

Scripture 'Reading' and Identity Formation in Paul:
Paideia among Believing Greeks
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"I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your sake, *that you may learn by our example* (ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε) *not to go beyond what is written* (τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται)" – 1 Corinthians 4:6

The authors of the pastoral epistles repeatedly characterize Paul not just as a herald and messenger of the good news (Rom. 1:1, 10:15), but also as a teacher of the gospel to non-Jews. As 1 Tim 2:7 puts it, "For this I was appointed a herald and apostle..., a teacher of nations in faith(fulness) and truth" (διδάσκαλος ἔθνῶν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ; cf. 2 Tim 1:11). The letters also depict Paul's instruction to the gentiles not simply as a proclamation of the gospel but as an "education" or παιδεία in faith that was central to believers' formation. The Christian life is called a "teaching in piety" (1 Tim. 6:3), a "(gymnasium) training in piety" (1 Tim.4:7; γύμναζε δὲ σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν), and the "government of God in faith" (1 Tim. 1:4; οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει) based on "good instruction" (τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας; 1 Tim. 4:6).¹ Finally, the epistles characterize the scriptures as the basis of this education. Listen to the author of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 mime "Paul" to this effect in his instruction to Timothy on how to be a good pedagogue:

"Now you have observed my teaching (διδασκαλία), my conduct...Now you, [Timothy] continue in what you have learned (ἐμάθεις) and believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with *the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation* (σοφίαι εἰς σωτηρίαν) *through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness* (πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανάρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ), that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

These terms and others mentioned elsewhere in the Pastorals (διδασκαλία, ἐλεγχος, ὁ μαραμυθῆτικος, παράκλησις) are used with relative consistency among Greek and Roman philosophers to refer to distinct types of instruction that together comprise a παιδεία in virtue.² Authors of the Pastorals redeploy these terms – probably without direct knowledge of their technical distinctions--to depict the Pauline way of life as an "education in righteousness" that sprang from instruction in the wisdom of scripture.³ In short, the Pastoral Epistles evoke Paul's authority as teacher of the

¹ For παιδεία, see 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 2:11-12; and the citation of 2 Tim. 3:10-17 below.

² See Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.23, 33-37; Seneca *Ep. Mor.* 95.1, 64-66.

³ So, e.g., "Paul" in Titus 2.1, 12, 15 tells Timothy to "teach what befits sound instruction," to "exhort [παρακάλει] and reprove [ἐλεγχε] with all authority," in order that he can "train [παιδεύουσα]" believers "for salvation"--to live the cardinal virtues "with self-restraint [σωφρόνως], upright [δικαίως], and pious lives [εὐσεβῶς]." Cf. 1 Tim 4:11-16, 6:2, 2 Tim 2:24-25, 4:2-3. The result is προκοπή or "progress," which in

nations to define the Christian life as a high-status, 'philosophic' education in righteousness that was based in large part on the communal and life-long reading, exhortation, and teaching of sacred texts (1 Tim. 4:13).⁴

The deuterio-Pauline epistles portray Paul's mission similarly, as an education of the nations, while also highlighting its aim: the *ethnic* transformation of the "nations" into the "one new man" (Eph. 2:15; 4:13), the collective body of the (Jewish) Messiah that erased the division between Jew and Greek. In Ephesians, "Paul's best disciple" asserted that Christ's body constituted the commonwealth of Israel within which gentiles had been made citizens (Eph. 2:11-22).⁵ The gospel is therefore the "word of truth" whose paideutic instruction helps transform gentiles from their former state as "children" influenced by every worldly faux-wisdom into "men" educated in the wisdom of his mysterious will—"perfect men" who attain knowledge of the Son and reach "the fullness of Christ" (εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον; 4:11-16).⁶ The ethnic character of the education logic behind the (post-)Pauline gospel explains "Paul's" moral exhortation to the Ephesians not to live like the "nations" *they formerly were*, but to take up a different training, the renewal of the "spirit of their minds" (4:23) in the wisdom and knowledge of Christ (1:17-18). Rather than practicing debauchery and living in the "futility of their minds," because they "did not so learn Christ" (4:20-21, 5:15-18), "Paul's" former-gentiles were to practice a different ethnic παιδεία, one that comprised: the "imitation of God" (5:1); living as Spirit-filled sages (σόφοι); speaking to fellow believers in "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (5:19)⁷; and bringing children up in the "discipline and instruction of the Lord," as fathers do with their sons (ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νοουθεσίᾳ κυρίου; 6:4). In sum, church leaders in the Pauline tradition emphasized the centrality of home-based and communal scriptural instruction to their full ethnic transformation into the commonwealth of Israel.

The earlier epistle to the Colossians contains these same themes, while also clarifying the crucial, ethnic "us"-versus-"them" dynamic that empowers this

Roman Stoic parlance designated those who were on the path to virtue. In 2 Tim 4:15, it refers to Timothy's formation, his character development as a mature person of Christ.

⁴ Note that it does so without ever citing scripture, a methodological issue perhaps worth discussing together.

⁵ Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 620.

⁶ See Eph. 1:9-10; 4:11, 15; 5:6-14.

⁷ I believe that we should read ψαλμοῖς as a reference to the scriptural Psalms unless evidence suggests otherwise. The evidence of Paul's letters, as well as the gospel traditions, underscores the centrality of these poetic texts to the early church's self-understanding and emerging christologies. Contra Gerhard Delling, "ἕμνος, κ. τ. λ.," *TDNT* 8:499; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon: A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 151. The psalms (ψαλμοίς) mentioned in 1 Cor 14:26 and Col 3:16 do not necessarily refer to poetic compositions of believers *rather than* the scriptural psalms. Philo of Alexandria (*Contempl.* 80) and Josephus (*Ant.* 2.346; 7.305) both characterized the scriptural psalms, on a Hellenistic model, as "hymns" or "odes" to God, and Tertullian (*Apol.* 39) said that at agape meals Christians sang songs from the Scripture or those of their own composition. There is definitional overlap between the terms ψαλμοῖς and ἕμνος. Hence, references to "hymns" in the Pauline corpus could denote either scriptural psalms or newly composed hymns, and Paul's allusion to psalms in 1 Cor 14:26 may well refer to the scriptural psalms. On this subject as it relates to Pauline community identity formation, see my essay, "Christian 'Rock' Music at Corinth?," 123-143, esp. 130-131 and n. 20 in *The Psalms in Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical, and Artistic Traditions*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge and Margot Fassler. Brill and the Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

παιδεία.⁸ As Paul said, identifying his divine service to God as an education *in* Christ: “I became a servant...to make the word of God fully known” among the gentiles, “*the mystery which is Christ in you...Him we proclaim, warning and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may proclaim every man mature in Christ...knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this so that no one may delude you by beguiling speech...or make prey of you by philosophy and empty conceit*” (1:25-28, 2:2-4, 8).⁹ Colossians’ Paul claims that Israel’s Christ, who dwells within believers, is the fount of all wisdom – and not the “beguiling” Greek and Roman philosophies. Paul’s rejection of these dominant ethnopolitical sources of wisdom in favor of Christ as the source of all rule and authority (2:10) is the pivot upon which Paul turns to call the Colossians to now live in him as they had been taught (2.6-7): to reject “earthly” practices in favor of renewal-of-mind in Christ, and to let the peace of Christ that erases ethnic division rule in them (3:5-15). They were, in short, to let “the word of Christ dwell in [them] richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and sing[ing] Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” to God (3:16).

The question this paper asks is whether the depiction of Paul as instructor and exemplar to the nations in an ethnically superior παιδεία –the “word of Christ” rooted in the scripture of Israel–is a post-Pauline development of Paul’s missionary practice. The answer I give is “No.” At the rhetorical climax of Paul’s letter to the Romans, the apostle taught believers that “all the ancient scriptures were written for our instruction (διδασκαλίαν) in order that through the exhortation of the scriptures (παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν) we might have hope” (Rom. 15:1-4). Although he knew little of the Roman Greeks to whom he wrote (1:13, 5; 15:14-16), he nevertheless flattered them for their wisdom and ability to instruct one another (1:12, 14, 15:14), exhorted them to hold fast to the teaching he gave them (16:17-20), and constructed much of his instruction to them out of citations of the scriptures of Israel, which he wed to and delivered within a larger Greco-Roman rhetorical form (i.e., a philosophic protreptic speech in Greek epistolary form).¹⁰

This strong emphasis on the importance of an education in the scriptures, framed in terms familiar to a non-Jewish audience, is consistent with Paul’s instruction of churches that he founded, churches composed largely of ethnically Greek believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia Minor. In 1 Corinthians 1-4, for example, Paul argued vigorously that Christ was a wisdom far superior to that of

⁸ I am not at all sure that Colossians is pseudonymous, but I read it so for the purpose of this essay.

