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**“Fulfilling the Law” in Paul’s Epistles:
The Connection between the Old Testament Law and Christian Ethics**

by

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ABSTRACT

Although the Bible is not strictly or primarily moralistic, ethics continue to be an important and unavoidable concern of the Christian life. The role of the OT in developing ethics is frequently debated. One common position begins from Paul's statements that we are no longer under the law (Rom 6:14; Gal 5:18; cf. Rom 3:21; 1 Cor 9:20; Gal 3:10) or have died to the law (Rom 7:4). However, these declarations appear to be in tension with Paul's other statements that Christians fulfil the law (Rom 8:3–4; 13:8–10; Gal 5:13–14). This thesis endeavours to understand the relationship between the OT law and ethics implied by Paul's "fulfilment" statements. Paul never systematizes a hermeneutical approach to the law or a complete ethical code. Rather, he endorses rational ethical discernment employing a renewed mind (Rom 12:1–2) with the aid of the Spirit (7:6; 8:4–7). Significantly, Paul never explicitly encourages his communities to base their ethics on the law, but his "fulfilment" passages imply that the law retains a potential role in Christian ethics. One purpose of the law, as Paul understands it, was to produce a proper pattern of behaviour in Israel. Paul asserts that love is the foundational characteristic of that lifestyle. So the Christian's practice of love preserves the essence of what the law was meant to produce. While Paul discards some specific instructions in the law, this model also implies that significant portions of the law must point toward this same loving practice. Paul's understanding of the OT law thus implies that the law can be used constructively (if selectively) for Christian ethics, even though he did not himself actively encourage such a use for his communities.

DEDICATION

In memory of my father, Albert Friesen, a servant of God
and shepherd to the saints and the lost.

He loved deeply and sacrificed much to serve others.

He rejoiced with those who rejoiced and wept with those who wept (Rom 12:15),
bearing the burdens of others and fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal 6:2).

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most puzzling and paradoxical statements Paul makes in regards to the OT law is found in 1 Cor 7:19: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything” (NRSV; cf. Rom 2:26; Gal 2:3; 5:6; 6:15). This statement takes place in his exhortation that Gentiles (i.e., the uncircumcised) and Jews (i.e., the circumcised) ought to come to Christ in whatever state they find themselves (1 Cor 7:17–24).¹ Yet, Paul was not ignorant that circumcision was in fact God’s command in the OT law (Gen 17:10–14; Lev 12:3; Rom 2:25; 4:11; Gal 5:3). This paradox leads to the general question: How does Paul understand the relationship between the OT law and Christian ethics?² Since Paul is attempting to inculcate Christian ethics, the question can be put another way: What role does Paul understand the OT law to have in developing Christian ethics? In the immediate context, Paul does not clarify what he means in 1 Cor 7:19, although he may illuminate v. 19 later in ch. 9. Parallel statements found in Galatians may also provide some insight.

¹ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 346.

² *Ethics* can be a problematic term when discussing Paul (James W. Thompson, *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011], 5). For the purposes of this thesis, all I mean by ethics are Paul’s moral instructions for how his communities should live.

However, it is likely that the closest Paul comes to specifically addressing the paradox of 1 Cor 7:19 is when he speaks of fulfilling the law (i.e., Gal 5:14; Rom 8:3–4; and 13:8–10).

Much ink has been spilled on Paul's view of the law. Many opinions exist and a study into this topic has numerous potential points of entry. However, Paul's "fulfilment" language is the closest he comes to making an explicit connection between the law and his imperatives.³ This raises the specific question: What do the "fulfilling the law" passages and their contexts suggest about the role of the OT law in Christian ethics? Dunn highlights the importance of Paul's "fulfilment" language when he says that "a radical reinterpretation of the law and of what fulfillment of the law really means is a fundamental part of all the strands of earliest Christianity's distinctiveness over against the prevailing Jewish piety of the day."⁴ Understanding Paul's view of the connection between the OT law and his ethics aids us in understanding his relationship with the other Jewish sects as well as the development of the early church. Furthermore, this understanding is integral to the Christian's pattern of life vis-à-vis ethics and morality. Grasping Paul's view on this topic helps us to appropriate the OT law properly when determining Christian ethics.

Although much has been said about Paul's view and use of the OT law, it remains a complex issue. Through careful examination of Paul's "fulfilment"

³ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 2 vols., WBC 38 (Dallas: Word, 1988), 97.

⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 97.

language, I will attempt to clarify his view of the OT law in relation to his ethics. This thesis will primarily be exegetical, focusing on the biblical texts. Special emphasis will be given to Paul's "fulfilling the law" statements and their contexts. Surrounding textual context as well as relevant historical and intertextual background to Paul's letters will be discussed as needed to elucidate what Paul means when using "fulfilment" language. Additionally, other passages, especially those which demonstrate a negative view of the OT law, will be referenced where necessary in order to determine how they interact with and affect Paul's "fulfilment" statements. I will be reviewing passages primarily in 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans in that order. I will then synthesize my findings in the concluding section. Undergirding this review will be the assumption that Paul can be understood coherently and that he is generally consistent throughout his letters.⁵

⁵ This position is contrary to the conclusions of Räsänen and, to some extent, Sanders. Räsänen's position regarding Paul's understanding of the law is that it is inconsistent and full of problems (Heikki Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 1st Fortress Press ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 264). He sees Paul teaching the abolition of the law and also making positive statements about it which imply a valid application (Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 199). When speaking of fulfilling the law in Rom 13:8–10, Räsänen avers that Paul speaks of Christians fulfilling the law, but ignores any cultic instructions in his summary (Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 28). Generally, Paul is not "conscious" of his "oscillation" (Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 28). With this context, Räsänen suggests that Paul is reducing the law to its moral components, specifically found in the law to love one's neighbour (Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 26–28). Räsänen concludes that the "fulfilment" language indicates that Christians are obligated to observe at least some OT instructions, which contradicts Paul's other statements nullifying the law (Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 63–68). There is no solution for Räsänen that resolves this tension (Räsänen, *Paul and the Law*, 72).

Sanders takes a similar approach to Räsänen's. Sanders still concludes that Paul's statements about the OT law "do not form a logical whole" (E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983], 4). However, unlike Räsänen, Sanders attributes the inconsistencies to the different questions Paul was addressing, each with its own internal logic (Sanders, *Paul*, 4). Regarding Paul's ethics, Sanders states that Paul never made any "generalizing or theoretical distinction" about what aspects of the law form Christian ethics (Sanders, *Paul*, 96; cf. 98).

That Pauline scholars have argued for different frameworks and systems to understand Paul is an added complexity. The debates have been lengthy and continue still, not least between what has been called the “New Perspectives” and the traditional views (such as the Lutheran or Reformed positions). Within this broad spectrum lie varying positions with their own nuances; and the scope of this thesis could not do justice to these debates. Nevertheless, I will interact with various models through their exegesis of the relevant passages. Even then, it is impossible to canvas all frameworks.⁶ The models that are of primary interest are those that provide greater detailed analyses of the texts under review in this thesis. My analysis will thus not depend on any particular paradigm. Moreover, the limits of this thesis do not allow for me to develop my own framework fully. The macro-level and systematic issues are too complex and massive to address here. However, an aspect of a possible model will be sketched out as the texts under review are synthesized in the conclusion.

⁶ For example, the theological construct of Paul as a Torah-observant Jew teaching that it is only Gentiles who are free from the law (e.g., Mark D. Nanos, “The Myth of the ‘Law-Free’ Paul Standing between Christians and Jews,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 4 [2009]: Nanos 1–21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/scjr.v4i1.1511>) expands our examination of Paul’s “fulfilment” statements into too many non-essential texts for the question of this thesis. Under this model, the conclusions of this thesis would likely only apply to Gentiles. That discussion must be left for another time.

2. 1 CORINTHIANS

Although the focus of this thesis is how Paul understands the OT law with regards to “fulfilment” language, it behooves us to look at 1 Cor 7 and 9 in greater detail first. As discussed above, 7:19 is one of the most puzzling and paradoxical statements Paul makes in regards to the OT law and Christian ethics. Through the review of this passage and ch. 9 as part of its context, we will get a better sense of what role Paul may understand the OT law to have in developing Christian ethics. This in turn sets the stage for addressing the specific question about what the “fulfilling the law” passages and their contexts suggest about the role of the OT law in Christian ethics.

(a) 1 Corinthians 7: The Paradox

A clue to the distinction between circumcision and God’s commands in 7:19 may be Paul’s parallel statement in Gal 6:15. Since οὔτε ... περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλά (v. 15 NA²⁷) closely parallels ἡ περιτομή οὐδέν ἐστίν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδέν ἐστίν, ἀλλά (1 Cor 7:19), Thiselton argues that what follows ἀλλά in Gal 6:15 is related to, and so helps to elucidate, what follows ἀλλά in 1

Cor 7:19.⁷ Thiselton's argument, then, is that καινή κτίσις (Gal 6:15) should inform our understanding of τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ (1 Cor 7:19). The commands from God that Paul is referring to are new creation commands (i.e., eschatological; post-Christ event) and exclude circumcision.⁸ Exactly what comprises new creation commands is not identified, but this new reality does not include the requirement of circumcision. A similar argument can be made for Gal 5:6 where οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ is the parallel statement to 1 Cor 7:19 and ἐν ... Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ... πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη (Gal 5:6) may describe the same reality as τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ (1 Cor 7:19). This connection would indicate that the commands Paul has in mind in v. 19, which exclude circumcision, are commands for the new age of the Christ event, which comprise "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6 NRSV). One's faith is revealed through obeying these commands; and these behaviours are acts of love.

Paul may not have developed his thought in 1 Cor 7:19 to the extent he does in Galatians, but the close parallels are not easily discounted. If the linkages are accepted, Paul may be saying that God's commands (1 Cor 7:19) in his present, post-Christ event reality (i.e., in Christ [Gal 5:6]), which inaugurated the new creation (6:15), are equated with "faith working through love" (5:6 NRSV) and exclude at least one practice (i.e., circumcision) that was a significant

⁷ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 551.

⁸ Cf. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, vol. 4 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 1111. See Wis 19:6; 1 En. 72:1; and 1QS IV, 25 where the authors frame or link commandments with the concept of new creation.

ethnic/national indicator (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15; cf. Rom 2:29; Gal 5:2).⁹

While these new creation commands for Paul's community might not be the same as all of those found in the OT law, commands of some kind still exist with a focus on love.¹⁰ These commands exist during the time between the Christ event and the full actualization of God's new creation (i.e., the fully realized eschatology)—and perhaps even indefinitely.¹¹ Since some in the Corinthian community likely had misapplied Christian spirituality and erroneously practiced

⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 657; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 346; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 551; cf. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1036; contra Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 67–68. Wright argues for the development of human character during the inaugurated eschatology: “He shaped his ethical teaching at every point by the combination of the ‘now’ (the Messiah has already died and been raised, the spirit has already been given, the Day has already dawned, the Messiah’s people have been rescued from ‘the present evil age’) and the ‘not yet’ (we have not yet attained what we are promised, we are not yet made perfect, we must judge nothing before the time). And he has seen that the unexpected interval has a specific purpose: to allow a space in which there can be formed a genuine human character, with renewed minds, spirit-transformed hearts and bodily obedience all in tune with one another and with the creator” (Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1125–26). Wright’s view of Paul’s new creation commands prior to the full eschatological realization has strong synchronicity with the possible connection between 1 Cor 7:19, Gal 5:6, and 6:15 discussed here. Commands focused on love and grounded in faith are integral for the development of genuine human character, with renewed minds (Rom 12:1–2) and spirit-transformed hearts.

Regarding ethnic/national indicators, circumcision developed as such an indicator more so after the Babylonian exile. It was after the exile that many Israelites wondered how to define a faithful Israelite, implying concerns about apostates. What becomes evident in the intertestamental writings is that this question developed into defining criteria for Jewish identity (within the context of covenant fidelity). While obedience to the entirety of the OT law was important, three criteria rose to prominence as identity hallmarks: (1) circumcision (e.g., Add Esth 14:15; Jub. 15:11–34; 16:14; cf. m. Ned. 3:11); (2) Sabbath adherence (e.g., 2 Bar. 84:8; Jub. 2:17–33); and (3) OT dietary regulations (e.g., Jdt 12:1–4; Jub. 6:14; 4 Macc. 5:14–6:30; cf. 10:5; Frank Thielman, “Law,” *DPL* 529–42, here 533). This was in part due to religious pressures or outright persecution by occupying forces, most notably the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, on these very issues (e.g., 1 Macc 1:48; 2:15–28; 2 Macc 6:18–31; cf. 4 Macc. 4:26–5:23; Thielman, “Law,” 533).

¹⁰ Insufficient evidence exists simply to conclude that the new creation commands Paul has in mind are an entirely separate body of instructions from the OT law. This will become more evident as we look at the following passages.

