

tion between “faith” and “faithfulness.” They are two sides of the same coin. One may therefore speak of either with the full assurance that the other exists.

10 For as many as are of the works of the Torah are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE TORAH, TO PERFORM THEM.”

The abrupt shift in emphasis in this verse indicates that Paul has anticipated the polemic of the Influencers and hastens to address it. Paul had just linked the faith of Abraham with the blessing to the nations, reasoning that they too would receive this blessing by faith even as Abraham did. The Influencers would have been quick, however, to show from the same Genesis narrative that Abraham was blessed *because* he was obedient (Gen 22:15ff). The question, then, was the place of the Torah in the whole matter of blessing from God. Did obedience to Torah (in this case, accepting circumcision as a proselyte and all that came with this act) precede God’s blessing of righteousness, or did God’s blessing of righteousness come first, effecting a change of heart that resulted in obedience?

Excursus: The Works of the Torah

This is now the sixth time we have seen the phrase “works of the Torah” (ἔργων νόμου, 2:16(3x); 3:2,5,10) and we should stop to investigate it more closely. One of the difficulties we have when encountering the word “Torah” (usually translated “Law” because of the Greek word νόμος, *nomos*) in the Apostolic Scriptures is that we wrest its meaning away from the 1st Century context in which its meaning is derived. It is clear that in the 1st Century the Oral Torah (the rulings of the Sages that had taken on *halachic* authority) had found its place along side of the Written Torah. In some cases it was viewed as secondary to the Written Torah, but in practical measures it was received as equal or even superior. The prevailing view was that the Oral Torah gave the proper manner in which the Written Torah was to be obeyed. We must remember, then, that when we encounter the word “Law” (νόμος, *nomos*) in the Apostolic Scriptures, we can not simply presume that the Books of Moses are its referent. Such a monolithic approach to the word ignores the historical setting. We must, in every case, at least give way to the possibility that Written and Oral Torah are viewed as a unified whole (to one degree or another) in the use of the word “Law.”³³

This is particularly true with the phrase “works of the Law” or “works of the Torah.” Until the discovery of the text from the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QMMT), we had no extra biblical instances in which the phrase “works of the Law” or “works of the Torah” was used. Now that this Qumran document has been discovered, we have another source to consider, and another witness as to what Paul might have meant when he spoke of “works of the Torah.”

The document itself has been titled “*Maseket ma’asei haTorah*,” “some of the works of the Torah.” Because of its fragmentary nature, there is no complete consensus on who the author and recipients were. Stegeman³⁴ believes it was written by the Teacher of Righteousness, the Qumran leader, to the High Priest in Jerusalem, and that the “homily” is a rebuke for the lack of Torah obser-

33 See above, p. 92, n. 56.

34 Hartmut Stegeman, *The Library of Qumran* (Brill/Eerdmans, 1998), 104ff.

vance by the Jerusalem Temple. Others have suggested that the document represents a schism within the Qumran society itself, with one faction rebuking the other for failure to observe Torah in accordance with the sect's *halachah*. Whatever the case, the general thrust of the document seems clear: certain matters of *halachah* and Torah-observance were being either neglected or disregarded by some, and as a result they were in danger of the curses of the covenant and the judgment of the final day. However, if they were to accept the *halachic* understanding of the Torah issues which are raised in the text, and begin to practice them, then it would be "reckoned to them as righteousness" and all would be well.

These are some of our pronouncements [concerning the law of Go] d. Specifically, s[ome of pronouncements concerning] 5 (B2) works of the law that w[e have determined ... and al]l of them concern [defiling mixtures] 6 (B3) and the purity of [the sanctuary³⁵ And it will be reckoned to you as righteousness, in that you have done what is right and good before Him, to your own benefit*³⁶

What were the issues which 4QMMT raised? Here is a topical list:

1. Ban on offerings using Gentile grain
2. Ban on sin offerings boiled in Gentile or copper (?) vessels
3. Ban on sacrifices by Gentiles
4. Ban on eating the peace offering on the 4th day (Lev 7:11-18)
5. Rulings on the purity of those who prepare the red heifer
6. Ban on bringing skins of cattle and sheep into the Temple
7. Ruling on skins and bones of unclean animals
8. Ban on Temple entrance after contact with skins of a carcass
9. Ruling on who is fit to eat the holy gifts
10. Ruling on what constitutes "outside the camp" for the place of sacrifice
11. Ruling on the sacrifice of pregnant animals
12. Ruling on eating the fetus after a pregnant animal is sacrificed
13. Ban on the inclusion of the unfit into the congregation of Israel
14. Ban on the entrance of the blind into the Temple
15. Ban on the entrance of the deaf into the Temple
16. Ruling on poured liquids and how they might contract impurity
17. Ban on dogs in the Temple
18. Ruling on fruit trees as pertains to first fruits
19. Ruling on cleansing of lepers; unintentional/intentional sins
20. Any part of a bone constitutes corpse impurity
21. Offspring of unlawful marriages still produces legitimate children
22. Ruling on crossbreeding animals which are clean
23. Ruling on intermarriage of priest with the people.

Obviously, this list contains matters taught directly in the Written Torah. But there are a significant number of issues which are clearly sectarian, suggesting that the Qumran interpretation and it alone is the proper *halachah*. What is more, if the recipients of the admonition expect to be counted

35 4Q398 f14_17ii:3, translation from Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg, Jr. and Edward M. Cook, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New English Translation* (HarperCollins, 1996).

36 4Q398 f14_17ii:7 (C31), translation, *Ibid.*

as righteous, they will adhere to the *halachah* as laid down by the Qumran Teacher. Furthermore, since the Qumran society considered itself the community of the righteous, it is also clear that for one to enter the Yachad (community), he would have to prove himself to have both received these teachings and practiced them (where possible).

The fact that both the phrases (“works of the Torah” and “counted as righteousness”) are found in this document is incredibly important for understanding the same phrases in Paul. What we now see is that the phrase “works of the Law/Torah” was used in Paul’s day to refer to specific sets of rules or *halachah* which a given group required in terms of its self-definition. Simply put, such a list of “works of the Torah” constituted the entrance requirements into the group. Since the group would no doubt consider its own interpretations of the Written Torah to be the correct interpretation, they would also have held that only those who adhere to their *halachah* would actually be obeying the Torah and living righteously. “Works of the Torah,” then, refers to *halachah* required for entrance into the covenant community (as envisioned by each sect), not personal obedience to God’s word. And since covenant membership was considered one and the same with the status of “righteous,” it is not difficult to understand how adhering to a given set of *halachot* to gain membership in the community was one-and-the-same to being reckoned as righteous.

----- End of the Excursus -----

For the Influencers, the proselyte ritual (circumcision) was their “works of the Torah.” It was necessary for the Gentile believers to become proselytes in order to enter the covenant community, something in turn which was necessary to gain the status of “righteous.”

Paul, then, anticipating their argument that even Abraham was obedient to the commandment of circumcision for which he was reckoned as righteous, directly confronts their position by quoting Deuteronomy 27:26.

In terms of how the section is structured, it would appear that Paul is making a direct contrast to his former statement of blessing. Those who participate in the same faith that Abraham had are likewise blessed as he was blessed. In contrast, those who are of the works of the Torah are under a curse. We should not forget that the influencers’ “good news” is not “faith in Yeshua plus Torah,” but that unless the Galatians would become proselytes, they were not covenant members, that is, were under God’s wrath. Those who were insisting that conversion to their Judaism was necessary for salvation had rejected the idea that faith in the Messiah was all that one needed to be reckoned righteous as a member of God’s covenant.

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MT	Lxx	Paul
<p>אָרוּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִקְיָם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם</p> <p>Cursed is he who does not establish the words of this Torah to do them.</p>	<p>ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτούς</p> <p>Cursed is every man who does not abide in all of the words of this Law to do them.</p>	<p>ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.</p> <p>Cursed is everyone who does not remain in everything that is written in the book of the Law to do them.</p>

In the ears of the Influencers (and those they represented), the boldness of Paul's statement must have been shocking. Granted, he had just finished speaking about "blessing," so to continue on about "curses" might seem appropriate. And for any Jewish audience, "blessings and curses" would send one's mind immediately to the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy and the covenant enactment there. But what would have sounded brash and bold was the linking together of those who "relied on the works of the Torah" with those who stood ready to "be cursed." Establishing the words of the Torah by doing them (as Deuteronomy 27:26 commands) was no doubt the perspective of those who were preaching the "works of the Torah." From their perspective it was the others who were in danger of God's covenant judgment and wrath, not them.