⁹ 1:25-28, 2:2-4, 8: ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν—νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ, οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης. Ὅν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ. Εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει...ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως, εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ, ἐν ᾧ εἰσὶν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι. Τοῦτο λέγω, ἵνα μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται ἐν πιθανολογίᾳ...Βλέπετε μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων...

¹⁰ On this subject see my *Pax Christi: Empire, Identity, and Protreptic Rhetoric in Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (under review with *Novum Testamentum Supplements*).

orators, philosophers, and the Roman “rulers of this age” who had killed him (1:30-31, 2:7-8). On that basis, Paul exhorted Corinthian believers to obey his superior instruction and “not to go beyond what is written” in their behavior (4:6).¹¹ Citing 1 Sam. 2:10, he called them to “boast only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:31), to focus their efforts on community upbuilding, and thus, to gather to break bread, sing Psalms, and instruct one another in the faith (1 Cor. 14:26). In other words, the scriptures taught the Corinthian Christians morality and group politics and strengthened group identity over against the sages and orators and Roman rulers “of this age.” In Pauline Christian churches, an education in the scriptures of Israel was a critical tool in the socialization of its members.

My thesis is, thus, that the seeds sown in the post-Pauline understanding of the Christian life as a “training or παιδεία in the scriptures” can be found in the ministry of Paul to the nations, as it is reflected in the undisputed letters. It is not a later development of Christian self-understanding and practice that merely deployed Paul’s aura for self-authorization. It is rather an elucidation of emerging practices of identity formation that Paul and his cohorts taught gentile believers in order to reform them into the “commonwealth of Israel” (Gal 6:16; Phil. 1:27, 3:20).¹² Both Paul and his cohorts used the Jewish scriptures, in a Greco-Roman cultural environment and in a dialectical relationship with Greco-Roman educational practices, to teach and enculturate communities of ethnic Greeks in how to be(come) Israel.

I. Education and Identity: *Paideia* as Civilization into an *Ethnos*

Let me begin this argument with the dominant Greco-Roman model of παιδεία as a cultural education of “good men” for the future of the city-state.¹³ Derived from the Greek term πᾶς, παιδεία referred to the upbringing of children through training in literacy, numeracy, virtue, and ethnic history. Over time, it came to represent “the classical Greek system of education and training,” which could encompass gymnastics, poetry, music, mathematics, astronomy, geography, virtue ethics, and even rhetoric and philosophy. In short, it not only referred to the basic education of children, but could also connote “the complete pedagogical course of study necessary to produce a well-rounded, fully educated citizen.”¹⁴ Παιδεία was a practice of enculturation.

It was also a tool of imperialism. As is well-known, the expansion of the Macedonian Empire under and after Alexander brought with it παιδεία (in the latter sense) as a tool of Hellenization. Recognizing its power to enculturate, imperial-era Roman also embraced Greek παιδεία and its civil(izing) powers as they stretched the arms of their empire to assimilate even the Hellenes.¹⁵ Feeling the press of such military expansion, Jews in Palestine and elsewhere responded, in turns, by fighting or

¹¹ See Dt. 13:1, Rev. 22:18-19.

¹² I say “emerging” because there is little evidence in 1 Thess. for this view, but a good deal in his later letters. I think Paul wrote Philippians and possibly also Colossians during his Roman imprisonment.

¹³ Which I merely summarize here for the sake of space.

¹⁴ Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 29-30.

¹⁵ As Gwynn indicates, the work of Roman educators like Quintilian, Seneca, Vitruvius, and Pliny indicate that little change in its basic character took place in the process. A. Gwynn, *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian*, 146.

embracing it. Sometimes, as under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, they battled παιδεία as a perceived threat to Jewish religious identity and political sovereignty. But in other times and locales, they assimilated its powers to elevate their individual and collective status. Examples of the latter impulse, produced during periods of both Hellenic and Roman domination, include: the *Antiquities* of Josephus, written for his Roman patrons; the Stoicized middle Platonic exegesis of Philo of Alexandria, written for himself and other Hellenized Alexandrian Jews under Roman and local Egyptian rule; and the so-called genre of Jewish “apologetic” literature, written largely for fellow diaspora Jews under the governance of other peoples. It is thus no accident that Josephus repeatedly depicted the Jewish sects as “philosophies” (*Ant.* 18.1.2, 6, 13.5.9; *War* 2.117-66) and that Philo circumcised the Greek category of “nature” to name Abraham an “unwritten law and statute” in *On Abraham*. The Wisdom of Solomon even depicted the Torah-wisdom as a πνεῦμα παιδείας that lived in all who approached her for instruction and Israel’s ancestors as heroic exemplars of the philosophic, Jewish way of life. In short, these Jews under empire infused both “scripture” and “Judaism” with the power of Hellenistic παιδεία (philosophy and rhetoric), simultaneously recasting the latter as Judaic, in order to sanction, sustain, and protect their ethnic identities.

Two recent studies on παιδεία and imitation help us understand how Paul may have done likewise in his instruction of Greek believers in Christ. The first, Teresa Morgan’s *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*, demonstrates two main things. First, despite the relative paucity of functional literates, the Greek and Roman worlds were “profoundly literate societies” in which, “from the early third century BCE until the end of the Roman empire, you could be fairly sure of finding a teacher, or more than one, in most towns and villages, in the forum, at the crossroads, in the gymnasium, or in a private house or garden.” Second, the typical course of “common” literate education, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, was remarkably consistent “across vast geographical distances, a wide social spectrum and a timespan of nearly a thousand years,” with “much the same exercises in the same order taught, from the third century BCE onwards, everywhere from the palaces of kings and emperors to the village street.”¹⁶ While it varied in locale and precise textual content, the typical course of instruction (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία)—a course with which Paul’s audiences would have been familiar—is therefore relatively easy to characterize.

At the age of 6 or so, a child typically accompanied by an attendant or paidagogue could either be educated at home or was taken to an instructor to learn to write and say his letters.¹⁷ Once the child had mastered these preliminaries, he was given short passages to copy from the sacred stories and great heroes of Greece’s noble past, typically from Homer, the gnomic poets, and a few other popular authors (e.g., Euripides). Over time, by copying these passages repeatedly and memorizing and reciting them orally, the child thereby learned not only to read and write, but to imbibe and embrace and take pride in the sacred stories, great sayings, and deeds of his people. Among Romans this cycle of primary education changed little, with only an increase in the number of heroic *exempla* used in school exercises to mark their ethnic difference. Evidence of the early common era indicates that urban Jews participated in ἐγκύκλιος

¹⁶ *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1998), 3-4.

¹⁷ Who went by a variety of titles, διδάσκαλος being the most common. While it most often referred to an attendant, παιδαγώγος could also refer to an instructor. Morgan, 17-18.

παιδεία, while also using synagogal settings for oral, community education in the scriptures.¹⁸ Thus, whether Greek or Roman (or Jewish), those who learned to read and write embarked on a path of education that not only could progress to training in practical wisdom and other arts and could lead, for an elite few, to advanced training in rhetoric and philosophy.¹⁹ They also participated in a prime means of enculturation in the Greco-Roman world, a practice of learning that embraced not only those from the highest levels of society but also those hoping to break into such groups and those, who while they would never do so, gained some status and identity through this instruction. Even in its most rudimentary form, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία was thus a marker of social status, cultural and ethnic group belonging *and* difference (for those who did not know it or know it well). As Morgan says, “literate education [was] a binding and differential force, an indicator and transformer of cultural status.”²⁰

In his extraordinary book, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation*, Tim Whitmarsh explores the ways in which Greeks living under Roman rule during the second century CE employed paideia in this way, (re)constructing their identities as Greeks and empowering themselves as a subject people by creatively retelling the sacred stories of their collective past through (re)articulate poesis in their present, the period of the “Second Sophistic.”²¹

Whitmarsh sets the stage for this argument by articulating the power of paideutic *mimesis* or “imitation” to form the “soul” of a man and by extension, a people. He begins with a comparison of Plato’s and Plutarch’s views of philosophic education. As is well-known, among Greek philosophers, Plato is most famous for placing education in the service of the soul and making it a quest of the intellect, a mimetic process of the mind copying and seeking after (but never fully experiencing) union with the ideal. Unlike Plato, who was famous for dividing shadow from substance, copy from original in the philosophic education of the will, Aristotle and Plutarch argued that the practice of imitating cultural and philosophical ideals actually altered the soul through repetition: the repeated act of imitative *doing* effected a somatic naturalization of what was repeated in the mind and soul of learners. Put another way, both learners’ *mimesis* of the poetry and Homeric stories copied in primary education and philosophic education in the Good were practices of repetition that inculcated the pattern of the original into learners’ souls. Learners, whether children or sages, were *made* and could be remade by what they repeatedly, habitually learned.