¹¹ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 552.

something closely related to antinomianism (e.g., 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23; cf. vv. 6–10, 29–30), it is understandable that Paul would have had to qualify his statement about circumcision with the fact that Christians are still obligated to follow God’s commands.¹² Admittedly, the relationship between 1 Cor 7:19, Gal 5:6, and 6:15 is not explicit. However, the notion that Paul has a set of new creation commands on his mind in 1 Cor 7:19 seems plausible given that Paul clearly identifies that the commandments of God are not the OT law in its entirety. Something has changed between the OT law that contained the instruction of circumcision and God’s commandments to which Paul refers. The Christ event is the best candidate for the event that has transformed the OT law in Paul’s view (cf. Rom 8:3–4).¹³

Whether Paul views the OT law as having been transformed into new creation commands or having no connection whatsoever with the new creation remains to be determined. When Paul says that “obeying the commandments of God is everything” in 1 Cor 7:19 (NRSV), it is unlikely that he is avoiding any connection to the OT law. The pairing of ἐντολή with τήρησις in v. 19 more likely has some relationship to the OT law since it refers to the OT law in Sir 32:23. The OT law is also frequently the reference when ἐντολή is paired with synonyms for τήρησις (e.g., τηρέω [Matt 19:17] and φυλάσσω [e.g., Lev 22:31 LXX; Deut 4:2,

¹² Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 347. Rosner raises this context again when Paul states that, although he becomes as one outside the law in 1 Cor 9:21, he is not lawless towards God (or without God’s law) and is subject to Christ’s law (Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 31, ed. D. A. Carson [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013], 118).

¹³ Another interesting similarity of this interpretation (specifically Gal 5:6) with Paul’s discussion of the law’s fulfilment (Gal 5:13–14; Rom 13:8–10) is that love plays an integral part.

40; 5:29; 6:2, 17; 30:10, 16 LXX; 3 Kgdms 2:3 LXX; 4 Kgdms 17:13 LXX; 1 Chr 28:7–8 LXX; Ps 118:4, 60, 63, 134, 168 LXX; 1 Macc 2:53 LXX]).¹⁴ Without further explanation, Paul’s audience would likely have understood Paul’s reference to τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ as referring to the OT law.¹⁵ This would have made Paul’s statement appear all the more paradoxical since God’s new creation commandments are not that law in full.

(b) 1 Corinthians 9: An Ethical Standard

In 1 Cor 9, Paul moves a step further from ch. 7 in clarifying the relationship between the OT law and his ethics. Paul speaks of the law in relation to how he conducts himself. This move may provide further insight into what Paul means in 7:19. Paul uses himself as an example in ch. 9 of giving up his rights—in this case as an apostle—in order to facilitate sharing the gospel (9:12; cf. vv. 22–23). Since

¹⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 155; Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 101. Schreiner states that there are over 40 occurrences of φυλάσσω with keeping God’s commandments in the LXX (Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 156). Less likely is Rosner’s contention that Paul’s audience would have understood God’s commandments to have no relation to the OT law, but rather to Paul’s commandments (e.g., 1 Cor 14:37; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 37–38, 128–30). It is quite possible that Paul wanted to leave the paradox in 7:19 unresolved at this stage to grab the attention of his audience—making the point that there is more to the gospel and God’s desired pattern of living than circumcision or social status (i.e., slavery in this case; vv. 17–24). Even if this is not the case, the parallel statements (i.e., Gal 5:6 and 6:15)—where “obeying the commandments of God” (1 Cor 7:19 NRSV) is replaced by something else—are insufficient to claim that the commandments of God must mean something wholly other than the OT law. There may be more subtlety that Rosner does not investigate.

¹⁵ Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 113. There is no evidence that Paul restricted God’s commands in 1 Cor 7:19 to the Noachide laws or laws found in nature that were separate Gentile ethics as opposed to the OT law for Jews. In 1 Cor 7:18, Paul speaks of those who are circumcised or uncircumcised. This indicates that he is addressing both Jews and Gentiles when he speaks of obeying God’s commandments in v. 19. For Paul to be referring to two separate bodies of commands with a single term seems unnecessarily convoluted.

Paul is “free with respect to all,” specifically regarding financial ties, he is able to serve everyone “so that [he] might win more of them” (v. 19 NRSV).¹⁶ Paul provides specific examples of how he has become “a slave to all” (v. 19 NRSV) “for the sake of the gospel” (v. 23 NRSV) in vv. 20–22. It is in these examples that he touches upon his relationship with the law, specifically regarding his different conduct when with Jews as opposed to Gentiles.¹⁷

In making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, being “under the law” in v. 20 (NRSV) qualifies the state of “being a Jew” which Paul talks about earlier in the same verse. Since Paul was already a Jew, it is odd for him to say that “[t]o the Jews [he] became as a Jew” (v. 20 NRSV). Paul is likely referring to practices and behaviours that marked one as a Jew rather than one’s ethnicity due to birth.¹⁸ Paul does not identify which practices those are, but it is safe to assume he has at least circumcision (7:19) and dietary regulations (8:8; 10:23–33) in mind.¹⁹ Given

¹⁶ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 470.

¹⁷ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 471–72.

¹⁸ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 472–73; Heikki Leppä, “The Torah in Galatians,” in *The Torah in the Ethics of Paul*, LNTS 473, ed. Martin Meiser (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 59–69, here 60 n. 4; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 48–51; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 104; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 702; Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 417.

¹⁹ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 472–73; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 417. Adeyemi unconvincingly argues that Paul has idolatry in mind rather than Jewish identity markers in 1 Cor 9:20–21 (Femi Adeyemi, “The New Covenant Law and the Law of Christ,” *BSac* 163 [2006]: 438–52, here 442). Paul has moved from the specific issue of eating food offered to idols (8:1–13; cf. Paul’s related but new focus on actual idol worship in 10:1–22) to the broader principle of giving up one’s rights for the benefit of another (9:1–15; cf. the application of his instruction about eating food in 8:7–13; see Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 102, 104). Not eating food offered to idols so as not to make another Christian fall is likely included but should not limit Paul’s principle; and one should not downplay the parallel between “became as a Jew” and “became as one under the law” in 9:20 (NRSV) in order to conclude that Paul clearly meant to exclude all OT instructions from Christ’s law—even if this remains a possibility.

Paul's willingness to become "as one under the law" (9:20 NRSV), he immediately clarifies that he is actually "not under the law" (v. 20 NRSV).²⁰ At the very least, Paul is saying that he is not obligated to observe certain religious regulations which were closely associated with being a faithful Jew, even though he does observe them in certain situations for the sake of the gospel. The resonance with his statement about circumcision in 7:19 is notable: There are at least some commands in the OT law that are no longer obligatory for Christians.²¹

Paul then moves from speaking about being with Jews to being with Gentiles. When with "those outside the law" (i.e., Gentiles), Paul becomes "as one outside the law" (9:21 NRSV).²² Specifically, Paul is speaking of the "lawless" (τοις ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος). This "lawless" state likely defines the

Moreover, Paul identifies the Gentile as being "weak" in 8:7 (NRSV) regarding eating the food offered to idols (cf. the parallel between Gentiles being "outside the law" in 9:21 [NRSV] with "the weak" in v. 22 [NRSV]). It is at least some Gentiles who had significant concerns about eating food offered to idols. Jews under the law would also have had these same or similar concerns. If Paul only had this issue of idol worship in mind when writing vv. 19–23, the weak Gentiles he identifies in v. 22 would most certainly be the same as those identified in 8:7. (This is not at all certain as Thiselton's discussion reveals. See Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 705–6.) If both the Gentiles and Jews Paul identifies in 9:20–22 had the same concerns, Paul's distinction of these two groups and his own behaviour when with each of them becomes meaningless. That Paul has increased his scope to a broader principle is more probable; and this opens up the possibility that Paul has in mind the socio-religious practices that distinguished the Jews from Gentiles. (Regarding circumcision and dietary regulations reflecting Jewish identity, see the second paragraph of n. 9.)

²⁰ The larger context of 1 Cor 9:19–23 addresses behaviour, not just rhetoric or verbal proclamation (e.g., 8:1–13; 9:3–7). Because of this context, it is difficult to accept Nanos's argument that Paul is only referring to his preaching strategy (i.e., arguing from the position or understanding of either a non-Christian Jew or Gentile; see Nanos, "Myth of the 'Law-Free' Paul," Nanos 18). There is no explicit evidence in 9:19–23 that Paul is limiting his focus on that rhetorical aspect of his ministry and excluding his behaviour (e.g., Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 701–2).

²¹ It is important to note that the position that the entire OT law is no longer obligatory is not excluded by anything Paul says in 1 Cor 9:20.

²² Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 51; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 703.

Gentiles in opposite terms from Jews who were “under the law” in v. 20 (NRSV). If this is the case, then being outside the law implies an absence of the rituals and practices that marked ethnic Jews (e.g., 10:27). However, Paul could still mean that not being under the law refers to the entire OT law and/or covenant obligation. In either case, Paul feels the need to clarify immediately this statement lest his audience conclude he is lawless or even just acting lawlessly. Paul qualifies himself with a parenthetical statement that he is not “lawless” (i.e., godless)²³ in any sense since he is “not free from God’s law” (9:21 NRSV).²⁴ Yet, what does Paul mean when he refers to God’s law? He may not be making a specific reference to God’s law if one takes θεοῦ as an objective genitive, meaning Paul says he is “not ... lawless toward God” (μὴ ὄν ἄνομος θεοῦ).²⁵ If θεοῦ is taken as a subjective genitive, then Paul would be referring to God’s law (i.e., not “without [God’s] law”).²⁶ In any event, both translations must amount to the same conclusion: Paul is restricted to behave in some sense according to God’s will.²⁷ Paul is, in fact, subject to “Christ’s law” (ἐννομος Χριστοῦ; v. 21 NRSV; cf. Gal 6:2). As opposed to Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 7:19, he makes a clear distinction in 9:21 that whatever standard he is beholden to is related to

²³ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704.

²⁴ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474.

²⁵ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474; cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704.

²⁶ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474.

²⁷ Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 9, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 97.

Christ. It is Christ's law that meets God's standards but differs from the OT law in some way.

As earlier, when we asked what God's law was, the obvious question stemming from v. 21 is: What is Christ's law? Fee argues that Christ's law is not actually a law and Paul is only using that term as "wordplay involving 'law' compounds."²⁸ Under this view, there is no new set of laws replacing the OT law, although Christ's law does contain commands which we find Paul giving his communities and which reflect Jesus's life and teachings.²⁹ This position may find partial support when Paul speaks of commands from God which are not directly found in the OT law, and some of which are interpretive developments of OT instructions (e.g., vv. 8–14; 14:37).³⁰ At the same time, the fact that Paul directly quotes the OT law (9:9) for support (v. 8 when Paul asks rhetorically *Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ* and then states that the OT law says the same thing) indicates that a relationship with the OT law is not absent. Indeed, Paul claims that the OT instruction was "written for our sake" (v. 10 NRSV; cf. Rom 15:4).³¹

²⁸ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474–75.

²⁹ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 475; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704. Thiselton cautions that Christ's law should not be understood as only Jesus's ethical teachings, but the full scope of Jesus's life and person as witnessed through the gospel (Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704). Rosner supports a similar interpretation for Gal 6:2 (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 117). Winger's position is interesting in that he rejects any connection with codified instructions or Jesus's life but equates the law of Christ solely with the Spirit (Gal 5:16–25; Michael Winger, "The Law of Christ," *NTS* 46.4 [2000]: 537–46). Thompson argues that the parallels between Gal 5:14 and 6:2 indicate that Paul "associates 'the whole law' with 'the law of Christ'" (Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 126).

³⁰ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 98.

³¹ Additionally, Rosner observes that when Paul discusses his sexual ethics in 1 Corinthians, "the language he uses ... echoes the law" (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 196; also Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1125). Rosner suggests that OT legal connections, sometimes with the use of distinct LXX terminology, are found in Paul's instruction against incest

Entering the debate any further regarding the exact nature of Christ's law would take us too far afield from our current purpose. Nonetheless, what can be taken from Paul's statement regarding Christ's law is that he adheres to some code of conduct related to Christ (cf. Gal 6:2).³² Again, this makes eminent sense if Paul wished to counteract the extreme view of some of the Corinthians that they were free to do anything.³³

This parenthetical qualifier about Christ's law, then, supports two possible interpretations. Given that Paul "became as a Jew" (1 Cor 9:20 NRSV) in the sense of fully behaving as Jews "under the law" (v. 20 NRSV) with their socio-religious practices that identified them as Jews, one option may be that God's/Christ's law only excludes those commands that distinguish Jewish national, ethnic, religious, and/or cultural practice.³⁴ The question remains for this option as to what, if any, commands from the OT law form at least a part of God's/Christ's will since not all are reiterated or carried over, so to speak. Whatever the answer, it is most likely that Christ's law corresponds to God's

in 1 Cor 5, homosexual conduct in 6:9, going to prostitutes in v. 18, and also Paul's discussion of marriage and divorce in ch. 7 (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 196–97; cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 411–12, 417, 444–48). Therefore, Paul's sexual ethics may demonstrate the potential influence the law, as well as other OT sections, had on their development (Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 689–92; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 162; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 411–12, 417, 444–48).

³² Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704–5.

³³ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 475; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704–5.