Most Christian commentators have interpreted this section based upon their assumption that by the "works of the Torah" Paul means those who attempt to find their own righteousness through keeping the Torah. Paul therefore quotes Deut 27:26 to show that it is impossible to keep all of the Torah, and that to fail to do just that renders a person under the Torah's curse. A further assumption by the typical commentators is that the Torah required perfect and continual obedience in order to escape its curse, something humanly impossible. Therefore, no matter how zealous a person may be, since they fail to abide by every word of the Torah perfectly, they are doomed to receive the curses.

This standard interpretation has manifold problems. First is that such a reading of Deuteronomy simply cannot be sustained. The book is written with the perspective that God intends Israel to obey His Torah, and that she is able to obey it. Paul is quite aware of Deuteronomy 30:11ff (he quotes it in Romans 10):

For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

No one in Paul's day believed that anyone could live out Torah perfectly, and no teacher would have required such a thing. To "abide" in the things of the Torah meant living within the provisions of the Torah, including its provisions for what a person was to do when he or she sinned (i.e., transgressed the Torah). As Dunn comments:

That Judaism, against which Paul here reacts, called for an impossible perfection is not part of the context of the argument at this point and should not be read into it.³⁷

What, then, is Paul's point and the basis of his argument? I would suggest that emphasis should be placed upon the manner in which Paul describes the Influencers as "those who are of the works of the Torah." The phrase "of the works of the Torah" is literally "out from the works of the Torah." That is, they find their covenant status to be based upon the exclu-

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³⁷ Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 171.

sive position which Israel enjoys in the covenant, a position offered to the Gentile Galatians through obeying their *halachah*, that is, by becoming a proselyte. As such, the Influencers (and the Galatians, if they were to follow them) would be relying upon “the flesh” (ethnic status) as a means of being reckoned righteous before God. Paul knows from his own experience that such a position may render one blameless when judged against the *halachah* of the Sages, but when standing before the Almighty, the truth would be made known. For Paul, though he could confess his life before faith in Yeshua to be “blameless” as pertaining to the Torah (Phil 3:6), he realized after he experienced genuine faith that he, in fact, was not blameless; that his hatred against the Gentile believers of The Way was a blatant disregard and breach of the Torah (which enjoins mercy and hospitality toward the foreigner), and that in reality, the Oral Torah of the Sages for which he was no doubt doubly zealous, had actually set aside the Torah of God, just as Yeshua had taught (Mark 7:9): “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.” It was not as though Paul or the Influencers were suggesting that complete and perfect obedience to the Torah was required or even could be attained. Nor were they teaching that failure to maintain a supposed “perfect record” in terms of obedience to the Torah would result in divine curses. Rather, what Paul had come to see was that the teaching “Israel is all righteous” had led to a dependence upon man’s traditions at the expense of God’s Torah. As such, to deny that Yeshua alone was the way to the Father (John 14:6) left a person doomed to a life of deception, that he was actually obeying the Torah when in fact he was not. Only faith and the Spirit Who came to those with faith could open one’s eyes to see the Torah as God intended it to be seen, and to live it out in humble obedience to God.

Paul knew all too well that the life of Torah prescribed by the Influencers was a life of pseudo-obedience. The cup could be well polished on the outside, but the heart could be full of filth. If the Galatians were to succumb to the theology that their conferred status of “Israelite” had won them righteousness, then they would also be relying upon salvation through their status rather than salvation through faith in Yeshua. As such, they would prove themselves to be without faith, and likewise unable to live in obedience to the Torah. What is more, since the Torah everywhere points to Messiah and enjoins one to cast himself in faith upon Him as did Abraham of old, to deny Him is to deny the very goal of the Torah. How could one claim to live according to the Torah and deny its essential message? Those who deny Him, regardless of how well they may claim to live out the precepts of the Torah, will one day stand before the Judge and have the reality of their lives revealed. And when they do, they will be receiving not the blessings of the covenant but the curses.