Building on this understanding of *mimesis* as somatically transformative, Whitmarsh then reads Greek literature of the “Second Sophistic” as productive performances of identity, showing how Greeks of the “Second Sophistic” who mimed and renarrated sacred stories from Homer and the gnomic poets remade themselves – (re)constructing cultural continuity with their high-status past by creating imagined communities of “universal Hellenism.”²² Not only this, he showed that their *mimesis* of stories of their sacred past was powerful enough to subvert and redistribute social power, even effecting ethnic transformation among the Romans: by reconstituting the heroes of Greece’s past in the present and renarrating Hellenism convincingly as true

¹⁸ Early: James Crenshaw; David Carr. 1st century: articles on synagogal education.

¹⁹ Morgan, 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹ Whitmarsh, 71-88.

²² 66. It was an organic means of maintaining vitality of Greeks’ past in their present (58).

civilization, Greeks under Roman rule led some of their political “betters” to imitate Greeks anew, to seek to become Greeker than Greeks in their quest for cultural domination of the known world.²³

This cultural power of paideutic *mimesis* to elevate social status and define group identity transactionally (that is, in inter-group ideological and social exchanges across intercultural and interethnic boundaries) largely explains the impulse of Christian teachers of the second century CE onward – the same period Whitmarsh studied – to characterize believers’ disciplined growth in the Christian life as paideutic learning. Like Greeks and Hellenized and Romanized Jews also had, second-century Christian teachers redirected the hegemonic cultural power of παιδεία, imitating it within Christian communities, to create a uniquely Christian paideia that was thought, quite literally, to somatically (re)make “catechumens” into mature men (τελείοι) in this new, civilized faith. It was a “system of education in the faith that the early Christians created through a combination of biblical revelation and the cultural patterns suggested by Hellenistic literature and philosophy, that is, Greek paideia. It had as its objective the achieving of the wisdom of God through spiritual formation under the divine Pedagogue, the Logos or Word of God. Christian paideia looked to the formation of character and appreciation of virtues as much as it did the acquisition of knowledge. Its final aim was the true knowledge – Christian philosophy or worldview – whose end was fellowship and imitation of Jesus Christ.”²⁴

II. Παιδεία in Pauline Community Identity Formation

In the mid-first century CE, Paul was engaged in an earlier form of this process of educational enculturation – imitating the model of literate and oral Greco-Roman education, transforming it through conflation with a community-based, oral practice of instruction in the scriptures (as had his Jewish contemporaries), and thereby reconstituting its hegemonic powers of ethnic and cultural formation – to convince the gentiles he missionized of the high status of his way of life and to reform them into the Israel of God. He did so, I argue, by doing several things with his communities: depicting himself as a teacher of the nations in the scriptures as the source of true wisdom; portraying himself and Timothy as exemplars of his παιδεία to be imitated; depicting Christ as the content and voice of scripture; using the scriptures to undermine rival pedagogues; teaching believers the Christian meaning of Israel’s sacred stories in letters (and in person); and exhorting believers to sing the Scriptures (especially the Psalms) together and instruct one another in faith – all to form them, individually and collectively, into the Good Man in Christ.

²³ 117-120.

²⁴ Find reference, my emphasis. Contributors included *Epistle of Clement*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, the catechumenal schools, the Great Catechism of Gregory of Nyssa, catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem, and Augustine *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, *De Doctrina Christiana*; *De Beata Vita*. At Alexandria, see also Clement of Alexandria, *Paidagogos*. In the East, see the Cappadocian Fathers, including Gregory of Nazianzus, *Panegyric on Basil*; Basil of Caesarea, *To Young Men On How They Might Profit, From Pagan Literature*; John Chrysostom, *De Inani Gloria et de Educandis Liberis*. In the West, Lactantius, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, and Jerome. Paideia under Christian auspices). See also Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, and Cassiodorus’s *Institutes*.

Space prohibits both a full accounting of even a few of these arguments²⁵ and a full articulation of the methodological presuppositions that go into my reading of the letters as evidence of identity formation.²⁶ I am also going to hand a hostage to fortune (and us fodder for discussion) by assuming rather than arguing that when Pauline communities gathered, they sang Psalms together and over time, came to be instructed and exhorted out of some of Israel's scriptures like Torah and Isaiah, possibly as Paul's fellow Jews were in synagogal gatherings (1 Cor. 14). These practices would undoubtedly have worked to form gentile believers' identities. But in the sketch that follows, I want rather to provide arguments in favor of a couple of the points made above, which may be difficult to "see" on standard readings of Paul's letters.

A. Παιδεία and Pauline Self-Presentation in 1 Corinthians 4

I have argued elsewhere that Paul's letter to the Romans is an extended protreptic demonstration of Paul's prowess as an educator of the Roman Greeks to whom he writes.²⁷ But 1 Corinthians 4 provides a blessedly shorter example of Paul's use of educational commonplaces to underscore his authority as instructor of the Corinthians. A deliciously subtle argument, 1 Cor. 1-4 assumes and deploys a series of assumptions about good education that function to put the haughty-minded subset of his Corinthian audience in their place, and to underscore that they must *follow his example* in not going "beyond what is written" in their behavior (4:6).

Much ink has been spilled over the phrase "not going beyond what is written," and it is not my intention to undermine the now-commonplace assumption that Paul intended the Corinthians to pattern their behavior on what they learned from the scriptures of Israel. A number of scholars commenting on 1 Cor. 1-4 as a whole have also recognized that the whole is a (heated) reminder of Paul's singular standing in the community as founder and herald of the "word of Christ." But few scholars focusing on

²⁵ This is the subject of my current book-in-process, *The Paideia of Paul*. Projected date of completion December 2008.

²⁶ These include: reading the letters performatively, as rhetorics and moments of identity formation rather than only as static evidence of Pauline thought and practice; reading Paul primarily for practices; reading Pauline thought and practice for socialization (viewing *paideia* as practices of socialization and reading for *mimesis*, the call to imitate Paul as educational); and reading Paul for his practice of ethnic transactionalism and reconstellation (bringing together Greek philosophical, Roman political, and Jewish scriptural motifs) for identity formation.

I also do not assume that the (rhetorical) audiences of Paul's letters can all be presumed to have an equal baseline education in Judaism or its scriptures. Mirror-reading 1 Thess, for example, there is no evidence that the Thessalonians have any education of this sort. Paul's letter to the high-minded folk at Corinth seems to presume a baseline knowledge of and identification with at least some of the stories of Israel (See Paul's "our fathers" in 1 Cor. 10:1, implicitly writes the Corinthians into the Exodus story, which he presumes they know), and I have argued that they may well have been steeped at least in a cycle of Psalmic poetry from their initial formation. Moreover, if the phrase "what is written" (1 Cor. 4) refers to scripture, then Paul expects that they will have known enough of it to follow his lead. Paul's letter to the Romans explicitly assumes that some members of the gentile rhetorical audience knew Torah—which means that others did not (Rom. 7:1). For the folk who knew Torah, Paul's citations of scripture will have read differently than for those who did not. *This evidence suggests that audience competency in scripture was hardly uniform, and that if audience expertise be deemed important to meaning-making, our claims about "the meaning" of scripture use must account for these differences. Our answers to such questions as "what scripture did (or could) they know?" will necessarily be complex.*

²⁷ *Pax Christi*.

“Paul and Scripture” have integrated these points. For, doing so requires us to pause long over the seminal first half of the exhortation of 4:6, “that *you may learn by us* [– *that is, by our example*--] not to go beyond what is written.” For Paul’s emphasis is not on scripture *per se* but on *himself* as an *exemplum* of Scripture, on himself as a living, breathing, embodiment of the “word of the cross” (1:18) whom the Corinthians must imitate in order to live (into) “what is written.” Paul is the παιδεία of scripture that they are “not to go beyond” in their behavior toward each other.