³⁴ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 704.

commands which must be obeyed, which Paul speaks of in 7:19.³⁵ A weakness of this first option is that Paul speaks of the OT law in general terms in 9:20–21 rather than explicitly distinguishing specific practices. The second option is that, since Paul is not specific in identifying the exact laws that comprise being “under the law” (v. 20 NRSV) or what exactly he is “lawless” from (v. 21), the entire OT law is in view in these verses (i.e., how Paul would have understood the law before his conversion, which likely falls under one’s obligation to the Sinaitic covenant; cf. Phil 3:4–6). If all OT laws are in scope, this option leaves open the question as to what ethical instructions comprise God’s/Christ’s will if there is no connection with the OT law. Given Paul’s use of the OT law in 1 Cor 9:8–10 and his inclusion of specific OT instructions in Rom 13 (see discussion below), this is unlikely. More probable is that Paul understands himself to be free from covenant obligation which includes the entire OT law. However, being free from obligation to the Sinaitic covenant and its legislative body does not preclude that some OT instructions form part of, are formative for, or are at least similar to Paul’s ethics. Regrettably, Paul does not provide a clearer answer to these questions in 1 Corinthians. At a minimum, Paul’s position in 1 Corinthians is that a standard of behaviour continues to exist for Christians and it is not the entirety of the OT law. This standard of behaviour has come about due to the Christ event and may relate to Christ, be part of the new creation, and be lived out with faith through love.

³⁵ Cf. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474.

3. GALATIANS

(a) Galatians 5: Leveraging the Law

Unlike in 1 Corinthians, Paul makes the connection between his ethics and the OT law explicit in Galatians: “For the entire law is fulfilled [πεπλήρωται] in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” (Gal 5:14 NIV; cf. Lev 19:18). Galatians 5:14 is one of three statements in Paul’s epistles where he talks about the law (νόμος) or some aspect of it being fulfilled (using πληρώω)—Rom 8:4 and 13:8 being the other two (cf. ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Gal 6:2]). Of course, the context of this verse is essential to understand Paul. The first issue to examine is what Paul’s negative statements of the law mean. In the previous verse (5:13), Paul confirms the Christian’s freedom from “the powers of the old age” which include “sin, ‘the elements of the world,’ false gods, and especially the law” (cf. 3:22–25; 4:3, 8–9, 24–31).³⁶ Earlier in Galatians, Paul identifies some areas from which Christians are free. He argues against adherence to circumcision (5:2–3) and holy days (4:10) since the agitators in Galatia were likely insisting that Gentile Christians follow not just the Jewish identity markers but the whole law.³⁷ It is possible that the agitators had limited the requirements at

³⁶ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 343.

³⁷ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 222; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 227.

that time to circumcision since Paul feels it necessary to emphasize that circumcision obligates one to obey the whole law (5:3).³⁸ However, it is more likely that the Galatians, including the agitators, understood that adherence to all of the OT law was part and parcel of adopting the identity markers, including circumcision.³⁹ Circumcision was seen by some as the more difficult instruction for a Gentile to observe and, therefore, often the last one adopted (e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 20.38–39).⁴⁰ It is more probable that Gentiles would have already consented to the rest of the OT law if they had come to the point of circumcision. Even in Galatians itself, we see evidence that other instructions besides circumcision were likely expected (e.g., Gal 4:10). In v. 21, Paul addresses some of the Galatians as wanting to be under the law generally, not just circumcision.⁴¹ This general statement also supports the view that the agitators likely expected adherence to all of the OT law. Furthermore, once circumcised, the common understanding or assumption was that one's identity was now that of a Jew, an identity that included a lifestyle of observing all OT instructions (e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 13.257–258, 319; m. Pesah. 8:8; cf. Jas 2:10; 4 Macc 5:20–21; m. 'Abot 2:1; 4:2).⁴² If this is the case and the Galatians were already aware of their obligations, the question

³⁸ Fung, *Galatians*, 222; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 226–27.

³⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1993; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 265–67; Moo, *Galatians*, 323–24; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 313–14.

⁴⁰ Dunn, *Galatians*, 266; Moo, *Galatians*, 323; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 314.

⁴¹ Moo, *Galatians*, 323; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 314.

⁴² Dunn, *Galatians*, 265–66; Moo, *Galatians*, 323; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 314.

remains: Why did Paul feel it necessary to make this link explicit when he says, “Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised”—a prominent Jewish identity marker—“that he is obliged to obey the entire law” (Gal 5:3 NRSV; cf. 3:19–26)? Schreiner avers that Paul is referring to 3:10, emphasizing that “all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse” (NRSV).⁴³ There is no consensus over exactly what Paul means in v. 10, or why he connects “[relying] on the works of the law” with “a curse” (NRSV).⁴⁴ What v. 10 shows clearly, though, is that taking on the obligation “to obey the entire law” in 5:3 (NRSV) would mean bringing God’s curse on oneself. Paul is thus even clearer here than in 1 Corinthians that Christians are not obligated to observe the entirety of the OT law.⁴⁵

In Gal 5:4–6, Paul reveals the result of the legal obligation that comes with circumcision and states that such an approach leads to separation from Christ (v. 4). He counters that circumcision is adiaphoron (v. 6), which, given the context of v. 3, implies that the obligation to obey the entire OT law is not applicable. To be clear, Paul’s concern regards the obligation of doing (ποιέω) the entire law (ὅλον τὸν νόμον; v. 3), not merely an erroneous understanding of it.⁴⁶ With the above context, it is most probable that the freedom Paul identifies in v. 13 includes, at

⁴³ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 314; similarly Moo, *Galatians*, 324–25; cf. Dunn, *Galatians*, 266–67.

⁴⁴ Paul’s view of the Pharisaism of his day vis-à-vis relying on the law and being obligated to obey it is still heavily debated (see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 227).

⁴⁵ Moo, *Galatians*, 322.

⁴⁶ Moo, *Galatians*, 323–24; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 139.

the very least, freedom from any obligation to do the whole OT law. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Paul has qualified the Galatians' freedom; the Galatians are not supposed to be self-indulgent but serve each other through love (v. 13; cf. 6:2).⁴⁷ Ethics of some kind still exist that restrict the Christian's freedom.⁴⁸ The freedom Christians have from the law is not one of libertinism, but of the freedom to "[l]ive by the Spirit" and not to "gratify the desires of the flesh" (5:16 NRSV; cf. vv. 1, 13, 17–18).⁴⁹

The second issue to examine is how Paul's concern about doing the law interacts with his statement about fulfilling the law in 5:14. At first blush, Paul's negative statement about keeping the law (vv. 3–6) appears to contradict his positive statement that the entire law is fulfilled by loving others (v. 14). One possible resolution to this ostensible paradox is to conclude that it is not the Galatians who fulfil the law. If they neither keep the law nor fulfil it, there is no real contradiction. Moo takes this position and suggests that the implied agent of the passive verb *πεπλήρωται* in v. 14 is not the Galatian community, but Christ through his teaching (e.g., Matt 5:17), life, and sacrifice since (1) *πληρώω* is used in the NT to refer more often to eschatological events; and (2) Paul emphasizes the Galatians' life in Christ that leads to a Spirit-filled life of love.⁵⁰ Although Moo does not deny that Christians ought to follow ethical standards, his

⁴⁷ Fung, *Galatians*, 244–45.

⁴⁸ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 241.

⁴⁹ Moo, *Galatians*, 343.

⁵⁰ Moo, *Galatians*, 348.

conclusion regarding Gal 5:14—that Christ is the implied agent rather than Christians—is problematic. Paul exhorts the Galatians to “become slaves to one another” in v. 13 (NRSV) immediately prior and warns them not to destroy each other immediately following (v. 15). The focus of this section on the Galatians’ behaviour indicates that the Galatians are the agents. It is less probable that Paul switches from the Galatians to Christ and back again without a clearer indication. Fung, on the other hand, avoids the issue of having to determine the implied agent and argues that *πεπλήρωται* should be taken as a gnomic perfect “expressing a general maxim.”⁵¹ The implication of this argument is that Christians are not fulfilling the law because this aphorism speaks generally of the way things are rather than of who does what. Even if that were the case, the *γὰρ* in v. 14 indicates that it would be a maxim that supports Paul’s imperative in v. 13.⁵² If there is no agent implied directly, the connection between vv. 13 and 14 strongly supports the conclusion that the Galatians are indirectly implied to be the agents.⁵³ This conclusion comports with Paul’s use of the same verb in Rom 13:8, also in the perfect tense (*πεπλήρωκεν*), which clearly indicates that the Christians are the agents fulfilling the law (see below).

⁵¹ Fung, *Galatians*, 246 n. 14.

⁵² Cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 126.

⁵³ The logic proceeds like this: As a truism, Lev 19:18 is the fulfilment of the whole OT law (Gal 5:14). The Galatians are instructed to love and serve each other (v. 13). Loving and serving each other is a direct reflection of Lev 19:18, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal 5:14 NRSV). Therefore, what the Galatians are instructed to do also fulfils the law.

Having concluded that it is Christians who fulfil the whole law, we must determine what this fulfilment entails. When Paul speaks of the whole law being fulfilled (5:14), does he mean every single instruction is completed by the Christian through loving others? It is unlikely that Paul views all OT instructions as reducible to Lev 19:18, searching for the love principle in each one.⁵⁴ Many commands found in the OT law pertain to situations absent a neighbour, such as how to treat animals (e.g., Deut 22:6–7). Moreover, Paul has already excluded parts of the OT law (e.g., circumcision [Gal 5:2–3] and holy days [4:10]) for the Christian. In the alternative, is Paul replacing every OT commandment with Lev 19:18? This is also unlikely given the possible meanings of πληρώω in Gal 5:14. *Replacement* is not a notion πληρώω carries within its semantic range.⁵⁵ The context would need to be clear that Paul actually means replacement.⁵⁶ It is more likely Paul has the law as an indivisible unit in mind rather than each individual instruction.⁵⁷ Paul's decision to use ὁ ... πᾶς νόμος in v. 14 rather than outlining specific commands supports this view. Even in Rom 13:9 Paul includes a catch-

⁵⁴ Dunn, *Galatians*, 291; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 646 n. 102; cf. Leppä, "The Torah in Galatians," 67; contra Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 27.

⁵⁵ "Πληρώω," *BDAG* 827–29; Dunn, *Galatians*, 289; cf. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 815; Bernard O. Ukwuegbu, "Paraenesis, Identity-Defining Norms, or Both? Galatians 5:13–6:10 in the Light of Social Identity Theory," *CBQ* 70 (2008): 538–59, here 546.

⁵⁶ Contra Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 124; but cf. Stephen Charles Mott, "Ethics," *DPL* 269–75, here 271; Stefan Schreiber, "Law and Love in Romans 13.8-10," in Meiser, *Torah*, 100–119, here 117.

⁵⁷ Dunn, *Galatians*, 288; Fung, *Galatians*, 245; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 121; Ukwuegbu, "Paraenesis," 545. Räisänen argues that Paul is reducing the law to its moral components (Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 26–28).

all phrase, “and any other commandment” (NRSV), when listing specific commandments (see below). It is probable Paul is making the claim that the totality of the law “has found its full expression in a single word or is summed up under one entry” (i.e., Lev 19:18) since loving others is the quintessence, the defining character, of the OT law.⁵⁸ The lifestyle that the law was intended to produce is so strongly connected to Lev 19:18 that one can be said to be living that lifestyle if the command to love is obeyed.⁵⁹

Of course, Paul most likely has some specific commandments in mind as ones that a loving lifestyle fulfils (e.g., Rom 13:8–10). He may have viewed some commands, or the principles found within them, as universal and, as such, integral to the law’s endorsed pattern of life—primarily those involving love.⁶⁰ Paul may also be assuming that some commands that do not involve love must be applied in a different way given his new context.⁶¹ For example, some laws, such as

⁵⁸ “Πληρώω,” *BDAG* 828; also Dunn, *Galatians*, 290. See the parallel between πληρώω and ἀνακεφαλαίω in Rom 13:8–9 and the discussion below.

⁵⁹ Fung, *Galatians*, 245–46; Mott, “Ethics,” 271; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1078; cf. 1110; contra Moo, *Galatians*, 347 n. 8.

⁶⁰ George W. Knight, III, “The Scriptures Were Written for Our Instruction,” *JETS* 39.1 (1996): 3–13, here 10. Paul points out in Gal 5:22–23 that there is no conflict between the fruit of the Spirit and any law—the OT law most probably being on Paul’s mind (Fung, *Galatians*, 273; Moo, *Galatians*, 366–67; cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 263). Thompson avers that the fruit of the Spirit is an “elaboration” on what Paul means when he speaks of fulfilling the law (v. 14) since Paul states that “[t]here is no law against” the fruit of the Spirit (v. 22 NRSV; Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 127). This is possible, but Paul’s point may simply be that the law is no longer necessary to produce such ethics (cf. 3:23–26; Dunn, *Galatians*, 313). Ukwuegbu makes a clear separation between the mores in the law and the fruit of the Spirit and suggests that Paul, in Gal 5:23b, is claiming the law has no relevance for Christians since they follow the Spirit (Ukwuegbu, “Paraenesis,” 550). This position does not give sufficient credence to the fact that the law generally reveals sin and also contains instructions Paul supports (e.g., the love command in Lev 19:18) which are reflected in the fruit of the Spirit.