Here, then, was the crux issue: were the Galatians going to accept the Influencers’ standard for righteousness (covenant status based upon being an Israelite) or God’s standards? Regardless of how persuasive the Influencers were, with their arguments based upon a long-standing teaching of the Sages, their message was wrong because it disregarded the Messiah. And apart from the Messiah and the Spirit Who is given to those who are His, the Torah would remain letters on stone, followed by the traditions of men, and therefore would fail to bring about genuine righteousness. As such, the curses prescribed in the Torah for those who disregard its precepts would be enacted in justice. If the salvation offered by God, pointed to in the Torah, and realized in Messiah is disregarded, one should expect the curses, not the blessings. Paul is not degrading the Torah for having curses! Rather, when God enacts the curses of the

Torah upon those who disregard it, He is acting in faithfulness to His word. But the only possible hope for actually living according to the Torah is to be led by the Spirit of God: “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” And only those who are “in Messiah” have the Spirit.

Paul’s quote of Deuteronomy 27:26 is neither directly from the Lxx nor a close translation of the Hebrew. It appears that Paul may be paraphrasing the Lxx or quoting it in a general way. While he uses slightly different terms, the meaning is nonetheless the same. In the larger context of Deuteronomy, the statement that one must abide by all the words of the Torah is an emphasis upon the unity of the Torah. Those who are truly covenant members are not allowed to “pick and choose” the statutes and ordinances which they want to obey. The Torah comes to the covenant members as a whole, and they must accept it as a whole if they are to prove themselves to be covenant members. Such a full acceptance of the covenant will also result in the acceptance of the Messiah. This is important to Paul because from his perspective, the Messiah (and thus, Yeshua) was the central aspect of the Torah. To fail to be faithful to Him was a clear breach of the Torah which could only result in cursing, not blessing. That is because faith in the Promised One of the Torah is itself the avenue by which one is able to obey. Dunn’s comments are worth noting:

What the covenant law demanded, in Paul’s view, is the obedience which expresses such faith (Rom 1.5), the love which is the outworking of such faith (Gal 5.6), not requirements of the law understood and practiced in such a way as to deny the sufficiency of the very faith on which the covenant was based.³⁸

Indeed, the Torah consistently enjoins upon Israel her careful welcome of the Gentiles, not their exclusion. If the Gentiles were chosen by God to be covenant members as the promise to Abraham clearly indicated, then to restrict their involvement on the basis of man-made rituals (that of the proselyte ceremony) was contrary to Torah. This Paul proves by quoting Habakkuk 2:4—

11 Now that no one is justified by the Torah before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

Habakkuk 2:4 formed a central principle in Paul’s theology: he quotes it also in Romans 1:17. Since Abraham was declared righteous (“justified”) because he believed in God, the statement of the prophet only confirms what Moses had written. One did not stand righteous before God based upon his inclusion in Israel but by his faith in God, and thus in God’s Messiah. The question of whether “by faith” should attach to the subject (“the righteous by faith”) or the verb (“shall live by faith”) is actually moot in this context, for Paul agrees to both. A person is declared righteous on the basis of faith, because genuine faith always leads to godly living, that is, living righteously. God declares a person who believes as righteous, because He will inevitably make him righteous: what He has begun He indeed will finish (Phil 1:6).

So obvious is this in Paul’s understanding that he (either rhetorically or

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³⁸ Dunn, *Galatians*, p. 173.

ironically) presents it as an indisputable axiom which is likewise evident ($\delta\eta\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, *delos*) in the minds of the Influencers and therefore in need of no further proof. The word does mean “to make clear,” “to reveal,” “to make understandable.” Paul’s underlying message is this: anyone who knows the Tanach would also know that right-standing before God begins with faith, not with the works of the Torah. The phrase “justified by the Torah” in this verse should most likely be taken as a short-hand form for “justified by the works of the Torah.” Paul is not in disagreement with James who taught that one is seen to be just (justified) by his obedience to the Torah (James 2:21ff). His statement that no one is justified by the Torah should be understood in the context as stating that “no one is justified simply because he is reckoned as part of Israel.” And to be even more specific in terms of the context of Galatians, “a Gentile will never be reckoned as righteous on the basis of becoming a proselyte.”