Paul deploys several educational commonplaces in 1 Cor. 1-4 to give this argument wings. The first of these is the antithetical dualism established between “children” and the “mature,” which comes to the fore most vividly in 1 Corinthians 4:14, “I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children.” The second is a contrast Paul offers between the status-reversing “wisdom of the cross” (1:17, 27) and the high-status, philosophic “wisdom of the world” (1:18-25, 2:7-8). Recall that in the Greco-Roman ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, “children” were instructed in the mere rudiments of education--given bits of sacred and gnomic texts and heroic past narratives to copy, memorize, and make their own – whereas philosophy (the height of παιδεία) was reserved for the mature, those who had imbibed not just these bits of wisdom but had long ago writ into their skin and bones the “truths” to which this preliminary course of education pointed – the superior wisdom of their way of life. In 1 Cor. 1-4, Paul weds these “truths” of Greco-Roman education to the truth of his gospel message, whose veracity he proves with punctuated citations of Israel’s scripture,²⁸ to instruct the Corinthians, an audience who seemingly think themselves worldly wise, that he teaches the “mature” a wisdom superior to the world’s philosophies (2:6). But, he says, the Corinthians *don’t know this wisdom* because they are mere babes in Christ (3:1). Still suckling at the breast of truth, they don’t understand that the wisdom Paul proclaims may be folly to philosophers and world rulers, but it is the power and strength and wisdom of the Corinthians’ vastly superior God (1:18, 24). The fact that the Corinthians don’t recognize so basic a point about their way of life means that they aren’t ready for the solid food of the faith, the ‘philosophic’ wisdom that comes from the mind of Christ within them (2:16, 3:1-4).

Paul underscores the irony of this point – given the Corinthians’ high opinion of themselves – by identifying himself as their father and contrasting them with Timothy as his children in faith. After launching a devastating censure of their self-concept as “wise” “kings” in comparison to his identity as a “fool for Christ’s sake” (4:8-13), Paul elevates his paternal “home instruction” of them in “the word of the cross” over that which they might have gained from worldly pedagogues (4:15) – intimating that their worldly παιδεία had taught them nothing. He then compares their factious behavior as his children with that of Timothy, who has faithfully imitated his example. Timothy, Paul implies, has imitated Paul’s consistent example as a real pedagogue--his status-inverting realization of the suffering of Christ in his self-lowering for them – and through his *mimesis* has become “mature” in faith. In short, Paul implies that Timothy has done what any good advancing student should, embarked on a practice of repetition of his teacher’s wise example that inculcated into his person the pattern of his teacher’s

²⁸ See 1:19, 1:31, 2:9, 2:16, 3:19-20. Throughout 1 Cor. 1-4, esp. in 1:26-27 and 4:10-12, I believe that he also echoes 1 Sam 2:1-10 OG. I argued this case in “Christian ‘Rock’ Music in Corinth?” See below for more discussion of Paul’s citational practice in 1 Corinthians.

παῖδεία, Christ-in-Paul, in such a way that it actually, somatically formed his character into the likeness of Christ.²⁹ It is for that reason that Timothy has been sent to remind the Corinthians of Paul's 'ways in Christ, as he teaches them everywhere in every church' (4:17): he actually embodies Paul's instruction to them just as Paul embodies Christ's "word" or instruction to him. This is why Paul repeatedly adjures followers to follow his example, becoming "imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (11:1). Put precisely, Paul uses the commonplaces of Greco-Roman education in 1 Cor. 1-4, wed to scriptural citations and allusions to scriptural imitation, to teach the Corinthians *how* they shall know and fully realize in their persons the wisdom of Christ. It is by following Paul's example as their instructor that they will learn "not to go beyond what is written."

B. Performance of the Word: Scripture as the Word of Christ/ the Word of Christ as Scripture (1 Cor. 1-2, Rom. 10)

This example builds on the first by focusing on Paul's rhetorical performance of scripture in his letters. My goal is to underscore how reading Paul's letters performatively teaches us how they may have functioned to instruct Paul's audiences, even those who knew little or nothing of scripture, in scripture's "true" meaning and authority for Paul – that it was written to be the living, spiritual foundation for their instruction and exhortation in Christ (15:4).

Recall from Colossians and Ephesians the central paideutic emphasis on Christ dwelling within gentile believers in such a way that they may avoid the beguiling false-wisdom of the Greco-Roman philosophies; may know and do the good, imitating God; and thus, may be formed and transformed through their acts into the body of Christ that comprised the "commonwealth of Israel." In 1 Cor. 1:30, Paul likewise asserts that Christ is true wisdom for believers, a secret kind of wisdom imparted not among philosophers or Roman rulers but among the "mature" in Christ (τελείοι, 2:6-10). Continuing this line of argument in 2:11-15, Paul asserts that the Corinthians possess "not the spirit of the world but the spirit from God" (so that they might understand God's gifts to them. He also argues that he imparts these truths to believers in words of spiritual instruction (ἐν διδασκτοῖς πνεύματος) rather than "words taught by human wisdom" so that those who possess this spirit may be able to judge all things. Not insignificantly, Paul punctuates all three of these main points with terse citational proofs from scripture (1:31, 2:9, 2:16), the second of which is an "Isaianic" composition of his own making. Beyond the fact that the second citation may not even exist (for the Corinthians to have known), there is little evidence in the text for broad intertextual echo of the second and third of these

²⁹ As Jo-Ann Brant shows, the mimesis to which Paul referred was not a mere copying, but a practice of repetition that inculcated the pattern of the original, Christ, into the souls of acting subjects. See Jo-Ann Brant, "The Place of Mimesis in Paul's Thought," *Studies in Religion* 22 (1993) 285-300.

citations.³⁰ Rather, the scriptures seem to function rhetorically to *authorize* Paul's instruction in his gospel of messianic reversal (1 Cor. 1:18-31, 1 Cor. 4) as superior to the Greco-Roman philosophic instruction with which the Corinthian "strong" are apparently enamored.

In short, the Corinthians are taught by *Paul's practice of instructing them in scripture* that the scriptures are the source of their Wisdom and the wellspring of spiritual truth, that which they are not to go beyond in their behavior. This is no small matter, for Paul's efforts at instruction are aimed precisely at underscoring the need for unity in the body of Christ (1 Cor 6, 12:12-13), the need for Corinthians to identify not as high-status worldly "philosophers" but as former-nations (12:2) who as one collective unit uniquely possess the Spirit of God and the mind of Christ (cf. Rom. 8). It is by this Spirit, Paul claims, by *their* Spirit of wisdom alone, that believers had received the spiritual gifts of prophecy and instruction (etc., 12:28-30, 14:6) that enabled them to be "mature" in their thinking (14:21³¹) and to come together to instruct one another with "Psalms, instructions, revelations, and tongues" for the upbuilding of the body (14:26) – in short, to know that "God is really among" them.³² As it does in Wisdom of Solomon, Paul's scriptural wisdom functions rhetorically in 1 Corinthians as the spirit of supreme, divine instruction (πνεῦμα παιδείας) – even for "kings" and "judges" like them (1 Cor. 4; cf. Wisd. 6).

In Romans 10, Paul's depiction of the performativity of scripture as a mode of gentile instruction is even more immediate, for here he personifies scripture as the Word that speaks Christ to "those who can hear." In Romans 9-11 as a whole, Paul applies the rhetorical technique of προσωποποιία to scripture – personifying it as Word--to demonstrate that Christ is the ultimate advantage of *ethnic* Israel for all who believe.³³ 9:33-10:17 contributes to this portrait by depicting Christ as the Living Torah speaking through the gospel. Within 9:30-11:10, Paul exercises the Word in this way to prove a double-functioned truth: that because God gave certain Israelites a spirit of stupor, in their interethnic race for advantage Israel failed to understand that Christ was the aim of

³⁰ I do believe intertextual echo with 1 Sam 2:1-10 OG undergirds the logic of 1 Cor. 1-4 as a unit. I also believe the Corinthians knew this poetic text. See again "Christian 'Rock' Music at Corinth?"

³¹ Note the citation of Isaiah 28:11 as "law." Folk who knew the "law" *well* would recognize the inaccuracy of Paul's portrait. Apparently the Corinthians are not that well-schooled in it. But it serves Paul's purposes here nicely for the "law" (of Isaiah) to authorize Paul's point about the need to be mature thinkers (scriptural "philosophers," if you will) rather than babes in their thinking.

³² Later: more on 4.. the word and progress/perfectibility...i.e., formation of character. Galatians on law of Christ. Lev 19:18; Rom 13:10. [and those that follow] . progress phil 1.25. *Also Christ as (scriptural) wisdom within them. "word of Christ dwell in your richly" (Rom 10:17). Christ as wisdom w/in 1 cor 1:30.