⁶¹ Knight, “Scriptures,” 10.

casuistic instructions, may have been pedagogical—useful for teaching about the law’s endorsed pattern of life—for their own time and in their own context.⁶² Some of these instructions may also be pedagogically useful after the Christ event but without obligatory force in Paul’s context (e.g., 1 Cor 9:8–14; cf. Gal 3:23–4:7; Let. Aris. 144). It may be that these instructions with a pedagogical function are not necessarily constitutive of the law’s pattern of life even though they help direct people towards that pattern. Additionally, Paul may be assuming that the other commands that do not involve love are not essential to the lifestyle the law was meant to produce (e.g., circumcision; Gal 5:6; 6:15). What is more, Paul undoubtedly sees the actions enjoined by other commands as hindering that lifestyle in the new context of his community and the Christ event. Galatians 2:11–14 is a clear example where OT dietary instructions were impeding the new priority of Gentile inclusion in God’s kingdom.⁶³ Paul confronted Peter when Peter separated himself from eating with Gentiles “for fear of the circumcision faction” (v. 12 NRSV). For Paul, this was “not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel” (v. 14 NRSV). Due to the new reality and priorities of the gospel, those OT instructions which were impeding the gospel and its aims needed to be

⁶² The Letter of Aristeas espouses a similar view that some instructions, especially those concerned with animal care, should not be taken at face value. Instead, they should be understood as pedagogical and used allegorically or principally: “Do not take the contemptible view that Moses enacted this legislation because of an excessive preoccupation with mice and weasels or suchlike creatures. The fact is that everything has been solemnly set in order for unblemished investigation and amendment of life for the sake of righteousness” (Let. Aris. 144 [Charlesworth]).

⁶³ Fung, *Galatians*, 106–11; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 79–80; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 140–41, 146.

disregarded and did not form part of the proper lifestyle for God's people in this new gospel reality. As can be seen in this brief discussion, possible options for how Paul used the OT law vis-à-vis his ethics exist. Nevertheless, Paul's thinking in 5:14 is simply not that systematic and calculated. The law as a whole unit is more at the forefront, especially the general pattern of life it was intended to produce.

Even with the conclusion that the Galatians fulfil the law as described above—i.e., by living the pattern of life the OT law was meant to produce and which is characterized by love—is Paul directing them to fulfil the law or merely stating a factual outcome of a Christian life? Longenecker argues for the latter and that Christians are not obligated to fulfil the OT law, but that the fulfilment of the law is a natural consequence of Christians living a life of love in Christ with the Spirit.⁶⁴ Westerholm, whom Longenecker quotes extensively, states, “ ‘Doing’ the law is what is *required* of those ‘under the law’; ‘fulfilling’ the law is, for Paul, the *result* of Christian [*sic*] living *the norms of* [*sic*] *which are stated in quite different terms*” (italics original).⁶⁵ Essentially, this position concludes that Paul never instructs his communities to fulfil the law; he merely states it as a matter of fact.⁶⁶ This interpretation, however, contains a difficulty similar to that in Moo's contention that the implied agent is Christ. Paul directs the Galatians to serve one

⁶⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 242–43; see also Moo, *Galatians*, 348.

⁶⁵ Stephen Westerholm, “On Fulfilling the Whole Law (Gal. 5:14),” *SEA* 51–52 (1986–1987): 229–37, here 235.

⁶⁶ Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 434.

another in v. 13—δουλεύετε is an imperative—and then warns them of the negative consequences of not following his instruction in v. 15. Paul is clearly instructing the Galatians even if the negative consequence of disobedience is a natural outcome. It would be peculiar for Paul to break this flow if v. 14 was a theological side comment that amounted to telling the Galatians that they, as Christians, will naturally do what they are not doing (as indicated by the fact that they needed instruction from Paul in v. 13). It makes better sense that Paul is using v. 14 to support his imperative in v. 13, as indicated by the connecting γάρ.⁶⁷ The importance of serving one another is seen in the fact that that behaviour fulfils the law and corresponds with a command from the OT.

This connection between Paul's ethical imperatives and the OT law raises an important question: If Paul is concerned that the Galatians not observe the whole law, why does he even make this connection? Given the agitators' probable focus on adherence to the whole OT law, v. 14 is likely supposed to function as a counterproposal of sorts that supports Paul's ethic in v. 13. Since the agitators and those they had influenced would have held the OT law as foundational for their way of life, Paul may be making this connection between his ethics and the OT law—a view Paul himself accepted—to bridge their view of the law with his ethical instructions. This would minimize the agitators' perceived differences between their own understanding of the OT law and Paul's argument even if not fully eliminating them. Paul may be using this argumentative strategy to facilitate

⁶⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 243.

his audience's acceptance of his teachings. As Moo states, "Paul carries over this focus on the law from earlier in the letter because he needs to assure the Galatians that the Christian life as Paul understands it is fully able to provide that conformity to the will of God that the agitators were apparently claiming could be found only by submission to the law of God."⁶⁸

At this point, it is beneficial to consider the broader issue in Paul's letter to understand how his "fulfilment" statement is supposed to function in that larger argument. The broader issue concerns who belongs to the family of Abraham and his promise (3:15–18; 4:21–31). In contrast, Paul's "fulfilment" section is addressing how one is supposed to live as part of that family and promise. Paul responds earlier to the broader concern, answering that it is through Christ, "born according to the Spirit" (4:29 NRSV), that one becomes part of this family and promise (2:15–16; 3:16, 18; 5:1). On the immediate ethical concern vis-à-vis fulfilling the law in 5:13–14, Paul now focuses on discussing proper and improper behaviour. This can be seen by Paul's language following v. 14 when he speaks of living "by the Spirit" (v. 16 NRSV), "doing what you want" (v. 17 NRSV), being "led by the Spirit" (v. 18 NRSV), and "works of the flesh" (v. 19 NRSV) with his list of vices (vv. 19–21). To have any traction with those in the Galatian community who believed all who are part of Abraham's family are obligated to observe the OT law,⁶⁹ Paul would need to be making some connection between

⁶⁸ Moo, *Galatians*, 346.

⁶⁹ Cf. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 63.

the Galatians' behaviour and the OT law to demonstrate the sufficiency of his alternative.⁷⁰ Although one belongs to Abraham's family through Christ, the proper pattern of life under that framework is still connected with the OT law as a fulfilment of it. Therefore, with the surety of belonging to Abraham's family and promise through Christ, the pattern of life espoused by Paul does not invalidate or revoke one's membership in that family and promise. Even if this is how v. 14 fits into Paul's argument, it still seems perplexing for Paul to teach that Christians are not obligated to observe the whole law but should fulfil the law. A factor to consider in order to ease this tension is that the obligation to keep the whole law when one gets circumcised (v. 4) is likely connected with being a member of the Sinaitic covenant (e.g., Exod 12:44; Lev 12:3; Josh 5:2–9; cf. Gen 17:13; Luke 2:21–27; Acts 7:8).⁷¹ Both circumcision and the Sinaitic covenant were strongly identified with Jewish ethnicity and practice, which included adherence to the entire OT law.⁷² The obligation to keep the whole law in this context may flow from the covenant; that is, since every single instruction forms part of the covenant, those who are obligated to adhere to the covenant must observe all the instructions.⁷³ At a minimum, it is this aspect of the law—the covenantal obligation—from which Christians are free. At the same time, it bears repeating

⁷⁰ Sanders, *Paul*, 97. This connection can still be maintained even if fulfilling the law is ultimately eschatological, a consequence of justification, and the work of the Spirit (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 335).

⁷¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Circumcision," *DPL* 137–39, here 138.

⁷² See the second paragraph of n. 9.

⁷³ Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 208.

that it is unlikely Paul has fully divorced his ethics from the OT law. That would be self-contradictory since it is the law itself that is fulfilled by a command found in the OT (i.e., Lev 19:18), which is directly related to Paul's imperative in Gal 5:13. Obeying the commands of the law is no longer a covenant obligation. Still, the law as a whole encourages the same pattern of life God desires from Christians insofar as its instructions embody the love commanded in Lev 19:18.⁷⁴

What can safely be concluded so far is that Paul was leveraging the overlap between his imperative and the OT law to persuade the Galatians to adhere to his Christian ethic. He did this even while disputing any covenantal obligation for the Christian to the OT law. The practical implication of this conclusion is that Paul's Christian ethic at the very least includes the behaviour found in Lev 19:18, even without covenantal obligation.⁷⁵ With a proper filtering or weighting of the various OT commands, the OT law as a whole "remains a valid expression of [God's] will" for Christians even if some of the OT instructions and covenant obligation are excluded from Paul's Christian ethics due to the new reality of the Christ event (cf. Col 1:9–10).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Mott, "Ethics," 271; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 208.

⁷⁵ Cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 126; n. 60.

⁷⁶ Fung, *Galatians*, 247; Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 126–27. As Schreiner concludes, "Love does not go around the moral norms of the law, nor does it violate them, but it does transcend them" (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 335).

4. ROMANS

Compared with 1 Corinthians and Galatians, Romans contains similar themes regarding the relationship between the OT law and Paul's ethics. In Rom 2, Paul separates circumcision from the ability to observe the law (cf. 1 Cor 7:19). In Rom 5–7, Paul discusses the relationship between the law and sin, one aspect of which is that the law reveals sin—the converse of proper living. This leads into Paul's discussion about an aspect of the law being fulfilled in relation to Christians (8:4; cf. Gal 5:14). In Rom 12–15, Paul provides a programmatic statement about discerning ethics (12:1–2) and then lists several instructions. Near the end of that list, however, Paul indicates that “the scriptures” are instructive for his community (15:4 NRSV). In between chs. 12 and 15, Paul again addresses the issue of the law being fulfilled (13:8–10). All of these passages have strong points of contact with the previous discussion and provide insight into how Paul may be relating the OT law to his ethics, specifically using “fulfilment” language.

(a) Romans 2: “Real Circumcision”

Although Paul discusses the law in Rom 2 within the framework of Jews having gained an advantage through the covenant, including the law and circumcision (vv. 17–29; cf. 3:1–2), it is helpful to look at how Paul views the law in relation to one's behaviour within that framework and compare it to how he speaks of that

same issue explicitly for the Christian community. Paul identifies that he is speaking to an individual Jew who relies on the OT law and boasts of his relationship to God (v. 17). Moo posits that this Jew is a “debating partner,” a rhetorical device.⁷⁷ This interlocutor may not be reflective of actual Jewish belief and Paul may not have intended him to be. In contradistinction, Dunn suggests that this Jew is representative of the “typical Jew.”⁷⁸ Regardless, resolving this debate is immaterial to our concerns. What is important is the problem Paul highlights regarding the position of this Jew. Through a series of rhetorical questions (vv. 21–23)—the affirmative answer for which is implied in v. 24—Paul highlights the problem that this Jew was not adhering to his own teachings of the OT law.⁷⁹ Possibly mirroring a similar concept as in Gal 5:3, Paul affirms that circumcision “is of value if you obey the law” (Rom 2:25 NRSV).⁸⁰ The converse to this statement is that the law is of no value if one breaks it (v. 25).⁸¹ What is

⁷⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 159.

⁷⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 109.

⁷⁹ Diverging views exist as to why Paul uses the examples he does since it is unlikely pious Jews would have seen themselves behaving this way (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT 6 [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998], 133–34). These may be hypothetical if Paul’s interlocutor is a rhetorical debating partner. Suffice it to say that Paul is raising a concern about hypocrisy when the interlocutor breaks the law in the situation Paul presents and, ultimately, argues against.

⁸⁰ Schreiner, *Romans*, 138.

⁸¹ In arguing this position, Paul ignores the traditional sources of grace within the Sinaitic covenant. The sacrificial system, sometimes accompanied by restitution, was available for many transgressions (Lev 2:13; 4:1–6:7, 24–30; 7:1–7). Paul’s argument that circumcision becomes uncircumcision if one breaks the law (Rom 2:25) implies and depends on the fact that there is no means to atone for one’s transgressions under the law. Paul may have concluded that the sacrificial system was no longer efficacious since Jesus had taken on the role of being a sacrifice and the purpose of the sacrificial system had moved to the cross (e.g., 3:21–26; Schreiner, *Romans*, 138). In any event, this aspect of Paul’s argument is also not significant for our purposes here.

significant is how Paul speaks of this conclusion in v. 25. He says that, if one who is circumcised breaks the law, that person's circumcision "has become uncircumcision" (v. 25 NRSV). Paul continues this theme of transposing circumcision and uncircumcision as he expands his argument. One who is uncircumcised can "keep the requirements of the law" to a degree that "their uncircumcision [will] be regarded as circumcision" (v. 26 NRSV) even though this individual remains physically uncircumcised (v. 27). Paul redefines the concept and category of circumcision by qualifying "true circumcision" and "real circumcision" as an internal, spiritual state which is demonstrated by obedience to the law without concern for physical circumcision (vv. 28–29): "Real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual" (v. 29 NRSV). As in 1 Cor 7:19, Paul separates the OT command to be circumcised from the pattern of behaviour endorsed by the OT law.⁸² One who is uncircumcised is still able to "do by nature things required by the law" (Rom 2:14 NIV). Paul points to a certain universality of the law: Although they "do not have the law," Gentiles who are still able to "do by nature things required by the law ... are a law to themselves"

⁸² Paul is most likely referencing the OT law in this passage when using νόμος since he refers to the common distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Rom 2:10, 14, 24–25; Dunn, *Romans*, 99; Moo, *Romans*, 145; Schreiner, *Romans*, 140). Gentiles were viewed as ἀνόμωος by some Jews regardless of their behaviour since they had not received the OT law; and Paul refers to Jews as ἐν νόμῳ (v. 12; cf. vv. 17–18) because they had the OT law (Moo, *Romans*, 145–46). However, Paul eventually undermines this distinction (e.g., v. 26).