If we were to grasp the perspective of the Influencers by their core message, it would be: “Gentiles can never be part of the covenant.” Only Israel has been given the covenant, and thus entrance into that covenant was through joining Israel by acquiring the legal status of “Jewish.” In contrast, the core message of Paul, Yeshua, and the Prophets was that righteousness (covenant membership) was the fruit of saving faith because (like Abraham), faith in God and His Messiah always brings about righteousness. The basic message of Paul, then, was “all who have faith are covenant members.” Dunn³⁹ represents this essential difference like this:

covenant → works of the Torah → exclusion of Gentiles

covenant → faith → blessing open to all nations

In this representation, the Influencers’ perspective may be explained this way: covenant membership is granted to all who are within Israel. Gentiles come into the covenant through becoming proselytes, which means they are no longer Gentiles. Thus, no Gentiles are ever covenant members. The second representation, that of Paul, is that the covenant consists of those who are of the faith of Abraham, and as such, covenant status may be extended to all who have faith, including the Gentiles.

Since the Influencers’ perspective excluded all Gentiles from the covenant (since their entrance into the covenant changed their pedigree), it also denied the final promise of the covenant, that “in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” In this regard, it denied the Torah rather than establishing it. On the other hand, covenant membership on the basis of faith fulfilled the covenant and thus the Torah.

What is more, the prevailing view (represented by the Influencers) also produced an over-confidence in the possession of the Torah as marking a distinction between the Jew and the nations, and such over-confidence blinded one to the seriousness of sin. Since the Torah was viewed as an ethnic marker separating Jew from non-Jew (and thus covenant member from non-covenant member), “the Jew” felt safe within the Torah, putting him all the more under sin (Romans 2:1-3:20). In this situation, he was blinded to the fundamental importance of faith and the Messiah (and His work) as the object of that faith. And he was therefore also blinded to the fact that the covenant was, from its beginning, a matter of God’s grace. As such, any view of the covenant, includ-

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³⁹ Dunn, *Galatians*, p.173.

ing one's method for bringing Gentiles into the covenant, which lacked conformity to this ever present principle of grace, was itself spurious and contrary to the nature of the covenant itself.

Could this line of reasoning have resonated in the minds of the Influencers? One can hardly think so. But it might have found a reasonable acceptance among the Galatians. After all, they had experienced the presence of the Spirit in their early steps of faith, and all they needed to help them past the arguments of the Influencers was the assurance that their faith had, indeed, placed them within the covenant. Paul's insistence that the covenant was based upon God's mercy and grace and not upon obedience to the Torah offered that solid foundation which they sought.

Paul's quote from Habakkuk 2:4 is, once again, neither directly from the Hebrew text (MT) nor from the Lxx.

MT	Lxx	Paul
<p>הַנֶּהָ עֹפְלָה לֹא־יִשְׁרָה נַפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ :יְצַדִּיק בְּאִמּוּנָתוֹ יְהוָה׃</p> <p>Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous one will live by <u>his</u> faith.</p>	<p>ἐὰν ὑποστείληται οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται</p> <p>If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him; but the righteous one shall live by <u>My</u> faith.</p>	<p>ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται</p> <p>The righteous one shall live by faith.</p>

The Hebrew text has the possessive pronoun "his faith," (אִמּוּנָתוֹ) while the Lxx has "my faith" (πίστεώς μου). Paul, on the other hand, quotes the text as an axiom or principle which therefore needs no possessive pronoun. Either one could have fit his argument well, whether the righteous one lives as a result of his personal faith in God ("his faith"), or he lives because God is faithful to His promises ("My faith") makes little difference for Paul in the current argument. The point is simply that covenant status (at least from the human point of view⁴⁰) is the result of faith which leads to obedience (faithfulness) and not vice versa. One is not first a covenant member and then believes resulting in faithfulness. One first exercises faith through which he is seen as a covenant member, whose life within the covenant is one of faithfulness (=obedience).

Paul substantiates this divine order of covenant membership through yet another quote from the Tanach, Leviticus 18:5.

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40 From the divine perspective, covenant status begins with God's sovereign election of the individual or the nation, not their response to Him in faith. But from the human perspective, the response of faith is the first certain indication of genuine covenant membership.