Christ/wisdomofsolomon – pneuma of Sophia dwell w/in them, is pneuma paideia 1.5 6. . word in community. For socialization/formation in counterculture 1 cor 2, 10. [and those who follow]. Sung, interpreted

6. homonoia [jaeger in early Christianity and greek paideia]

³³ As Richard Hays sees, Paul frames 9-11 with the assertion that the Word of God (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) proves that God's faithfulness to Israel had not "fallen" (ἐκπέπτωκεν) in his race on behalf of Israel because most Jews had not accepted Christ (9:6). Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 66-67. On the personification of Christ as Word in scripture, see 75-83. As I've argued elsewhere, Paul's live performance of God's scriptural παιδεία in 9-11 occurs in four movements that build to a call of the nations to obedient kindness toward unbelieving Jews: the definition of Israel as a people of promise (9:1-29); Christ as the Living Torah that speaks now through the gospel (9:30-10:13); God's imposition on Israel of a spirit of stupor that opened the covenant to Gentiles (9:30-11:10); and God's restoration of Israel through Gentiles' act of fidelity in Christ (*fides*), the "good deed" of kindness to Jews (11:11-36).

Torah for righteousness. Introduced with the running of God’s scriptural Word in 9:6, the language of a footrace after “righteousness” frames Israel’s problem in 9:30-10:4³⁴: because their pursuit was unenlightened (κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν, ἄγνοοῦντες) (10:2-3), and they approached the Word from works rather than faith, Israel “stumbled over the stone of stumbling” (9:33) and failed to “reach” the law of righteousness (νόμος δικαιοσύνης, 9:31). Athletic language in 11:11-12--language often used in philosophic texts to depict the agon-izing quality and “hard” work of the pursuit of wisdom--forms an *inclusio* on 9:30 and signals that Israelites pursuing wisdom fell over the meaning of the law (10:3), detaining them in their race for righteousness long enough to allow Gentiles who were not even running to reach the goal of Christ (τέλος) before them.³⁵

Paul further crafts 9:30-33 out of citations of scripture to show vividly that the rock of Israel’s stumbling is the νόμος δικαιοσύνης.³⁶ As Hays details, commentators intent on maintaining a “law-free gospel” in Romans have done exegetical backbends to make νόμος δικαιοσύνης say anything but the obvious: the “law” or Torah “of righteousness” that Israel pursued from works is the goal (τέλος, 10:4) of righteousness that gentiles reached by faith. By implication, pursuing Torah is good, but the aim of the Torah-law has to be something other than the performance of works. While the identity of the “stone of stumbling” (Is. 28:16) is unnamed in 9:33, 10:4 and the repetition of Isaiah 28:16 in 10:11 make clear that “The aim of the Law, the righteousness of God, is Jesus Christ.”³⁷

Paul then vividly demonstrates this point by using προσωποποιία again in 10:5-13 to personify Christ as the *Living* Torah-Wisdom, Righteousness from Faith,³⁸ who speaks the gospel truth Moses writes in a pesher exegesis of Deuteronomy 30: that the one who does works of the law lives not “as if” by works (9:32), but by αὐτή, Righteousness (10:5; Lev.

³⁴ Stowers, *Romans*, 285-316.

³⁵ Stowers, *Romans*, 312-13. Language is of falling, παράπτωμα as “false step,” ἥττημα as “loss [of lead],” πλήρωμα as “completion,” and παραζηλώσω as zealous pursuit of the goal. *Contra* 316.

³⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 75.

³⁷ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 75-76. Based on Badenas’ conclusion (*Christ the End of the Law*) that τέλος must mean “aim,” Stowers also makes this point (304). But he curiously contends that Paul still aims to propound a law-free gospel and that εἰς δικαιοσύνην is an accusative of respect suggesting that “Christ is the goal of the law with respect to God’s plan to redeem the Gentiles” (308). Although Paul definitely argues for the benefit of his Greek audience, this reading of 10:4 seems to me to bend the text into knots. By 11:11 it becomes clear that Paul argues Christ should be the goal of the law for righteousness for Jews and for Gentiles. Only if this is true can Jews like the teacher (3:2) and the men of 10:14-16 be held accountable for having failed to proclaim Christ-in-the-law (if they see Christ to proclaim him, they have grasped that he is the goal of the law for righteousness). Paul’s is *not* a separate but equal future salvation of Jews (by law) and Gentiles (by faith), however much in Romans he is presenting his gospel to Gentiles; rather, his is a salvation by the Jewish law of faith, Christ, which Gentiles have grasped and, Paul is certain, his unbelieving Jewish kindred soon will. Furthermore, all are held accountable to God’s sovereign and lawful judgment on the last day. In 12-15, one of Paul’s points to the Gentiles is that the law of faith accommodates Jews’ performance of ἔργα νόμου without prioritizing them (they have become ἀδιάφορα).

³⁸ Christ is the aim of the law, and without Christ it is impossible to fulfill the righteousness of the law” (Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 4.198, 200). Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.9.42.5: “The Jews did not understand the intention of the law...they had no faith in the prophetic power of the law.”; Novatian, *Jewish Foods* 5 (FC 67:151): “When Christ, the aim of the law, came, he cleared up all the ambiguities of the law and those things which antiquity had shrouded in mystery.”; Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 17 (NPNF 1 11.472): “The man who does not have Christ is a stranger to the law as well.”; Gennadius of Constantinople, *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church* NTA 15:395: “Christ fulfilled the law’s purpose by granting the righteousness which comes by faith in him to all those who accepted him.”

18:5).³⁹ As Righteousness says, responding to the written word of Torah (Lev. 18:5), one need not ascend into heaven nor descend to the abyss to find Christ.⁴⁰ For, Christ, who *is* the living word of faith in Torah, is “on your lips and in your heart” (καρδία, 10:8). In other words, Paul employs the Greco-Roman rhetorical technique of *πρωσοποποιία* to show that Christ is believers’ Living Law. By *performing* the Scripture for his audience, deploying a living, speaking, personified Righteousness, Paul can show that “living by Righteousness” (1:16-17), the Righteousness of Torah, means *understanding* that Christ is the Living Torah who resides internally in believers’ hearts. It is for that reason, because Paul shows rhetorically that Torah is “near you” and speaks the Righteousness of Christ now (rather than through his audiences’ in-depth knowledge of these scriptural texts), that Paul can then instruct the Roman Greeks that *all* those who confess that “Jesus is Lord” and trust in their hearts that God raised him from the dead—whether Jew or Greek—will “not be put to shame” but gain the “riches” and “salvation” of the Lord (10:11). “Faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes from the word of Christ” in Torah (10:17).

In short, for Paul, the living Word of Christ, the gospel message proclaimed and instructed and lived in communities of faith, *is* the realization of the scripture of Israel. It is the goal of the law for righteousness for all who have faith (Rom. 10:5)—*especially* for the “nations” whom he has been commissioned to instruct in faith. “Paul the teacher of the nations in a scriptural education” is not a mere invention of the post-Pauline letters. Rather, the authentic letters suggest that Paul defines his mission to the nations in the culture-transforming, ideological power discourse of his day, that of *παιδεία*. Wed to the scripture of Israel through his words of instruction, his performative example, his exhortations to live the just requirement of Torah (1 Cor. 4, Rom 8:4, 13:8-10), and his assertion that Christ’s Spirit dwells within them, this *παιδεία* enables Paul to portray his gospel as the God of Israel’s “Spirit of instruction,” the (Torah-)wisdom that is Christ, which works within gentile believers’ hearts, which teaches them spiritual truths, and which, through believers’ striving to live them out in imitation of Paul’s example, works an effective transformation of their characters so that they can know and do the will of God and more fully become who Paul teaches them that they are—the Israel of God.

³⁹ On the compatibility of 10:5 and 10:6 and the originality of *αὐτή* rather than *αὐτοῖς* in 10:5, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 76; Stowers, *Rereading*, 308. Textual, patristic, and contextual evidence support *αὐτή*. Because the old Greek of Lev. 18:5 and Gal. 3:12 both have *αὐτοῖς*, it is more likely that the original reading was *αὐτή*, which was later corrected to *αὐτοῖς*. While p⁴⁶ is certainly early, all three uncials witness to *αὐτή*, and unlike the Western tradition, the tendency of the Alexandrian tradition is conservative. Patristic sources in favor of *αὐτή* include Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 4.198, 200; Jerome, *Sermons* 76 (FC 57.137); Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles* 81.345; Diodore, *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church* (NTA 15.101); Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 17 (NPNF 1 11:473). Finally, the language of 10:5-6 does not contain the contrast usually present in English translations. 10:6 says not, “*But* the righteousness of faith says,” but rather “the righteousness of faith *therefore* says” (the strong contrast comes only in 10:8). 10:6 interprets the law of 10:5, it does not correct it.

⁴⁰ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 81.