(v. 14 NIV).⁸³ However, Paul does not explain the nature or details of this universality.⁸⁴

There is debate about who these uncircumcised Gentiles were, whether they were Christians, and if they were even real or merely hypothetical. For our concerns, it is not necessary to determine whether Paul is speaking of Christian Gentiles, non-Christian Gentiles, or any other specific kind of Gentile in vv. 12–16 and vv. 25–29. What is important is that Paul does not take a common Jewish perspective of Gentiles as ἀνόμωος.⁸⁵ Rather, he acknowledges the possibility that Gentile moral behaviour may sufficiently comport with OT instructions—at least sometimes—so that the uncircumcised Gentile’s status could be “regarded as circumcision” (v. 26 NRSV; cf. v. 29; 2 Esd 3:36).⁸⁶ Sadly, what Paul means by Gentiles being “regarded as circumcision” (Rom 2:26 NRSV) is unclear.

To understand why Paul is making this distinction regarding “real circumcision,” we must look at this distinction within his larger argument. Paul’s main point when discussing Gentiles being considered “circumcised” is that all people, Jews and Gentiles, are guilty for knowingly sinning and will be held accountable (vv. 12, 15–16; 3:9). Paul also emphasizes that possessing the law

⁸³ John C. Poirier, “Romans 5:13-14 and the Universality of Law,” *NovT* 38.4 (1996): 344–58, here 348.

⁸⁴ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 922.

⁸⁵ The Letter of Aristeas holds a similar view that at least some Gentiles are aware of the content of the OT law without having that law (Let. Aris. 5, 15, 234, 267, 279–80, 292; cf. 247, 282).

⁸⁶ Dunn, *Romans*, 98; Moo, *Romans*, 150–51; Schreiner, *Romans*, 124, 121, 139; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 415–16.

does not itself give his Jewish interlocutor preferential treatment—compared to the Gentile—if he does not obey it (2:9–11; cf. vv. 28–29; 3:9).⁸⁷ Put another way, the law does not exempt the interlocutor from judgement when he disobeys (2:28–29; 3:9).⁸⁸ In making these points, Paul challenges circumcision and the protection of the Sinaitic covenant when its laws are not followed (2:28–29).⁸⁹ While not Paul’s main point, the implication of what he is saying is that it is conceivable for Gentiles at times to adhere to the OT law, keeping some of “the requirements of the law” (v. 26 NRSV), so that at least in those moments they are regarded as circumcised without actually being circumcised.⁹⁰ It is important to note that Paul is not advocating for observance of the OT law. He makes this argument to shift his audience’s paradigm of salvation and righteousness. Neither Jews nor Gentiles are saved through observance of any compilation of the OT instructions. Both people groups require another means of salvation (3:21–24, 27–30). In making this point, Paul does not flesh out his understanding of the relationship between his ethics and the OT law. Paul’s current argument emphasizes a different issue: No one can keep the law sufficiently (v. 23), which leads to condemnation for all. However, there is a parallel, although not direct,

⁸⁷ Dunn, *Romans*, 99.

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 99, 107; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1035–36.

⁸⁹ Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 145–46; Schreiner, *Romans*, 118, 140–41; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1036–37. It is not that Paul teaches an absolute rejection of circumcision; rather, it has become irrelevant (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15; Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 165–66).

⁹⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 98, 127.

relationship between Paul’s discussion in ch. 2—that true circumcision is internal, spiritual, and corresponds with the law’s endorsed lifestyle without physical circumcision—and his discussion later in Romans that Christians can fulfil the requirement of the law with the Spirit (3:31; 6:19–22; 7:6; 8:4; 13:8–10).⁹¹

(b) Romans 5–7: The Law and Sin

Before analyzing Paul’s statement about “the just requirement of the law [being] fulfilled in us” (8:4 NRSV), it is helpful to assess the relationship he depicts between sin and the law. In ch. 5, Paul speaks of being “justified by faith” (v. 1 NRSV) and being reconciled through Jesus (v. 11). In order to emphasize the necessity of these truths, Paul identifies the plight of humanity—i.e., sin and condemnation (vv. 8, 10, 12–14, 16–21)—that requires this justification and reconciliation. Importantly, the law is never far from Paul’s discussion about sin. Although sin existed before the law was given, it is when the law is given that sin is counted against a person (v. 13). What is more, when the law was given, sins multiplied (v. 20; 7:5). The good news is that Christians who are united with Christ no longer live in the sphere of the law, sin, and death; instead, they live in the sphere of grace, righteousness, and life (6:1–14). Anticipating an abuse of this Christian freedom from the law in ch. 6, Paul argues that, even though not under the law, Christians are not free to sin because the purpose of being united with Christ is “walk[ing] in newness of life” (v. 4 NRSV; cf. 7:6) and being set free

⁹¹ Dunn, *Romans*, 107, 127; Moo, *Romans*, 146–48, 171, 254–55; Schreiner, *Romans*, 143, 145, 208.

from sin to “become slaves of righteousness” (6:18 NRSV). In no uncertain terms, Paul emphasizes that sin leads to death (v. 23). Paul begins ch. 7 by returning to the theme of dying to the law through Christ in order to live “in the new life of the Spirit” (7:1–6 NRSV). Christians have “died to the law” (v. 4 NRSV) and are “discharged from the law” (v. 6 NRSV). However, fearing that his audience would think he is conflating the law and sin given the connections he has made in chs. 5 to 7, Paul inserts a clarification about the OT law’s role before leading his audience back to Christ as the solution to their plight (7:7–25).⁹² Since Paul tied the law so closely with sin, he clarifies a potential confusion by emphatically denying that the law itself is sin (v. 7). At the same time, it is the law that reveals sin (v. 7). That the law identifies sin is not Paul’s main point, but it has potential implications for his ethics. The logical follow-up question to v. 7 is: Has the standard or concept of sin revealed by the law changed after the Christ event?⁹³

⁹² Each instance of νόμος in Rom 7:7–22 is most likely the OT law, with the possible exception of v. 21. Outside of vv. 7–22, ἕτερος νόμος ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου (v. 23), ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας (v. 23), and νόμος ἁμαρτίας (v. 25) are also possible exceptions (Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 200; cf. Angelika Reichert, “A Literary Analysis of Romans 7.7-25a,” in Meiser, *Torah*, 70–99, here 75 n. 22). See the different arguments regarding Rom 7:21 in Dunn, *Romans*, 392–93; Moo, *Romans*, 460; Schreiner, *Romans*, 375–77; Klyne Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law,” *JSNT* 32 (1988): 93–113, here 105–7; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 200; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 323.

⁹³ It is unnecessary to determine whether the *I* (ἐγώ) in Rom 7 is a pre-convert or convert to Christianity. Although one’s status relative to the law changes, the law’s role of revealing sin does not change with an individual’s conversion. Any change in the law or of its roles is associated with the Christ event (e.g., 7:25–8:4; esp. 8:3). The analogy from marriage in 7:1–6 does not undermine this conclusion. As an overview, the analogy regards an individual no longer being bound to the law (vv. 1, 4). Being freed from the law was necessary to be bound with Christ (v. 4). This change in status was necessary to escape our slavery to sin “aroused by the law” (v. 5 NRSV; cf. v. 6). Given this description, the analogy is not so much concerned with the general revelation of sin but, rather, escape from sinning altogether and being slaves “in the new life of the Spirit” (v. 6 NRSV). Even in the marriage analogy, the law’s prohibition against adultery never changes. It is the woman’s legal status that changes after her husband dies so that she is able to remarry without violating that continuing prohibition—but, again, this is not Paul’s point. We

Any answer to this question must be held tentatively since this is not Paul's primary concern. Nevertheless, these concepts are significant enough in Paul's arguments to warrant further inspection vis-à-vis his ethics.

There are strong indicators that Paul assumes a consistent concept of sin both before and after the Christ event. This does not mean that all that the OT law specifically required continues to be binding on Christians. This clearly cannot be the case for Paul since he excludes circumcision (2:25–29; cf. 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2–3), dietary regulations (Rom 14:2–3, 6; cf. 1 Cor 8:8; 10:23–33), and holy days (Rom 14:5–6; cf. Gal 4:10). However, that the general pattern of a sinful life is still revealed by the law after the Christ event is likely. This conclusion is largely supported by three of Paul's statements: (1) sin existed before the law (5:13; cf. 2:12); (2) the law reveals sin which is the converse of the pattern of life that fulfils the law (7:7; 13:9); and (3) Paul exhorts the Romans not to sin as they did before they converted to Christianity (6:1–2, 12–13, 15–18).

Beginning with the first proposition, although sin, condemnation, and judgment gained strength with the law (vv. 13, 20; 7:5, 8–11), a sinful life was still possible before the giving of the law (5:12–14). Besides scriptural warrant for this position (Paul discusses Adam's sin in vv. 12 and 14), Paul also identifies the existence of death and its dominion prior to the law as evidence that sin was at work—it had power (vv. 12, 14; cf. v. 21; 6:16, 20, 23).⁹⁴ It is interesting that

should not push the analogy too far given Paul's limited focus in his explanation (vv. 4–6; see Moo, *Romans*, 412–14).

⁹⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 275.

Paul does not explicitly discuss the notion of some kind of universal law, similar to 2:17–29, to address the gap between Adam and Moses (although Poirier argues for an implicit reference).⁹⁵ Nevertheless, that sin existed indicates that, by definition, some ethical standard also existed.⁹⁶ If sin can exist without the law, the same concept of sin and general pattern of a sinful life may still exist when the law was given (see the second proposition below). If so, it would be unlikely that this concept of sin would change after the Christ event even when one does not “possess the law” (2:14 NRSV; cf. v. 12) or is no longer under the law (see the third proposition below). This conclusion, however, cannot be gleaned solely from 5:13. The second and third propositions are required.

Since sin existed without the law, it is evident that, when the law came, the law did not create the category of sin (or righteousness for that matter) but revealed it.⁹⁷ This is the second proposition. Paul makes this point explicit in 7:7

⁹⁵ Poirier argues that Paul wants his audience to draw the inference that, since “[d]eath requires sin ... and sin requires law” and “[d]eath reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses,” those living and dying before Moses were subject to the “Adamic law” (Poirier, “Romans 5:13-14,” 352–53). Poirier goes on to suggest that there is no material distinction between Paul’s use of ἁμαρτάνω and παράβασις in Rom 5:14; rather, the context generally indicates that the latter term is used with a specific infraction and the former is a more general concept, both of which lead to death (Poirier, “Romans 5:13-14,” 353–55; contra Moo, *Romans*, 330). Poirier concludes on this point that Paul implies that there is a universal aspect of the law that existed before the law was given to Moses (Poirier, “Romans 5:13-14,” 354).

Schreiner suggests that the distinction Paul is making is that, before the law was given, “sin [was] not reckoned” (5:13 NRSV) in the sense that a specific transgression (παράβασις) against an explicit commandment was not recorded against a person (except Adam who did transgress the specific instruction received directly from God; v. 14; Schreiner, *Romans*, 279). This allows for individuals still to be accountable for sin (ἁμαρτάνω) even without specific transgressions, albeit a bit awkwardly.

⁹⁶ Poirier, “Romans 5:13-14,” 354.

⁹⁷ Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 269 n. 18. The contextualization of sin as part of the law’s revelation is evident in the casuistic commands.

when he says, “Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin” (NRSV). Paul uses γινώσκω when speaking generally about the law and οἶδα when speaking of his example instruction (both in v. 7). It goes too far to parse out significant differences between the two terms, especially when the latter statement is used explicitly to clarify the former.⁹⁸ Yet, the question remains as to what kind of knowing Paul is talking about. Paul has already stated that those without the OT law may still be aware of the proper pattern of life revealed by the law without having it (2:12–16).⁹⁹ Therefore, it is more likely that Paul’s focus in 7:7 is that, by explicitly revealing what sin is, the person comes to experience that sin in a more vivid way, “for what it really is.”¹⁰⁰ This is evident when Paul says that “through the commandment [sin] ... [becomes] sinful beyond measure” (v. 13 NRSV).¹⁰¹ Additionally, Paul also indicates that the specific instructions are used by sin to intensify the desire to sin (v. 5) and increase the frequency and variety of sinful behaviour (v. 8).¹⁰² Nevertheless, part of this experiential knowledge is also noetic.¹⁰³ The law heightens one’s experience of sin but also reveals what sin is since the latter is necessary for the former. After all, in Paul’s example instruction in v. 7, the law has to identify the commandment not to covet

⁹⁸ Schreiner, *Romans*, 365–66; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 378–79.

⁹⁹ Moo, *Romans*, 433; Schreiner, *Romans*, 366.

¹⁰⁰ Moo, *Romans*, 433–34.

¹⁰¹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 366–67.

¹⁰² Moo, *Romans*, 420; Schreiner, *Romans*, 366–67.