MT	Lxx	Paul
<p>וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתְּכֶם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה:</p> <p>So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a person does them, he will live in (by) them. I am the LORD.</p>	<p>καὶ φυλάξεσθε πάντα τὰ προστάγματά μου καὶ πάντα τὰ κρίματά μου καὶ ποιήσετε αὐτά ἅ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν</p> <p>So you shall keep all My ordinances and all My judgments and do them, which the person who does them, he will live in (by) them. I am the Lord your God.</p>	<p>ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς</p> <p>The one who does them will live in (by) them.</p>

Paul appears to combine the MT and the Lxx in his quote. He does not include the word “person” (אָדָם, ἄνθρωπος) as the MT and Lxx do, but he includes the direct object “them” (αὐτά, *auta*, “do them”) which the MT has but the Lxx lacks. Once again, Paul is quoting this as an axiom or principle, and as such wishes to make it universal. Therefore, the inclusion of the term “person” is not necessary.

Paul wishes to stress what the original context of Leviticus 18:5 indicates: the life of obedience is one of covenant membership, not entrance into the covenant. Those who do the statutes and judgments are those who are already within the covenant, for Leviticus 18 is describing covenant life, not a proscribed method for entering the covenant.⁴¹

Thus Paul introduces the quote from Leviticus 18:5 with the words, “Now the Torah is not of (out from) faith.” If we count the expression “from the hearing of faith” (literally, “out from the hearing of faith”) found twice in the opening verses of this chapter, this is the seventh time in these few verses that we have the expression ἐκ πίστεως, *ek pistis*, “out from faith.” Paul has utilized this expression to contrast the “works of the Torah,” his short-hand way of expressing the Influencers’ viewpoint, that covenant membership is based upon ethnic identity, itself characterized by Torah observance. Since this contrast is the central theme of this section, Paul can simply use the word “Torah” to mean “the works of the Torah,” as he did in verse 11: “no one is justified by the Torah,” meaning “no one is justified (gains covenant membership) through becoming a proselyte.” It seems clear that he is doing the same here: “the Torah is not of faith” means “the works of the Torah/becoming a proselyte is not out from faith.” This he proves by quoting Leviticus 18:5 which teaches that obedience to the Torah characterizes covenant membership but is not the means of entering the covenant.

41 See Walter Kaiser, “Leviticus 18:5 And Paul: Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?)” *JETS*, 14.1 (1971).

12 However, the Torah is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.”

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Paul begins the sentence with the connective *δέ*, *de*, translated “however” by the NASB (NIV gives no connective; ESV uses the word “but”). The flow of thought surely connects to the previous quote from Habakkuk 2:4, by which Paul emphasizes that essential nature of faith in the covenant relationship. This, however, was not the message of the Influencers. They were teaching that Torah observance was the essential requirement by which a Jew retained covenant membership (possessed by virtue of having been born a Jew) or by which a Gentile could gain covenant membership (by acquiring Jewish legal status through becoming a proselyte). Paul’s categorical statement that “the Torah is not of faith” (ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως) must be seen in this context, namely, that the Torah *as a marker of one’s legal status as a Jew* is not the basis for covenant membership because the “works of the Torah” do not produce faith. Faith is the gift of God to His chosen ones by which they are enabled to see the Torah for what it truly is: the revelation of God that leads to Messiah (Rom 10:4). Apart from faith, the Torah functions only to condemn—it can never bring life (covenant membership). In fact, genuine obedience to Torah (obedience which includes right motives as well as right actions) flows from faith. Thus, the Influencers had the sequence backward: Torah does not produce faith, rather, faith produces obedience to the Torah.

This biblical sequence (that faith leads to obeying the Torah) is proven by the quote from Leviticus 18:5. The context of Leviticus 18 is that of instructions to covenant members (Israel) as she anticipates entering the Land. She is not to “walk” as the nations “walk” (i.e., in immorality and unrighteousness) but she is to obey the statutes and ordinances of Adonai, precisely because she has been redeemed by Him and therefore belongs to Him. Thus, living by God’s commandments is the characteristic of those who belong to Him. Their life is to be known by conformity to His statutes and ordinances.