C. Dealing with Other Teachers (Romans 2:17-4:25)

Paul habitually contrasted his gospel instruction with that of other stashed teachers, whether they were philosophers, orators (1 Cor. 1:20-21), unknown or unnamed troublemakers (Rom. 16:17-18), or fellow believers like Apollos or Cephas whose authority led to strife in Pauline communities (1 Cor 1:10-17; Gal. 2:11-14). Likewise, the first four chapters of Romans constitute cohesive elenchic engagements with two personified rival teachers, the first, a Stoicized Roman leader (1:18-2:16) and the second (following Stanley Stowers' lead in *A Rereading of Romans*), a fellow Jewish teacher of gentiles.⁴¹ In so doing, the teacher Paul follows a standard protreptic practice of demonstrating to his audience his superiority as a teacher by undermining the consistency of his rivals. Hence, after censuring inconsistent Romans rulers for living *παρὰ φύσιν* in 1:18-2:16, Paul launches a second staged protreptic debate for the benefit of his Greek audience, and censures his rival Jewish teacher of gentiles for inconsistent in living his *summum bonum* of life according to Torah law (2:17-24). Although his overall argument in 2:17-4:25 is complex, his goals in 2:17-24 are simple,⁴² and so are his rhetorical methods: He also weds an Isaianic charge of blindness to the truth of the law with a Greco-Roman stereotype of Jewish misanthropic law-breaking to prove the teacher's inconsistency and to undermine his authority (ὁ ἐλεγκτικός).

Who's the Jew and What's His Mission?: Identity and Eschatological Instruction to the Nations. The standard treatment of 2:17 assumes that the "Jew" Paul targets is "the typical Jew...that is, the Jew per se, conscious of his [ethnic] Jewishness, of his distinctiveness from the nations."⁴³ Stanley Stowers rejects that opinion, arguing that Paul's rival is a very particular Jew, a fellow teacher of Gentiles who boastfully claims to instruct the nations in right living while violating his own standard of conduct, the law.⁴⁴ As Stowers describes, everyone from Maximus of Tyre to Plutarch and Epictetus argues that a wise man's actions must match his words for his way of life to be more than a mere "name"—an empty, external sign (like the philosopher's cloak) of status and identity. The man who wants to be wise must desire virtue, an inward character of the heart or mind.⁴⁵ Because "Paul uses the popular philosophical motif of name (*onoma*) versus deed/reality (*ergon*)" that philosophers used to deride boasters and false teachers, Stowers argues that Paul's

⁴¹ This is the argument of *Pax Christi*.

⁴² I argue that Paul seeks to convince his dialogue partner that Judaism and its *summum bonum*, life in accord with Torah, are internal rather than external realities, matters of the heart or spirit (πνεῦμα) rather than the flesh (2:17-29, 4:1-25); Paul's Judaism of the spirit makes Gentile believers a (Stoicized) "living law" that enables them to do the work of Torah (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου, 2:15) while exempting them from practices they dislike (ἔργα νόμου like circumcision); and thus, Paul's good news of the Messiah demonstrates the impartial justice of God and his faithfulness to his promise to Abraham to include the nations in Israel "outside of Torah law" (1:16-17, 3:1-31). To Paul's Greek target audience—whose interests and prejudices shape 2:17-4:25 from beginning to end—the inner-Jewish debate between Paul and the teacher proves Paul's Judaism of the spirit a superior, philosophic way of life that makes Greek believers "inheritors of the world" without demanding ἔργα νόμου.

⁴³ Dunn, *Romans*, 109.

⁴⁴ See Stowers, *Rereading*, 126-175. As will become clear, I strongly disagree with him about the overall thrust of Paul's argument in 2:17-4:25; neither it nor the rest of the letter is an attempt to dissuade Greeks who are overly interested in Jewish law as a means of self-mastery. It is a defense of Jewish law that attends to the stereotyped anti-Judaism of Greeks by redefining law in Greco-Roman terms.

⁴⁵ Stowers, *Rereading*, 145-48; see Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.19.19, 4.8.38-39, 4.10; Plutarch *Progress in Virtue* 78e-f, 79c, 80a-b.

personified rival is a Jewish teacher whose deeds did not match his name or claims about the law.⁴⁶ His inconsistent actions identified him as a bad teacher.

Two kinds of internal evidence support Stowers' contention. First, Paul has already deployed the same (word-deed) motif in 1:18-2:16 to undermine the credibility of the (Roman Stoic) judge of 2:1.⁴⁷ Paul now produces a similar result in 2:17-24 using the same technique of censure for inconsistency, this time focused on the *summum bonum* of law. Second, the language of 2:17-21 identifies the Jew as an educator of gentiles in the law: "you who teach others, will you not teach yourself?" (2:21). Paul's rhetorical audience (which is identified as gentile/Greek from letter's beginning to its end) would clearly hear the educational resonances associated with a Jew who identifies as a παιδευτήν ἀφρόνων and διδάσκαλον νηπίον, who has the embodiment of γνώσις in the law, and is able to approve of τὰ διαφέροντα (2:18, 20). Mentioned only once in the New Testament (Heb. 12:9), a παιδευτής in the wider Greco-Roman world was well known as a "teacher" or "paedagogue." Given that the term is paired with διδάσκαλος, it probably refers to an instructor who casts his way of life as a "more theoretical," philosophic path to virtue.⁴⁸ Both the language of τὰ διαφέροντα and Paul's assertion that the teacher believes he has the "embodiment of γνώσις and truth in the law" further support this case. As Dunn says, τὰ διαφέροντα "is probably used in conscious contrast to τὰ ἀδιάφορα, which was already established as a technical term in Cynic-Stoic ethics in the sense of 'things indifferent, neither good nor bad.'"⁴⁹ Simply put, Paul explicitly identifies the Jew, in Greek and Roman 'philosophic' terms, for his Greek audience, as an instructor in the law as the source of wisdom and moral rectitude.

Isaiah as 'Law' in 2:17-24: Paul's Scriptural Censure of the Jewish Teacher for Ignorance. This identification does not function simply to reveal how some ancients characterized Judaism—as a philosophic 'school' for the pursuit of virtue. It also reflects the perspectival orientation of Paul's critique of the teacher to the "ears" of his audience: Paul deploys rhetoric with which Greeks would agree to reveal to his Greek audience the contempt the teacher's behavior brings on Israel's God in the eyes of the nations. Paul effects this (ethnically biased, stereotyped) censure in two, mutually reinforcing steps: first, by deploying the teacher's scripture against him to underscore the teacher's blindness to the law's instruction as to his purpose as an educator of Gentiles; and second, by excoriating him with a Greco-Roman stereotype of Jews as misanthropic law-breakers.

Paul begins this censure by characterizing the Jewish teacher as steeped in Torah: he "has been instructed out of the law" and has the "embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law" (2:18, 20)—points Paul never challenges (cf. 7:12, 14).⁵⁰ But Paul highlights the irony of this truth in 2:20, 24, when he uses the "law" of Isaiah to portray the teacher as ignorant of what it teaches him about his pedagogical role (2:18, 20).⁵¹ Paul makes this point,

⁴⁶ Stowers, *Rereading*, 148.

⁴⁷ (As we know, Epictetus challenges "those who call themselves Stoics (*Diss.* 2.19.19-38; 3.7.17; 3.24.40)" but do not live according to nature." Dunn, *Romans*, 112; citing Fridrichsen, "Der wahre Jude und sein Lob," 45.

⁴⁸ See Plato, *Rep.* 493c; IG22.1011.35; Cranfield, *Romans* 166-67; see also the wealth of literature on ancient education popularized by Jaegar, *Paideia*; Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*; and enlivened now by, e.g., Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*; Robb, *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece*; Fantham, *Roman Literate Culture*; and Too and Livingstone, *Pedagogy and Power*.

⁴⁹ Dunn, *Romans* 111.

⁵⁰ Cranfield, *Romans*, 167 n. 4.