¹⁰³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 366.

first (ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις) before sin can seize the opportunity to “produce ... all kinds of covetousness” (v. 8 NRSV).

Since the law reveals sin, it is important to ask if the concept of sin changed from the time before the law was given to when it arrived. Certainly, the law contextualized sin with some of its instructions. Even within the OT, there is evidence that laws changed and were adapted to the evolving structure and centralization of Israelite society, specifically from a tribal to urban culture.¹⁰⁴ This does not appear to be Paul’s concern, however. There is no indication that the concept of sin—either the power/reign of sin or its general content—has changed from ch. 5 (i.e., before the law) to 7:7 (i.e., under the law).¹⁰⁵ Therefore, we would not expect the general pattern of sinful behaviour to change after the Christ event either. This is the third proposition to consider. This proposition is supported by the evident connection Paul makes between the pattern of sinful behaviour and righteous behaviour revealed by the OT law. The instruction Paul uses as an example to demonstrate that the law reveals sin, i.e., οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις (7:7; cf. Exod 20:17 // Deut 5:21), is an instruction specifically included in Rom 13:9 (also οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις) where Paul describes the pattern of life by which Christians fulfil the law (vv. 8–10).¹⁰⁶ Thus, it is more likely that the general

¹⁰⁴ See Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 23–52, 98–143; Bernard M. Levinson, “McConville’s ‘Law and Theology in Deuteronomy,’” *JQR* 80.3–4 (1990): 396–404, here 399; Christiana van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, JSOTSup 107 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 73–74.

¹⁰⁵ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 135.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. n. 60.

concept of sin revealed in the law is the same as the sin to be avoided by Christians. This conclusion becomes even more apparent when Paul speaks of the possibility of his current audience's continuing to sin after they are saved (6:1–2) without any indication that the concept of sin has changed between chs. 5 and 6. Even if Paul is referring to the realm of sin—as opposed to specific sinful behaviour—in 6:2, specific behavior cannot be separated from the realm of sin; and Paul is still clearly concerned that those who no longer live in the sphere of sin avoid sinning.¹⁰⁷ Paul instructs his audience not to “let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies” (v. 12 NRSV) and to “[n]o longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness” (v. 13 NRSV).¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, avoiding the pattern of sinful behaviour revealed in the law is not the same thing as relying on the law as the exclusive source of one's ethics. As discussed earlier, Paul clearly excludes specific OT instructions and teaches that Christians have no obligation to the Sinaitic covenant and its legal stipulations.¹⁰⁹ Rather than pointing back to the law to discern proper living and avoid sin, Paul points to the community's obedience “to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted” (v. 17 NRSV). Paul is likely referring to the apostolic teaching under which the Romans were placed.¹¹⁰ They have “been set free from

¹⁰⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 358; Schreiner, *Romans*, 331–32, 334.

¹⁰⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 336, 399; Moo, *Romans*, 384.

¹⁰⁹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 330, 336.

¹¹⁰ Moo, *Romans*, 401; Schreiner, *Romans*, 335. Dunn's conclusion that it is Christ's example to which the Romans were entrusted is unconvincing (Dunn, *Romans*, 343–44). Schreiner criticizes Dunn's position on this point: “Dunn ... relies too much on the other uses of the word τύπος in detecting a personal reference to the transforming influence of Jesus himself. Surely, the

sin [and] have become slaves of righteousness.” (v. 18 NRSV). Although Paul does not endorse the law as the basis for his ethics and the standard for righteous living, a connection remains. The apostolic teaching given to the Romans must encapsulate a pattern of living that is the converse of the sin revealed by the law, even though covenant obligation and specific OT instructions are discarded.¹¹¹ Therefore, it is very probable that the general pattern of a sinful life is still revealed by the law after the Christ event. This coheres with what Paul implies later in ch. 13 (discussed below), that the OT law reveals the proper pattern of life God wills for his people.

(c) Romans 8: The Law and the Spirit

If the OT law reveals the pattern of sinful living which Christians ought to avoid, what exactly comprises the standard of living which Christians ought to follow? As was mentioned earlier, Paul likely points to apostolic teaching in 6:17—which may be informed by several different sources—but does not explicate that teaching. Paul is clear that, at the very least, the Jewish identity markers are excluded. Even though the basis for their exclusion is the new reality inaugurated by the Christ event (2:29; 3:21–31; 6:1–6, 14; 7:1–6; Gal 5:2, 6; 6:15; cf. Eph 2:11–16), Paul does not reveal a complete hermeneutical model to exhaustively identify all aspects of this proper lifestyle. Given that things have changed with

God who delivered them over to this pattern of teaching is the agent of transformation, but τύπον διδαχῆς is not itself personal.” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 336).

¹¹¹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 330, 336.

the Christ event, it is reasonable to ask more specifically how Christians are supposed to approach the OT law, if at all, in order to discern this pattern of life. Although not fully answering these questions, Paul may provide some insight in Rom 8:1–8 when he expands on the solution (7:25) he identifies for the problem in ch. 7 (vv. 8–11, 23–24).

The conclusion of Paul’s argument in ch. 7, indicated by ἄρα νῦν in 8:1,¹¹² is that there is no condemnation for Christians (v. 1). Christians are set free “from the law of sin and of death” by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (v. 2 NRSV). This conclusion, however, still has implications for Christian ethics vis-à-vis the OT law since the ἵνα connecting v. 4 to v. 3 indicates the purpose of what God did.¹¹³ Because of the Christ event, God “condemned sin in the flesh, so that [ἵνα] the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (vv. 3–4 NRSV). It is necessary to determine what the “just requirement [δικαίωμα] of the law” being fulfilled is (v. 4 NRSV) in order to ascertain if there is a nexus between that requirement and Christian ethics. It could be (1) the just punishment for violating the law (cf. 1:32); (2) justification/forensic righteousness; or (3) the behaviour/righteousness required by the law (cf. 2:26).¹¹⁴ The first option is unlikely since it is not the punishment that is fulfilled in the Christian and it does not fit well with the rest of

¹¹² Moo, *Romans*, 472.

¹¹³ Moo, *Romans*, 481.

¹¹⁴ Moo, *Romans*, 481.

Paul's statement.¹¹⁵ The second and third options are not mutually exclusive and both probably form an aspect of δικαίωμα.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the second option is unlikely since the context and flow of Paul's argument from ch. 7 indicates a problem with submitting to God's law (e.g., 8:7) rather than one's status before God.¹¹⁷ The third option is most likely since Paul defines those in whom the δικαίωμα is fulfilled as those "who walk [περιπατοῦσιν] not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (v. 4 NRSV).¹¹⁸ Περιπατέω, found in v. 4, often refers to one's ethical manner of life (e.g., Rom 13:13; 14:15; 1 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 4:2; Eph 2:10; 4:1; 5:2; Col 1:10; cf. 2 Cor 10:2–3; Gal 5:16).¹¹⁹ This third option is also supported when looking at the broader context of Paul's argument. What Christ does, which the law could not, is deal with sin in the flesh (Rom 8:3).¹²⁰ This refers to 7:7–25 where sin is identified as what prevents individuals from doing the good of the law.¹²¹ The implication is that, once sin is dealt with by Christ, the

¹¹⁵ Moo, *Romans*, 481–82.

¹¹⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 404–5; Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 151–52.

¹¹⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 482; cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 119; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1037.

¹¹⁸ Kevin W. McFadden, "The Fulfillment of the Law's ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑ: Another Look at Romans 8:1–4," *JETS* 52.3 (2009): 483–97, here 485, 490; Moo, *Romans*, 482; Mott, "Ethics," 271; Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 151.

¹¹⁹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 406.

¹²⁰ The law in Rom 8:4 is undoubtedly the OT law since the inability of the law (v. 3) is directly related to v. 4 and refers back to Paul's discussion about the law's inability to ensure one does good works (7:5–25; Sanders, *Paul*, 99). Jewett avers it is the law "in its unity" (Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 485).

¹²¹ The law's role of revealing sin, discussed in ch. 7, still carries over into ch. 8, especially v. 7 (Dunn, *Romans*, 424; Schreiner, *Romans*, 404–5).

impediment to doing the good of the law is removed.¹²² This ethical focus also exists regardless of whether the implied agent of πληρώω in 8:4 is Christ or Christians. Since πληρώω is an aorist, passive, subjunctive, Paul may be stating a general maxim without emphasizing an agent. Nevertheless, Christ could be the implied agent since it is what Christ does that allows for the just requirement to be fulfilled in the Christian (v. 4).¹²³ Alternatively, the implied agent may be Christians since Paul refers to “us, who walk ... according to the Spirit” which likely relates to the “just requirement of the law” being fulfilled (v. 4 NRSV), as discussed earlier.¹²⁴ This latter option would be consistent with Paul’s “fulfilment” statements in Gal 5:13–15 (see above) and Rom 13:8–10 (see below). In either case, Christian ethics is still very much in view when Paul indicates that what Christ has done makes it possible or even inevitable for Christians to walk according to the Spirit (8:4; cf. 7:6, 24–25; 8:7–8).¹²⁵ Therefore, it is highly probable that the just requirement of the law that is fulfilled in the Christian is a pattern of ethical living.

¹²² Schreiner, *Romans*, 406.

¹²³ Moo, *Romans*, 483; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 123; contra Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 65–66; and Sanders, *Paul*, 98.

¹²⁴ Räisänen takes ἐν ἡμῖν in Rom 8:4 as “among us” and interprets the implied agent as the Christians and that the Christians’ fulfilment of the law is a “fruit” of salvation (Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 65–66; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 485–86).

¹²⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, 424; Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 45; Moo, *Romans*, 484–85; Schreiner, *Romans*, 404–5; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1037, 1078. While Rosner takes Christ as the agent, he posits that the person’s conduct is not far behind in Paul’s mind (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 123).

Even though proper living forms part of Paul's argument, he does not provide insight in ch. 8 as to what exactly comprises this lifestyle. There is no indication that Paul has any set of instructions in mind that are being fulfilled.¹²⁶ A reason for the lack of specificity may be that Paul has the law as a whole in mind and the general pattern of righteous living revealed in it. This conclusion requires a closer look at the connection Paul makes between the just requirement of the law and walking in the Spirit. Paul states that the "just requirement of the law" is being fulfilled in those "who walk ... according to the Spirit [κατὰ πνεῦμα]" (v. 4 NRSV). Paul uses κατὰ πνεῦμα again in v. 5 and describes these people (οἱ ... κατὰ πνεῦμα) further, saying that they "set their minds on the things of the Spirit [τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος]" (v. 5 NRSV). In making these connections, Paul is implying that those in whom the just requirement of the law is being fulfilled set their minds on the things of the Spirit. Since both the just requirement and things of the Spirit are related to proper living, v. 5 may have some explanatory power for how Paul sees the law in v. 4. Given the connection between vv. 4 and 5, the plural τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος (v. 5) is likely indirectly linked to the singular δικαίωμα (v. 4). What is then being fulfilled is not any particular command but may be the pattern of life (i.e., things [plural] of the Spirit, the ethical behaviours generally) which the law as a whole (i.e., its just requirement [singular]) was meant to foster.¹²⁷ In this context, the goal of setting one's mind on the things of

¹²⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 482.

¹²⁷ Moo speaks of "the summary ... of what the law demands of God's people" (Moo, *Romans*, 482). Although Paul does not use the singular δικαίωμα but the plural to refer to the whole law (minus physical circumcision) in Rom 2:26, the context of ch. 8 supports the

the Spirit is to live in a way that is consistent with that content. It may also be that whatever one turns one's mind to is what that person will invariably live out. It is setting one's mind on the ethical conduct associated with the Spirit (v. 5) that enables one to walk according to the Spirit (v. 4); and it is this ethical content that is the same as the pattern of life the OT law was meant to produce through its just requirement.¹²⁸

A possible contention against this conclusion is that Paul does not refer to the law for proper living but to the Spirit. This is true, but Paul implies a relationship between the two. That the δικαίωμα is connected to things of the Spirit is reinforced by the corollary in v. 7 that those who have a mind set on the flesh, as opposed to the Spirit (cf. v. 5), do not and cannot submit to God's law—i.e., the OT law—or please him.¹²⁹ In this context where the σαρκί/πνεύμα contrast is explicit in vv. 4 to 6, the statement about the flesh in v. 7 strongly implies that those of the Spirit are able to submit to God's law and please him (v. 8).¹³⁰ Since Paul cannot mean all instructions in the OT, it is more likely that the implied relationship refers to the general pattern of proper behaviour revealed in the law.

interpretation that Paul is referring to the whole law in v. 4. Paul's parallel "fulfilment" statements also provide credence to this position.

¹²⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 423, 427; Schreiner, *Romans*, 406–7.

¹²⁹ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1109–10. God's law in Rom 8:7 is most likely still the OT law (Dunn, *Romans*, 427). Νόμος in v. 3 also more probably refers to the OT law, especially in the broader context of ch. 7 (see n. 92). This flows logically into ὁ ... νόμος τοῦ θεοῦ in 8:7 and mirrors ὁ νόμος τοῦ θεοῦ in 7:22, which also refers to the OT law (Schreiner, *Romans*, 412).