Paul’s emphasis, therefore, in quoting Leviticus 18:5 is to show that obedience flows out of covenant membership, and not vice versa. One does not obey in order to gain covenant membership, but rather, one’s obedience is proof of covenant membership already possessed.

That this is Paul’s understanding of Leviticus 18:5 is corroborated by noting his use of the same text in Romans 10:5. There he likewise shows that there is a righteousness which conforms to the Torah, but that this righteousness (sanctification) is the result of faith (justification), not the means of faith. In both cases (Romans and Galatians), Paul is consistent in his use of Leviticus 18:5.

13 Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the Torah, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—

The question facing the Galatians, however, and no doubt particularly the point of the Influencers, was that of the Gentiles and their inclusion into the covenant. The Gentiles had been characterized by all of those things which drew the curses of the covenant: idolatry, blasphemy, immorality, and all the “ways of the nations.” As those who were “outside” of the covenant, they attracted the curses. Only those “inside” the covenant could

expect to experience the blessings.

But it is not only the Gentiles who find themselves under the curse of the Torah (even though Gentiles are the primary focus of Paul at this point). All who fail to reckon with God's method of salvation (the "righteousness of God" in Romans) will likewise experience the curses. Thus Paul is able to switch to the first person plural ("... having become a curse for us ..."). God's justice does not allow simply negating the curse—it must be enacted upon those who rebel against the covenant. Paul recognizes in the sacrificial system revealed in the Torah that God's method of forgiveness is not to negate the curses which He promised, but rather to enact the curses upon a representative in order that those He represents may go unpunished. Like the redemption of the first-born (cf. Num 3:44-51) in which a sacrifice stands in the place of the first-born who is therefore redeemed, so the sinner who stands to be cursed is freed by the sacrifice of Yeshua. This "one-for-one redemption" stands at the heart of the Gospel and thus at the core of Paul's teaching.

Redemption (Paul uses the word ἐξαγοράζω, *exagarazō* in three other places: Gal. 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5) always involves the payment of a price.⁴² The use of the compound term here (ἀγοράζω plus the preposition ἐκ) is most likely perfective, thus adding emphasis. We might translate "completely redeemed." Redemption requires the payment of a price because the very character of God demands that the curse be administered since it is the wages of sin. Moreover, the one who is redeemed by price belongs to the one who paid the redemption. Thus, when the "price" which the curses required is paid, the redeemed sinner belongs to God.

"become a curse" (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, *genomenos huper hemōn katara*) is simply a more emphatic way of saying "became accursed. We might even understand the phrase to mean: "He became one who was cursed on our behalf." Here, the "one-for-the-many" is the point, and evokes the "last Adam" theology more clearly laid out in Romans 5. It is more than simply a man laying down his life for his friend. The thought which Paul emphasizes here is that Yeshua acted as a representative for His people, even as Adam represented his people. Yeshua, in dying a substitutional death for His people, took upon Himself the curse of the Torah which was rightly theirs, and in so doing, fully exhausted the curse so that none is left for those He represented. In His death, He paid in full the debt which sin had incurred.

That the Torah promised a curse upon those who rebelled against the covenant (those who are "outside") is substantiated by a quote from Deuteronomy 21:23.

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⁴² BDAG, "ἀγοράζω"; see the comments of Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 53–55.

MT	Lxx	Paul
<p>לֹא־תֵלֵן נְבִלְתוֹ עַל־הָעֵץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּיַבֹּר תִּקְבְּרֶנּוּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּיַקְלֹלְתֶם אֱלֹהִים תְּלוּי וְלֹא תִטְמָא אֶת־אֲדָמַתְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה:</p> <p>... his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.</p>	<p>οὐκ ἐπικοιμηθήσεται τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου ἀλλὰ ταφῆ θάψετε αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ὅτι κεκατηραμένος ὑπο θεοῦ πᾶς κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου καὶ οὐ μιαίετε τὴν γῆν ἣν κύριος ὁ θεός σου δίδωσίν σοι ἐν κλήρῳ</p> <p>... his body shall not remain all night upon the tree but you shall by all means bury it in that day; for everyone that is hanged on a tree is cursed by God; and you shall by no means defile the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.</p>	<p>ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου</p> <p>Cursed is everyone hung on a tree.</p>

The context of the Deuteronomy quote is the *halachah* regarding what is to be done with the corpse of one sentenced to death by hanging. Since one who receives such capital punishment is cursed of God, it is a defilement of the Land to allow this cursed one to remain in public view day after day. Therefore, the body was to be buried the same day in which the sentence was enacted.