⁵¹ Paul uses "law" to refer to scripture broadly: he begins *Romans* by teaching his audience that his "good news" was foretold by "God's prophets in the holy writings" (1:2), and in 3:10-19, he uses a catena of

first, by using the language of Isaiah 42:6-7 in 2:19 to depict the Jewish teacher as arrogantly assuming that the Greeks he instructs are “blind” “children,” the “foolish,” and “those in darkness.”⁵² Listen to Isaiah: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold...I have put my spirit upon him to bring forth justice to the nations...I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations (εἰς φῶς ἔθνῶν), to open the eyes that are blind (ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμούς τυφλῶν)...to bring from the prison those who sit in darkness (καθημένους ἐν σκότει).”⁵³ As Paul’s echoes of Isaiah reveal, the irony of 2:19 is that the very same scripture that names the “nations” as “blind” and “foolish” children teaches the teacher that his job is not to feed them the “milk” of an elementary education in living κατὰ νόμον (i.e., ἔργα νόμου), but rather to be God’s messenger who brings justice and the illumination of his covenant to the nations.⁵⁴

As Paul’s use of Isaiah elsewhere in Romans shows, that means proclaiming the good news—the scriptural “word of Christ” (ῥῆμα χριστοῦ) that “everyone who confesses that ‘Jesus is Lord’” and “trusts in their heart” that God raised him from the dead will be saved, for “there is no dividing wall between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon his [name] (10:9, 12, 17).”⁵⁵ In the words of Isaiah 52:7, the teacher, like Paul, is to be a “messenger who announces peace (εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης)...and salvation, saying to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Rom 10:15; Is. 52:7). That message is that the “deliverer will come out of Zion” (Rom. 11:26; Is. 59:20) and as the “root of Jesse, shall rise to rule” the nations (Rom. 15:12; Is. 11:10), so that “all the nations” will be gathered to the God of Israel as an eschatological “offering to the Lord” (Rom. 15:16; Is. 66:18-20). Paul depicts the teacher as deaf to these intonations of Isaianic law, deaf to his role in proclaiming the παιδεία of scripture, the eschatological restoration of the nations into Israel through the “good news” of Israel’s Christ.⁵⁶ Paul depicts the teacher as focused on the works themselves—on mere externals, ἀδιάφορα like the philosopher’s cloak—rather than the “knowledge and truth” about Christ that is embodied in the law (2:25; cf. Gal 6:15). Like gentile idolaters’ blindness to nature’s role as revealer of its Sovereign God (1:18-32), the teacher’s failure to understand this truth of the law is linked to his law-breaking; he cannot teach himself to do the good (2:21).

Paul’s Greek audience may not hear these Isaianic echoes *yet* (those educated in Torah might well hear the Isaianic nuances and ironies at play here, but other members of Paul gentile audience probably did not). But they need not have known the source or context of the citation for this censure to work—that is, to undermine Paul’s rival; it is enough that they hear themselves stereotyped offensively by the teacher and Paul counter that offense with the teacher’s own law. For Paul, adding smug satisfaction to offense, employs Isaiah 52:5 to clarify his scriptural point at 2:24: “The name of God is derided (βλασφημεῖται)

citations from Isaiah, the Psalms, and Proverbs to argue that “the law speaks to those who are under the law.”

⁵² Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 167. Compare 1:14, where Paul calls them “the wise.”

⁵³ See Cranfield, *Romans*, 166.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 167: “for the use of νόμος with reference to those needing elementary instruction compare 1 Cor. 3:1; Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:13.”

⁵⁵ For my exegesis of 10:1-17, see chapter 7. On Isaiah in Romans, see Wagner, *Herald of the Good News*, who shows that Paul likely read his role as herald in partnership with Isaiah.

⁵⁶ *Contra* Stowers, who emphasizes (*Rereading*, 151) that the teachers “agree that gentiles need not be made into Jews”; rather “Jewish teachers think they can make gentiles righteous before God by teaching them to observe certain works of law.” While Stowers is probably correct that the non-Christian Judaism of Paul’s day did not have a strong missionary impulse, Paul’s did, as this reading of the letter will show.

among the nations *because of you*.” Paul argues that the errors resulting from the teacher’s impotence to teach himself the good, errors made before the eyes of the “morons” he deigns to instruct, bring the contempt of the nations upon his God. In other words, Paul uses Israel’s scripture to prove that gentiles’ disdain for Israel results from the teacher’s failure to understand the law’s instruction—*whether or not* they hear the echo that he is, “in fact,” a “messenger of peace and salvation” to the nations (Is. 52:7).

‘Framing’ the Jewish Teacher: Deploying the Greco-Roman Τόπος of the Misanthropic, Lawless Jew (2:17-24). This Isaianic frame of judgment focuses Paul’s dominant line of attack: Gentiles’ contempt for Israel based on the Jew’s inability to do the law—for stealing, committing adultery, robbing temples, and law-breaking—while teaching Gentiles the opposite. James Dunn rightly underscores that this passage has “puzzled many commentators” who do not think Paul wishes to condemn “the Jewish nation *in toto*” and who do not understand the logic behind Paul’s attack, given that the high “moral caliber of Judaism was one of the features which made it most attractive to God-worshippers and proselytes.”⁵⁷ The answer to this puzzle is that 2:17-24 is neither an accurate depiction of Jews *per se* nor is it addressed to Judeophilic God-worshippers and proselytes. Rather, it is a Greco-Roman stereotyped censure of Jews, a censure with which anti-Jewish Greeks could reflexively agree, that addresses Greeks’ shame in Judaism, explaining and justifying it as a function of the inconsistent and blindly arrogant behavior of Jewish pedagogues who fail to understand the Christ-revealing purpose of the law. Put another way, Paul’s censure of the Jewish teacher for inconsistency panders to his Greek audience’s typically Greek and Roman prejudices against Judaism.

Louis Feldman has shown that while some non-Jews lauded Jews for their antiquity and virtuous behavior,⁵⁸ Greeks of the Hellenistic period and Greeks and Romans of the Republican and Imperial periods broadly caricatured Jews as a nation of misanthropes so certain of their ethnic superiority⁵⁹ and the truth of Torah that they were unwilling to debate the premises of their way of life⁶⁰ or to interact with their neighbors. According to Diodorus, Hecataeus (300 BCE) described them as “unsocial” (ἀνάνθρωπον) and “hostile to foreigners” (μισόξενον) (40.30.4).⁶¹ In another report by Diodorus, people encouraged King Antiochus Sidetes to eradicate Jews “since they alone of all nations avoid dealings with any other people and they alone look on all [other] men as their enemies” (34[35].1.1). According to Apion, Jews refused to show goodwill to aliens, especially Greeks (Josephus. *Against Apion* 2.121). Josephus even cites the Stoic Posidonius and Apollonius Molon (1c. BCE) as sources for an account by Apion that a Greek had been kidnapped by Jews and was being fattened for slaughter, after which time Jews would eat him and swear an oath of hostility to Greeks (*Against Apion* 2.79).⁶² Tacitus, writing at the beginning of the second century CE, sums up the Greek and Roman stereotype of Jewish misanthropy when he remarks that Jews regard non-Jews “with all the hatred of enemies” (*adversus omnes alios hostile odium*) (*Histories* 5.5.1).⁶³

The assertion of ethnic supremacy that supports this charge was not without *any* basis in fact:

⁵⁷ Dunn, *Romans*, 112.

⁵⁸ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 177-286.

⁵⁹ Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.67; Celsus, Origen Ag. *Celsus* 5.50.

⁶⁰ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 128, 175. Apollonius Molon in Josephus, Ag. *Ap.* 2.258.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 126. For other charges of human sacrifice, see 126-27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 83-174, esp. 125-26. Cf. Tacitus, *Histories* 5.8.1; Josephus *Ant.* 1.194, 11.212; Lysimachus, Josephus Ag. *Ap.* 1.309; Pompeius Trogus in Justin, *Historiae Philippicae* 36, *Epitoma* 2.15. See Appendix 7.

According to Philo [of Alexandria], the Torah differed from the law of other nations in that it was given by God to the Jews who carry a likeness of the commandments “enshrined in their souls” (*Legat.* 210). Because Jews bear within themselves the standard against which all acts are measured, openness to external influence is not a real option...In general, Philo’s attitude toward pagan religion is condescending and dismissive. Ultimately the Jews will exercise hegemony, as Philo writes in *Mos.* 2.44...In the meantime, Philo regards the spiritual supremacy of his nation as a fact of life.⁶⁴

But “fact” is irrelevant for understanding Rom. 2:17-24; what matters is the verisimilitude of Paul’s charges in Greek eyes. And according to Greek and Roman authors, Jews’ misanthropy and ethnic superiority were obvious from everything they did: from boasts of enjoyment of divine protection, even from their rulers; to a lack of patriotism, even sedition toward Rome; to a blanket refusal to eat or pray or intermarry with non-Jews; to a demand that others accept the teachings of Moses mindlessly, on blind faith rather than by an exercise of reason. Cicero, for instance, rails against the Jewish assumption of “divine protection” when he gripes that “the nation [of the Jews]...has made it clear how far it enjoys divine protection by the fact that it has been conquered, scattered, enslaved” (*Pro Flacco* 28.67). Aelius Aristides cites Jews as a “stock example of impiety [ἄσεβεία] in that they do not recognize their betters [i.e., they do not believe in the gods]” and are “somewhat unsocial and intolerant...[having] seceded from the Greeks or rather from all better people.”⁶⁵ Juvenal (*Satire* 14.100-1) emphasizes that Jews flout the Roman laws, practicing only their own, a criticism Josephus also attributes to Haman.⁶⁶ Philostratus quotes the first-century philosopher Euphrates as describing Jews’ refusal to “mingle with others in common meals, libations, prayers, or sacrifices.”⁶⁷ Finally, folk from Hecataeus to Galen and Rutilius Namatianus scoffed at Jews’ reputation for credulity; accepting their teachings on “sheer faith” and assuming that “everything in nature is due to God’s will,” they imitated Moses, “who framed laws for his followers without offering proofs.”⁶⁸