¹³⁰ Cf. Rom 8:9 and its adversative δὲ, indicating Paul's contrast between those in the flesh (vv. 7–8) and those in the Spirit (v. 9; McFadden, "Fulfillment of the Law's ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑ," 488; Moo, *Romans*, 189; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1109–10).

Of course, Paul does not state this implication. Here, as in the rest of Romans, he does not encourage his audience to use the OT law to develop comprehensive Christian ethics. At the same time, Paul never severs this implied relationship and the connection between the pattern of behaviour endorsed by the law and the Spirit. Even so, what must be kept in mind is that, similar to chs. 5 to 7, Paul's discussion in 8:1–11 of those who walk according to the Spirit is descriptive and does not veer into exhortations or imperatives about obligatory ethics.¹³¹

Additionally, Paul still does not codify Christian ethics. His primary concern is about in which realm one is living—that of sin and death or the Spirit and life.¹³²

There are concrete behaviours that belong to each realm, but Paul does not fully schematize the behaviour of either realm. However, as just discussed, a possible insight gleaned from ch. 8 is that the pattern of life the OT law was meant to develop is linked with walking according to the Spirit.

(d) Romans 12–15: Reasoned Discernment and Wisdom

At the beginning of Rom 12, Paul makes an explicit and programmatic statement about discerning God's will (vv. 1–2).¹³³ Paul encourages his audience to have their minds renewed so that they might be able to discern God's will and what is good, acceptable, and perfect (v. 2; cf. 7:14, 23, 25; 8:5–7).¹³⁴ The connection

¹³¹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 411.

¹³² Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence," 98–108.

¹³³ Mott, "Ethics," 272.

¹³⁴ Paul speaks to the Roman community as a group, using the plural μεταμορφωθήτε, and then uses the collective singular τῆ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς (Rom 12:2; cf. 1 Cor 1:10). This

between having one's mind renewed and ethics is explicit in 12:2 but is also reinforced by what comes immediately after. Paul quickly moves to a section of Christian ethics in 12:3–15:7. While Paul does not identify the OT law as the basis for his ethics or depend on specific OT instructions (with the possible exception of Lev 19:18 in Rom 13:9), it is significant that there are numerous parallels between his ethics and the OT. Thompson identifies the following:¹³⁵

suggests that he may have viewed this discernment process not merely as an individual one but a corporate one (Horace E. Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2: The Renewal of the Mind and Internalizing the Truth," *Int* 17.2 (1963): 161–75, here 162–63). Stoessel concludes that, when Paul speaks of having one's mind renewed, Paul "refers less to the renovation of reason than to the revitalizing of the church's theological foundation and the attitude, viewpoint, or understanding nurtured by it" (Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2," 167). Nevertheless, the renewal of one's reason as part of Paul's statement should not be underemphasized. When Paul uses δοκιμάζω in Rom 12:2, there is little doubt that he has in mind, at the very least, a mental exercise to examine and determine God's will ("δοκιμάζω," *BDAG* 255–56; Schreiner, *Romans*, 648; cf. Rom 2:18). Paul may mean more, but it is unlikely that he means less. This understanding aligns well with Moo's statement that Paul uses νοῦς "especially to connote a person's 'practical reason,' or 'moral consciousness'" (Moo, *Romans*, 756) since proper reason is required in the exercise of proper discernment. This is not to say that Stoessel is completely wrong. Implicit in the discernment process is a foundation of understanding upon which to assess what is good, acceptable, and perfect. Stoessel also avers that the term νοῦς indicates the discernment of an existing standard not the creation of one, even if by consensus (Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2," 166).

¹³⁵ Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 121–24.

Table 1. LXX Parallels with Romans 12–15

Romans	LXX (OT)
12:1	Exod 34:6; Ps 24(25):6; Dan 2:18
12:9	Ps 36(37):27; 96(97):10; Prov 3:7; Amos 5:15
12:14	Ps 108(109):28
12:15	Sir 7:34
12:16	Prov 3:5, 7; Isa 5:21; Jer 51:35(45:5)
12:17	Prov 3:4
12:19	Lev 19:18; Deut 32:35; Prov 24:29; Nah 1:2
12:20	4 Kgdms (2 Kgs) 6:21–22; Prov 25:21–22
13:1	Prov 8:15, 16; Dan 2:21, 37; 5:21; Sir 10:4; 17:17; Wis 6:1–3
13:9	Exod 20:13–17; Lev 19:18; Deut 5:17–21; Wis 6:18(19)
13:10	Lev 19:18
14:8	4 Macc 7:19; 16:25
14:11	Isa 45:23; 49:18
14:13	Lev 19:14
14:19	Ps 33:15(34:14)
15:1, 3	Ps 68:10(69:9)
15:4	1 Macc 12:9
15:9	Ps 17:50(18:49)
15:10	Deut 32:43
15:11	Ps 116(117):1
15:12	Isa 11:10

The most that can be said about these parallels is that there are close similarities between Paul's ethics and OT themes. Of interest is that the OT parallels with Rom 12:19; 13:9–10; and 14:13—while not the majority of those identified above—are specific OT instructions (i.e., Exod 20:13–17 // Deut 5:17–21; Lev 19:14, 18). This is by no means overwhelming evidence that Paul understood that the OT law continued to promote the proper pattern of life. Nevertheless, these parallels should not be discounted as aberrations, especially in the broader context of Paul's "fulfilling of the law" statements (of which Rom 13:8–10 is one). Paul himself tells the Romans, after quoting Ps 69:9 in Rom 15:3, that "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction [διδασκαλίαν]" (v. 4 NRSV;

cf. 4:23–24; 1 Cor 9:8–10; 10:6, 11). *Whatever* (ὅσοις) presumably includes the OT law; and this becomes clear when Paul refers to “the scriptures” (plural) later in Rom 15:4 (NRSV).¹³⁶ This statement appears to reveal that the OT law has at least another role that is separate from being covenantal legislation. Rosner argues that v. 4, specifically the term διδασκαλία, indicates that Paul understood all of the OT to function as wisdom.¹³⁷ While not an explicit encouragement for the Romans to look to the law for ethical guidance, this is another example where Paul leaves the proverbial door ajar. To conclude that Paul thought the OT law (perhaps as wisdom) was still instructive in some way for proper living does not undermine his programmatic statement in 12:1–2. The same determination about God’s will may be arrived at through various means or through an holistic assessment of the different sources.¹³⁸ Given the concern Paul had about some of the Romans relying on the OT law for righteousness and inclusion in God’s

¹³⁶ Dunn, *Romans*, 839; Knight, “Scriptures,” 7; Moo, *Romans*, 869.

¹³⁷ Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 184–86. Although Paul clearly did not follow his contemporaries down the same path, it is interesting to note that, during the intertestamental period, the OT law was being more closely associated with wisdom, sometimes wisdom’s personification existing from the beginning of creation (Barry C. Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1–10:18*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs [Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008], 89; e.g., Sir 1:1–10; 15:1–10; 21:11; 34:8; Bar 4:1; 2 Bar. 51:3; 4 Macc. 1:13–17; cf. Thielman, “Law,” 534; Gerbern S. Oegema, “Torah and Ethics in Early Judaism,” in Meiser, *Torah*, 12–30, here 25). Adherence to the OT law was not just what one must do, but it was reasonable and wise to do so (e.g., 2 Bar. 51:3; 1 En. 48:1; 4 Macc. 1:31–35).

¹³⁸ Paul clearly had in mind God’s work and plan through history (i.e., the non-legislative parts of the OT), Jesus’s ministry and sacrifice (i.e., the gospel and new creation), and apostolic example and authority as other sources from which one could discern ethics (Knight, “Scriptures,” 8; Mott, “Ethics,” 269–70, 272–73; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 111–34). The apostolic examples and authoritative teachings, however, were likely based on the apostles’ understanding of God’s plan and Jesus’s ministry. What other sources besides these Paul may have accepted, if any, is unclear.

people (e.g., 3:19–31; 4:13–17; cf. 15:14–21), he may have had a pragmatic reason to avoid any explicit dependence on the OT law in this letter.

(e) Romans 13: Overlap with the Law

While Paul does not depend on the OT law for his ethics in chs. 12 to 15, Lev 19:18 in Rom 13:9 may be the exception. Paul does explicitly identify a relationship between his ethics and the OT law in vv. 8–10 with his “fulfilment” statement. Christians should love each other “for the one who loves another has fulfilled [πεπλήρωκεν] the law [νόμον]” (v. 8 NRSV; cf. πλήρωμα in v. 10; 15:1–7). In order to properly understand this statement, the first factor we must determine is what law Paul is referring to. Romans 13:8 could be translated as “[t]he one who loves has fulfilled ‘the other law’ ” (ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν), where ἕτερος modifies νόμος.¹³⁹ Witherington argues for this translation, interpreting the other law as the law of Christ.¹⁴⁰ His argument is that Paul cannot mean loving another fulfils the OT law since Paul, in Galatians, states that circumcision requires one to adhere to the entire law instead of “its heart or summation.”¹⁴¹ Yet, this argument does not convince when one considers Gal 5:14 discussed earlier. Paul does, in fact, state that “the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (v. 14

¹³⁹ Ben Witherington, III, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 315.

¹⁴⁰ Witherington, *Romans*, 315.

¹⁴¹ Witherington, *Romans*, 315.

NRSV). He has identified that the OT law can be summed up as loving another. It is not a contradiction, then, for him to state in Romans that loving another fulfils the OT law. Furthermore, Dunn argues that this translation is unlikely since it is “a convoluted rendering of the phrase; and nowhere else does Paul use ἀγαπᾶν absolutely.”¹⁴² Moo further clarifies that ἕτερος is not usually found in an attributive position.¹⁴³ Moo also states that translating Rom 13:8 as “the other law” would “leave the verb ἀγαπάω without an object,” which is “an unprecedented situation in Paul.”¹⁴⁴ In light of Gal 5:14 and Paul’s normal use of both ἕτερος and ἀγαπάω, it is more likely that the correct translation of Rom 13:8 is “for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law” (NRSV). With that translation, the term νόμος in v. 8 is probably the OT law; this is likely since Paul immediately discusses commandments from that law in v. 9.¹⁴⁵

As with the other “fulfilment” passages, the second factor to consider is the agent fulfilling the law. Unlike Gal 5:14 and Rom 8:4, where the implied agent is not made explicit, 13:8 leaves little doubt that Paul identifies the human who loves as the one who fulfils the law. It is “the one who loves another” who “has fulfilled the law” (v. 8 NRSV). Since Paul, in the first part of that verse, has just instructed his audience to love one another, the clear meaning of the latter

¹⁴² Dunn, *Romans*, 776; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 808.

¹⁴³ Moo, *Romans*, 813 n. 19.

¹⁴⁴ Moo, *Romans*, 813 n. 19.

¹⁴⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, 776; Moo, *Romans*, 814; contra Jewett, *Romans*, 809. Jewett unconvincingly rejects that νόμος refers to the OT law based solely on the fact that it is anarthrous (Jewett, *Romans*, 809).

part of that verse is that it is the Christian who loves and, in so doing, fulfils the law.¹⁴⁶

Having determined that Paul is referring to the OT law and that the agent is the Christian, one factor remains to understand Paul's "fulfilment" statement in vv. 8–10. The last factor to consider is what Paul actually means by the Christian fulfilling the law (v. 8). It is highly unlikely that Paul is merely stating how the OT commandments ought to be followed (i.e., with love).¹⁴⁷ He has been explicit about the Christian's removal from the sphere of obligation to keep the OT law (e.g., Rom 6:14–15; 7:4; cf. 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 5:3).¹⁴⁸ Yet Paul is also not promoting antinomianism given his imperatives.¹⁴⁹ The γάρ in Rom 13:9—excluded from some English translations—indicates that what Paul says in v. 9 is intended to clarify what he means by fulfilling the law in v. 8.¹⁵⁰ Following his

¹⁴⁶ With the Christian as the subject, if *πεπλήρωκεν* is taken as an intensive perfect, its meaning could be that "the one who loves has just then entered into the state of having fulfilled the law" (see discussion of options in Moo, *Romans*, 814 n. 25). However, this translation is overly complicated for the context. Paul is less concerned about the timing of these events than encouraging his community to love each other—the emphasis being on the result of fulfilling the law. A simpler translation of the intensive perfect would be: "the one who loves is in the state of fulfilling the law" (Moo, *Romans*, 814 n. 25). If *πεπλήρωκεν* is taken as a gnomic perfect, Paul is simply stating the fact that the one who loves another is fulfilling the law. As in Galatians, Paul would be using this gnomic perfect as a reason for his community to love each other, indicated by the connecting γάρ (Moo, *Romans*, 813; cf. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 64–65). Whether *πεπλήρωκεν* is taken as an intensive perfect or gnomic perfect, the love of the person for another is as much a continuous state as the fulfilled law. If timing must be attached to Paul's statement, the probable implication of v. 8 is that loving others and fulfilling the law are practically coterminous. Nevertheless, that loving another is fulfilling the law remains Paul's emphasis.

¹⁴⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 814.

¹⁴⁸ Moo, *Romans*, 816.

¹⁴⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 777; Sanders, *Paul*, 94; Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence," 96.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Martin Meiser, "The Torah in the Ethics of Paul," in Meiser, *Torah*, 120–41, here 134.