By the 1st Century, however, the Deuteronomy text was understood to apply to all who were given capital punishment by crucifixion.⁴³ Note the following from the Dead Sea Scrolls:

If a man is a traitor against his people and gives them up to a foreign nation, so doing evil to his people, you are to hang him on a tree until dead. On the testimony of two or three witnesses he will be put to death, and they themselves shall hang him on the tree. If a man is convicted of a capital crime and flees to the nations, cursing his people and the children of Israel, you are to hang him, also, upon a tree until dead. But you must not let their bodies remain on the tree overnight; you shall most certainly bury them that very day. Indeed, anyone hung on a tree is accursed of God and men, but you are not to defile the land that I am about to give you as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).⁴⁴

And chokes prey for its lionesses; and it fills its caves with prey and its dens with victims (ii, 12a-b). Interpreted, this concerns the furious young lion [who executes revenge] on those who seek

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43 Note J. A. Fitzmyer, 'Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature and the New Testament,' *CBQ* 40 (1978), 493-513.

44 1QTemple 64:7-13.

smooth things and hangs men alive, [...] formerly in Israel. Because of a man hanged alive on the tree, He proclaims, 'Behold I am against you,' says the Lord of Hosts.⁴⁵

Paul's point, however, is simply to show that the Torah itself considered the one who rebelled against the covenant, and who therefore was punished by being hung on a tree, as also one who was cursed by God. There is little doubt that this was used as a polemic against the early followers of Yeshua. Since He was executed by being crucified (hung on a tree, cf. Acts 5:30; 10:39), it was argued that He had been cursed by God. Rather than trying to refute such a polemic, Paul simply turns it to prove his point: Yeshua was, in fact, cursed by God, because He took the curse of the Torah, due to His people, upon Himself. But His being cursed results in blessing for His people, which is the point Paul wishes to stress.

14 in order that in Messiah Yeshua the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Though the Gentiles were "outside" of the covenant, and therefore in the place of curses rather than blessings, through the redemption made by Yeshua, those chosen from among the Gentiles may now come into the blessings of the covenant. Once again, the essential "position" of those who are blessed is "in Messiah."⁴⁶ Union with the Messiah through faith is the means of ultimate covenant membership, which results in a life of righteousness, and thus attracts the blessings promised by God to all who obey Him. It is in this way that the promise of blessing upon the nations, given to Abraham, is realized.

Thus Paul's position is clearly seen: the fulfillment of the covenant blessings promised to Abraham, and particularly the promise for blessing upon the nations, is not to be gained through obedience to Torah (something that comes as the fruit of faith) but through faith in the crucified and risen Messiah. Here is the kernel of Paul's gospel and it is all the more understandable, therefore, why the Influencers' message was so egregious to Paul.

so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. – The structure of the sentence helps us understand that Paul is not linking each clause of this verse as dependent upon the former, but is actually saying the same thing twice. That is, reception of the Spirit is not dependent upon the blessing of the Gentiles, as though the idea is: "the Gentiles are blessed so that we might receive the Spirit." Rather, the double "so that" (*ἵνα, hina*, cf. 4:4-5) should be understood to mean: "in order that the Gentiles might be blessed, or another way to say it is, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit." For Paul, the presence of the Spirit in the life of a person is proof that he has been accepted by God. As such, the presence of the Spirit is the same as having the status of righteous: "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Messiah, he does not belong to Him.... For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom 8:9, 14). The promise of blessing upon the nations, given to Abraham, is proven to have taken place when the Spirit of God indwells the lives of those chosen from the nations, and empowers them to walk in obedience to God. Thus, the blessings of the covenant (whether upon Jew or Gentile)

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⁴⁵ 4QpNah (4Q169) 1:7-8.

⁴⁶ Note the contrasting "righteousness in (by) the Torah" of v. 11 (ἐν νόμῳ οὐδείς δικαιοῦται).