As is well known, Greeks also accused Jews of displaying their ethnic distinctiveness by “mutilating” their bodies through circumcision.⁶⁹ Strabo, for instance, assumes that circumcision is mutilation and that it is a uniquely Jewish trait when he describes a tribe called the Creophagi who butchered their genitals “in a Jewish fashion” (16.4.9.771). Diodorus likewise associates circumcision with Jews even though other ethnic groups practiced it (1.28.3, 1.55.5). Martial and Justin Martyr even reflect the use of “circumcision” as an epithet for Jews. In Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 1, Trypho identifies himself as a “Hebrew of the Circumcision.” Likewise, “it is quite clear that a Jew is the subject of Martial’s epigram (7.82) about the man who, while exercising himself in public, was

⁶⁴ Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity*, 130-31.

⁶⁵ Feldman, *Jew and Greek in the Ancient World*, 129; Aelius Aristides 46 [*De Quattuorviris* 309].

⁶⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.212; cf. Seutonius, *Claudius* 25.4; Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.68.

⁶⁷ Feldman, *Jew and Greek in the Ancient World*, 128; *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.33. See also Manetho, Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 1.250; Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5.2.

⁶⁸ Feldman, *Jew and Greek in the Ancient World*, 170-71; Diodorus 40.3.6; Galen *De Puls. Diff.* 2.4, 3.3; Rutilius Namatianus *De Reditu Suo* 1.393-94; Horace *Satires* 1.5.97-103; Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.112-14; Galen *De Usu Partium* 11.14. See also the discussion of Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic Schools.”

⁶⁹ On circumcision: Strabo 16.4.9.771, 17.2.5.824; Jos. *Ant.* 16.225, 11.212; Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.1.1-2; Horace *Satires* 1.9.70; Persius 5.184; Petronius 68.7-8, 102.13-14, frag 37; Martial 7.82, 11.94; Juvenal *Sat.* 14.96-99.

unsuccessful in trying to conceal the fact that he was circumcised. In an epigram (11.94) addressed to a circumcised poet, it becomes clear that the reference is to a Jew, because he declares that the poet has been born in the very midst of Solyma, that is, Jerusalem.”⁷⁰ In a word, Greeks and Romans stereotyped the Jewish people as misanthropic in every possible respect—as seditious, unsocial, impious, body-mutilators who were hostile to their neighbors (μισόξενον).

Non-Jews’ charges of Jewish misanthropy, arrogant ethnocentrism, and mindless legalism led inexorably to charges of lawlessness. Lysimachus (2-1 c. BCE) accused Moses of instructing the Israelites to overthrow the temples of other gods and to show no goodwill to outsiders.⁷¹ Romans like Juvenal expressed their incredulity at Jews’ arrogant, impious, and unpatriotic disregard for its laws, such as the worship of the Emperor.⁷² Claudius Ptolemy accused Jews of being unscrupulous (πανουργότεροι) and treacherous (ἐπιβουλευτικοί) in economic dealings.⁷³ According to Josephus, Titus even charged the Jerusalem Jews with taking advantage of the Julian edict, stealing tax money properly due the Romans in order to “grow rich at our expense and make preparations with our money to attack us!”⁷⁴ Worse still, Manetho, Tacitus, and Dio Cassius accused Jews of warring against their neighbors (στάσις), and in the process, enslaving their wives and children, committing murder, and “every other kind of royal crime.” Dio went so far as to say that Jews whipped into a frenzy by the pseudo-Messiah Lukas-Andreas ate the flesh of their victims, made belts from their entrails, anointed themselves with their blood, and wore their skins for clothing.⁷⁵

Can we then be surprised that Paul will exhort his audience to practice hospitality to strangers (φιλοξενία, 12:13), live peaceably (12:18), obey Roman rulers (13:1-7), pay their taxes (13:6-7), and love their neighbors as the fulfillment of Torah (13:8-10)? Given how widespread and longstanding this stereotype of Jewish lawless misanthropy was, we are on safe ground in assuming that both Paul and his Greek audience knew it. Certainly, when compared with the convention, Romans 2:17-25 reads as a stereotyped ethnic censure as vitriolic as it is distinctive from that Paul leveled against the Roman judge. Paul evokes the (reflexively Greek) “truth” that the Jewish teacher is an arrogant Gentile-hater who proclaims the supremacy of Jewish law as “the embodiment of knowledge and truth” to the ways of his Greek and Roman betters, while breaking the law himself (2:17-24). Every critique of 2:17-25 reflects the convention: boastful ethnocentrism and legalism (2:17), the arrogant assumption of Jews’ special wisdom in the law (2:18-20), the treatment of Gentiles as idiotic children (2:19), the refusal to argue the superiority of the law, the focus on circumcision (2:25), the derision of the nations (2:24), and stealing, adultery, and temple-robbing (2:21-23). As Ambrosiaster knew, the focus of Paul’s censure is *not* the law, which he upholds: “The teacher of the law is right to glory in these things, because he is teaching the form of truth.”⁷⁶ The problem, as Chrysostom put it, is that, “What seems to be an

⁷⁰ Feldman, *Jew and Greek in the Ancient World*, 156.

⁷¹ Lysimachus, Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 1.309; cf. 1.249, 264.

⁷² Juvenal *Sat* 14.100-1; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.212 (cited above).

⁷³ Claudius Ptolemy (2 c. CE), *Apotelesmatica* 2.3.65-66.29-31; cf. Juvenal *Sat.* 6.542-47, for the possible charge that Jews act like beggars when they have funds.

⁷⁴ Josephus, *War* 6.335-36; for the perceived vastness of the Temple wealth stolen from the Romans, see *War* 6.282. Dunn, *Romans* 114-15: “we can document at least one case of a Jew in Rome misappropriating funds and gifts intended for the temple—a scandal that resulted in the expulsion of the Jewish community from Rome in A.D. 19 (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.81-14).”

⁷⁵ Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.76, Tacitus, *Histories* 5.8.3; Dio Cassius 68.32.1-2; cf. Apollonius Molon, Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.79; Damocritus, *Suda Damokritos*; Cicero *Pro Fonteio* 14.31.

⁷⁶ Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles* (CSEL 81:83-85).

advantage—being given the law—may turn out to be a disadvantage if one does not keep the law.”⁷⁷ As Paul tells the teacher, “Circumcision is advantageous if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision, and...those who are naturally uncircumcised but keep the law will judge you who have the writing and circumcision but break the law” (2:25-27).

In short, Paul evokes the Greco-Roman τόπος of Jewish misanthropic lawlessness, wed to the citation of Isaiah, in order to show Greek believers that the Jewish teacher’s way of living and interpreting the law is not the best alternative to *Romanitas* (1:18-2:16) because it shames Israel’s God before his “betters.” In other words, according to Paul the teacher’s problem is not simply that he breaks the Torah,⁷⁸ contravening his *summum bonum* through his inconsistency, but that he does so while trumpeting his ethnic superiority and law-obedience *to other nations*; he makes the Jewish God and his law appear foolish, misanthropic, and lawless *before Jews’ rulers*. In the eyes of the very Greeks and Romans who stereotyped Jews as lawless, the teacher has therefore erased whatever ethnic advantage God’s gift of the law held for Jews. As Paul said, quoting Isaiah with finality, “You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.”⁷⁹ For as it is written, “The name of God is being defamed *among the nations* because of you” (2:24). Romans 2:17-25 is a synthesis of scriptural citation and functions as a performative demonstration of Paul’s superiority to rival Jewish teachers as a potential διδάσκαλος of the Roman Greeks in his “Judaism of the heart” (2:28-29). Among other things, therefore, the whole serves as Paul’s self-recommendation as the best Jewish “teacher of the nations.”

⁷⁷ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 6 (NPNF 1 11:368).

⁷⁸ Cf. Ex. 20:14-5, Philo *On the Confusion of Tongues* 163; T. *Levi* 14:5; Ex 20:4-6, Dt. 5:8-10, 7:25-26.

⁷⁹ On reading 2:23 as a summing accusation rather than a question, cf. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 318 and those he cites.