb is being used transitively ("to be zealous in relation to") would cause Paul's readers no problem.[46]

The case, however, does not depend on the occurrence of the motif of "zeal" alone, and indeed would not be very strong if that was all there was to it, since other possible meanings of the verb make more immediate sense. But the case becomes immeasurably stronger as soon as the other clause of the verse is brought into consideration—"they wish to shut you out." At first the objective seems surprising: Was the aim of the other missionaries not precisely the reverse—to draw the Galatians more fully *into* the people of Israel through circumcision? The key, however, is the stated objective: "to shut out." Most ignore this meaning or find it too difficult and opt instead for the sense "exclude you (from Paul and other Gentile Christians),"[47] or "that you should

[44] The possibility is again dismissed too quickly by Bruce (*Galatians*, 211).

[45] As A. Oepke notes, the description rules out the hypothesis that the leaders of the opposition to Paul were Gentiles (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* [THKNT 9; 2d ed.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlag, 1957] 107).

[46] See BDF §148.

[47] So NJB, NIV, and, e.g., H. Lietzmann, *An die Galater* (HNT 10; 3d ed. 1932; 4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 1971) 29; Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 311; R. Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 200; Rohde, *Galater*, 188; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 194.

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exclude Paul."[48] But that involves a less natural use of the metaphor or a more forced sense for the Greek.[49] For the metaphor is clearly that of being shut out or excluded, as from a city or an alliance,[50] and is in fact complementary to that used in 3:23: the law that "watched over, guarded (the city)" was the law that shut out the aliens.

The metaphor is thus very well suited to describe the typical attitude of the Jewish zealot—that is, the burning desire to defend Israel's distinctiveness by drawing the boundary line sharply and clearly between the people of the covenant so as to exclude those not belonging to Israel; or, in particular, of the Jewish Christian zealot—to exclude all Gentiles other than proselytes from Christ, the Jewish Messiah, and from the eschatological community of his people.[51] It was in fact another way of describing the consequence of the action of Peter and the others at Antioch: by withdrawing from table fellowship they effectively excluded the Christian Gentiles from the one covenant community (2:11–14). In the Galatian churches, then, the tactic of the other missionaries had clearly been to draw again these firm boundaries as laid down by the Torah and to point out the (to them) inevitable corollary: that the Gentile converts were still outside them.

Their hope, however, was not so negative, as in the classic models of such "zeal"; they were missionaries! Their intention was to raise the barriers between Jew and Gentile "in order that you might be zealous over them." That is to say, by demonstrating what membership of the covenant people actually involved ("the works of the law"), they hoped to incite a godly desire for that membership in those whose God-fearing had already shown the seriousness of their wish to be numbered among Abraham's heirs. They hoped to convert the Galatians not simply to Judaism but to Judaism as they understood it. By showing "zeal for the covenant" themselves, they hoped to spark off an equivalent zeal among the Galatians.[52] Or, more precisely, by showing such zeal with regard to the Galatians, their hope was that the Galatians would come to show a similar zeal with regard to them—so that, apart from anything else, each could share fully in the other's table fellowship without compromising the other and in a mutually sustaining way. This reading gives more weight to Paul's language and recognizes greater point in his charges than most of the current alternatives.

[48] See Betz, *Galatians*, 230–31.

[49] As Burton notes (*Galatians*, 246).

[50] LSJ *s.v.* ἐκκλείω 2; so RSV/NRSV and NEB.

[51] See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 177; M.-J. Lagrange, *Épître aux Galates* (EBib; 3d ed.; Paris: Gabalda, 1926) 116; P. Bonnard, L'Épître de saint Paul aux Galates (CNT 9; Neuchâtel: Delachaux, 1953) 94; Schlier, *Galater*, 212–13; J. L. Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," *SJT* 38 (1985) 316. J. Bligh suggests an allusion to the imagery of the bridal feast as in Matt 25:10–12 (*Galatians* [London: St Paul, 1969] 388 n. 27).

[52] Since converts to a religion or movement often put themselves among its most committed and even extreme members, the strategy and hope of the other missionaries were quite realistic.

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In short, Paul's use of the language of "zeal" here, and his description of the other missionaries' zeal as aimed at "excluding" the Galatian believers strongly suggests the strange but powerful mixture of dedication and distrust which is so often a feature of out-and-out loyalists for their cause, and which was evidently a feature of at least some of the factions within Second Temple Judaism. The debate itself, between two groups of Christian Jews (Paul and the other missionaries), was itself part of the intra-Jewish factional arguments on what Israel's unique relation with God meant for relations with non-Jews in particular.

IV. Conclusions

The picture, then, is about as clear as anything can be in exegesis. Particularly in Gal 2:11–17, where Paul harks back to the incident at Antioch, but at other points too, Paul's argument and appeal reflect the concerns and language of intra-Jewish polemic. At each point the basic concern was the same: a Jewish fear lest the purity of Israel's relationship with God be compromised or adulterated—especially by eating with Gentiles and failure to observe the designated feasts. At each point the response (whether by the group from James or the other missionaries in Galatia) was the same: to reinforce the boundaries between Jew and Gentile, whether by withdrawal from table fellowship with "Gentile sinners," or by insistence that Gentile converts to the Jesus movement came fully "under the law," or by provoking would-be participants in the heritage of Abraham to greater "zeal" by reinforcing the barriers of exclusion.

To be noted is the fact that these fierce debates were not Jewish versus Christian arguments. They were between Jews, Christian Jews to be sure, but Jews nonetheless—including the disputes that feature in the letter to the Galatians itself, where the real target of Paul's polemic is the other (Jewish) missionaries. And the issues are not (yet) Jewish versus Christian issues. They are about what it means to be a practicing Jew, what it means to be an heir of Abraham, what differences the coming of Messiah Jesus has made for Israel's self-understanding and for Jewish relations with Gentiles. These "echoes of intra-Jewish polemic" are a clear indication of a series of issues still thoroughly within the spectrum of Second Temple Judaism, of an awareness that what was at stake was in fact the character and continuity of God's choice of and purpose for Israel.

Of course, the whole question requires more extensive analysis than is possible or appropriate here. In particular, the debate with J. L. Martyn needs to be pursued.[53] For he sees such a line of exegesis as in effect a surrender

[53] See, e.g., his "Events in Galatia," in *Pauline Theology: Volume I, Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (ed. J. M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 160–79. For fuller interaction with Martyn, see my forthcoming *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

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to the theology of the other missionaries (whom he calls "the Teachers"), whereas the cross has meant for Paul a quantum shift into a wholly new and different perspective (especially 6:14–15). Martyn does indeed give cause for pause at several points (especially Paul's use of "covenant" theology in Galatians), and it is also true that Paul's argument against maintaining the old boundaries between Jew and Gentile is radically at odds with the attempts of his fellow Christian Jews to maintain them. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the whole dispute is entirely in Jewish terms. Moreover, it is clear from chaps. 3–4 that the desirability and necessity of sharing in sonship to Abraham and in the blessing of Abraham (3:6–14, 29) were common ground for all parties to the Galatian controversy (whoever introduced the specific topic in the first place). And our findings above do indicate a movement still in process of coming to terms with itself regarding its identity as heirs of the promises to Abraham, where the differences between Christian Jews were of a piece with and the extension of polemical disputes elsewhere among the factions of Second Temple Judaism.

It will have been no accident, then, that Paul concludes this, his most sustained polemical letter, with a blessing on "the Israel of God" (6:16), itself a final polemical shot summing up the claim (chaps. 3–4) that the Israel of covenant promise is the Israel defined by that promise as including Gentiles as well as Jews.[54] The "echoes of intra-Jewish polemic in Paul's letter to the Galatians" thus confirm that the fiercest debates within first-generation Christianity were among (Christian) Jews conscious of the traditional boundaries marking off Jew from Gentile, over the question of whether or to what extent these boundaries should still be maintained.

[54] See Schlier, *Galater,* 283; Longenecker, *Galatians,* 298–99.

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