“fulfilment” statement, Paul quotes several commands in v. 9 from the Decalogue (i.e., Exod 20:13–15, 17 // Deut 5:17–19, 21) and then includes the catch-all “and any other commandment” (Rom 13:9 NRSV). These commands “are summed up [ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται]” in the Lev 19:18 commandment (Rom 13:9 NRSV). Given the πληρώω/ἀνακεφαλαιόω parallel, Paul’s exhortation to love one another (v. 8) is equated with the Lev 19:18 command: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Rom 13:9 NRSV). However, merely equating Paul’s instruction to love with Lev 19:18 still leaves the nature of the fulfilment undefined. Greater insight can be gleaned by taking a closer look at ἀνακεφαλαιόω.

Ἀνακεφαλαιόω only appears in the NT in Rom 13:9 and Eph 1:10, where it means gathering or bringing things together (i.e., things united in Christ in Ephesians).¹⁵¹ In trying to understand the meaning of ἀνακεφαλαιόω, Lincoln cautions that “ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι is derived from κεφάλαιον, not from κεφαλή.”¹⁵² Κεφάλαιον referred to literary or rhetorical summaries (e.g., Heb 8:1), but was more often used as a banking term (i.e., to sum up; e.g., Acts

¹⁵¹ The present, passive, indicative ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται likely functions as a gnomic present in Rom 13:9. Although an agent (ὁ ... ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον) is identified in v. 8 for πεπλήρωκεν, the structure of v. 9 indicates that Paul is moving away from a focus on the agent in v. 8 to the fact that there are OT commandments “summed up” in Lev 19:18. The agent has already been established and Paul’s concern is supporting his imperative in v. 8 (ὀφείλετε) with the fact of v. 9. Verse 9 smooths the transition from the subject in v. 8 (ὁ ... ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον) to the new subject in v. 10 (ἡ ἀγάπη). That ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται is a gnomic present is probable given that ἀγάπη, related to ἀγαπάω in v. 9 (Moo, *Romans*, 817), becomes the subject in v. 10 (ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται; cf. πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη also in v. 10) instead of a refocus to ὁ ... ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον in v. 8.

¹⁵² Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990) 32; see also Heinrich Schlier, “κεφαλή, ἀνακεφαλαιόωμαι,” *TDNT* 3:673–82, here 681.

22:28).¹⁵³ It would be fallacious to assume a derivative automatically carries the same meanings as its root. Still, in this case, it is evident that ἀνακεφαλαίω does closely reflect κεφάλαιον.¹⁵⁴ BDAG defines both κεφάλαιον and ἀνακεφαλαίω as meaning either a rhetorical summation/main point or mathematical summing up.¹⁵⁵ LSJ defines these terms similarly.¹⁵⁶ Schlier concludes that ἀνακεφαλαίομαι “is hardly distinguishable from κεφαλαιοῦν.”¹⁵⁷ With the possible meanings of ἀνακεφαλαίω, the context indicates that it is unlikely Paul viewed all OT instructions in a mathematical way so that all correspond and are reducible to the Lev 19:18 commandment. Rather, it is more probable that Paul is using ἀνακεφαλαίω to mean a general summation or character of the law as a whole unit which has a superordinate goal of producing the proper lifestyle in God’s people; Lev 19:18 identifies the main, overarching characteristic of this lifestyle.¹⁵⁸ This can be seen in that not all OT laws have a direct link to love, such as the instruction that women must not wear men’s clothing and vice versa (Deut 22:5). Even when there is a closer link between a commandment and the

¹⁵³ “Κεφάλαιον, ου, τό,” *BDAG* 541; S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015), 92 n. 188.

¹⁵⁴ “Ἀνακεφαλαίω,” *BDAG* 65; Schlier, *TDNT* 3:681; Schreiber, “Law and Love,” 114 n. 44.

¹⁵⁵ “Ἀνακεφαλαίω,” *BDAG* 65; “κεφάλαιον, ου, τό,” *BDAG* 541.

¹⁵⁶ Ἀνακεφαλαίομαι is defined as to “sum up the argument” (“ἀνακεφαλαίομαι,” *LSJ* 108). Additionally, while κεφάλαιος has several definitions, it is most often used to mean a “chief or main point” or “to sum up” (“κεφάλαιος,” *LSJ* 944–45). “To be summed up” is also a definition of κεφαλαίω, along with to “bring under heads” and to “characterize generally” (“κεφαλαίω,” *LSJ* 945).

¹⁵⁷ Schlier, *TDNT* 3:681.

¹⁵⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 782; contra Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 26–28.

instruction to love, the former does not always lead inevitably to the latter.¹⁵⁹ For example, one can abstain from murder (e.g., Exod 20:13; Lev 24:17; Deut 5:17) yet still hate his neighbour. Since there is no direct relationship between some OT commandments and the instruction to love others, Paul likely has the law as a unit in mind and that the love command summarizes the main (most significant) feature of the overall lifestyle encouraged by the OT law.¹⁶⁰ This is also evident since Paul brings all of the OT instructions under Lev 19:18 when he says, “and any other commandment” (Rom 13:9) while, at the same time, excluding from Christian ethics some specific OT instructions which do not overtly involve behaviour towards others (e.g., circumcision [2:25–29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2–3, 6; 6:15; cf. Rom 2:26], dietary regulations [Rom 14:2–3, 6; 1 Cor 8:8; 10:23–33], and holy days [Rom 14:5–6; Gal 4:10]).¹⁶¹

Given the above, fulfilling the law probably means living out the proper pattern of life that the law as a whole was intended to produce; and the essence of this pattern of life is loving others.¹⁶² Additionally, in contrast to Gal 5:13–15, Paul explicitly mentions other commandments as examples that are summed up in Lev 19:18 (Rom 13:9). What Paul’s partial list indicates is that, while his ethics

¹⁵⁹ Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 193.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 646 n. 102.

¹⁶¹ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 26–27; Schreiber, “Law and Love,” 116. As Wright argues, “This is, clearly, not a matter of slavishly looking up texts in Torah and trying to make them fit every question Paul and his communities might face. He clearly does not do that. He is after something deeper, something which will sometimes (as in eating meat offered to idols) cut across what a strict interpretation of Torah itself would have said” (Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1110).

¹⁶² Mott, “Ethics,” 271; Schreiber, “Law and Love,” 112.

clearly do not adopt the OT law *in toto*, there is overlap with specific commandments.¹⁶³ The basis for the ethical obligation is not found in the Sinaitic covenant or OT law,¹⁶⁴ but certain behaviours and motivations are the same which cover the essential aspects of the law.¹⁶⁵ Some OT instructions corroborate Paul's ethical instructions and Paul specifically leverages Lev 19:18 to motivate his audience to adhere to his instruction to love one another.¹⁶⁶ This overlap between Paul's ethics and the OT commandments illustrates for Paul how the essential aspects of the law's pattern of life are being realized ("fulfilled") in the Christian's behaviour.

¹⁶³ Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 780.

¹⁶⁴ Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 432.

¹⁶⁵ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 126. As Moo states, "This means that it would be premature to claim that love 'replaces' the law for the Christian, as if the only commandment we ever needed to worry about was the command of love. For as long as our love remains incomplete, we may very well require other commandments both to chastise and to guide us. What the source of those commandments may be is, of course, another question" (Moo, *Romans*, 815).

¹⁶⁶ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 126.

5. CONCLUSION

There is much more that could be said about the relationship between Paul's ethics and the OT law. There is also much that Paul leaves unanswered. However, we can begin to develop a framework for discussing this topic by studying Paul's statements regarding the fulfilment of the OT law in the context of the ostensible paradox identified in 1 Cor 7:19. In reviewing these statements, it appears evident that Paul does not generally develop an ethical system or explain a hermeneutical model that identifies the relationship between the OT law and his ethics.¹⁶⁷

Nevertheless, it is clear that Paul is not endorsing libertinism or antinomianism (e.g., 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 5:16–21; 6:2; cf. 5:13, 17–18). He often gives ethical imperatives as the situation demands, but without regularly making direct links with OT commands.¹⁶⁸ Thus, it is difficult to discern the exact relationship between the OT law and his ethics.¹⁶⁹ The closest Paul comes to creating a

¹⁶⁷ Folker Blischke, "Reminder as an Approach of Pauline Ethics: Paul in an Old Testament and Hellenistic Line of Tradition," in Meiser, *Torah*, 41–58, here 41; Sanders, *Paul*, 95.

¹⁶⁸ Sanders, *Paul*, 95; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 126; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 432; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1110. An absence of direct quotations from the OT is insufficient in and of itself to prove that Paul had no notion of the OT law in mind when promoting any of his other ethical imperatives. The OT legal framework and commands may be evident through linguistic studies, such as "allusions, echoes, language and ideas" in addition to citations (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 163; cf. Meiser, "Torah in the Ethics of Paul," 125, 127 n. 27; see also Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 111–34).

¹⁶⁹ Sanders makes the point that Paul never made any "generalizing or theoretical distinction" regarding what aspects of the law form Christian ethics (Sanders, *Paul*, 96; cf. 98). As Wright summarizes, "[Paul's] writing is often telegraphic, and he does not usually add the

hermeneutical process is when he endorses rational discernment of ethics with a renewed mind (Rom 12:1–2; cf. 7:14, 23, 25; 8:5–7) and the involvement of the Spirit (7:6; 8:4–6; cf. 7:24–25; 8:7–8).¹⁷⁰ When grounding his ethics, Paul almost always avoids referring to the OT law; instead, he refers primarily to God’s redemptive work in history, Christ and the gospel (with new creation), and apostolic example and instruction.¹⁷¹ Paul is not more detailed than that vis-à-vis his ethical system and hermeneutical process. Neither is he more detailed in presenting a complete ethical code.¹⁷² That Paul does not provide a full ethical code may be explained by his exhortation to his communities to use their discernment (12:1–2; cf. 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 4:23; Col 3:10; Titus 3:5), enabled by the Spirit as they become new creations (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15).¹⁷³ Even the OT could not provide an exhaustive legal code addressing every conceivable situation.¹⁷⁴ Reacting to the new reality inaugurated by the Christ event, Paul may

footnotes to explain his hermeneutical theory of precisely how Torah, having been in one sense left behind at the cross, is in another sense projected forward into the present time. We find ourselves filling in those gaps from the hints he gives here and there. It is far too simplistic, and tends to marginalize Paul’s own focus on Messiah and spirit, to suggest either that he leaves Torah behind entirely as a moral code or that he simply uses and develops it with little or no break” (Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1125).

¹⁷⁰ Paul does not indicate that it is the Spirit who helps the Christian identify moral instructions for daily living (Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 13), but the Spirit does enable the Christian to live according to God’s will.

¹⁷¹ Knight, “Scriptures,” 8; Mott, “Ethics,” 269–70, 272–73; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 111–34.

¹⁷² Mott, “Ethics,” 269.

¹⁷³ Meiser, “Torah in the Ethics of Paul,” 132. On Rom 12:2, Jewett states, “The transformation Paul has in view here is shaped by the recovery of a realistic appraisal of ethical choices in the light of the converted community’s experience of the ‘new creation’ brought by Christ” (Jewett, *Romans*, 733; cf. 734–35).

¹⁷⁴ Schreiner makes the point that “no rule book could ever summarize all that is involved in loving others, for life is too varied and complex to codify how love expresses itself” (Schreiner,

be avoiding the same impossibility and, rather, giving his communities principles, examples, and methods to discern what God's will is for human behaviour; he does this while emphasizing the necessity of the Spirit and reasoned discernment.¹⁷⁵

Galatians, 335; see also Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1037). Looking at the OT laws, they are not comprehensive and OT judges and legal practitioners do not generally refer to these instructions in their adjudications (van Houten, *Alien*, 30–31). Leviticus 24:10–23; Num 9:6–14; 15:32–36; and 27:1–11 demonstrate that the law is incomplete and evolving (van Houten, *Alien*, 135). Even when the law is written down prior to the time of Ezra, the instructions given to judges on how to perform their responsibilities and adjudicate is more general and the written law likely has a didactic rather than legislative function (Samuel Greengus, “Some Issues Relating to the Comparability of Laws and the Coherence of the Legal Tradition,” in *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development*, JSOTSup 181, ed. Bernard M. Levinson [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994], 60–87, here 85; Bernard S. Jackson, *Studies in the Semiotics of Biblical Law*, JSOTSup 314 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000], 118–21; cf. Deut 16:18–20; 2 Chr 19:4–11). This use of the OT law does not undermine the fact that OT instructions are placed within a narrative of Israel's covenant relationship with God and, therefore, become covenant stipulations; moreover, wisdom literature alone does not capture the obligations Moses places in his deuteronomic sermon as part of the covenant renewal (John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 293). Both aspects described here functioned in tandem (Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 297). The point is that, even in the OT, the instructions were not comprehensive and exhaustive.

After the Babylonian exile, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Israelites continued to strengthen their collective resolve to adhere strictly to the OT law in order to avoid a repeat of the covenant curses (Thielman, “Law,” 533). The exile was viewed as a consequence of covenant infidelity (e.g., Jdt 5:17–21; 8:18–23; Tob 3:2–6) and was an experience that ingrained itself on the thought-world of Israel. Avoiding the covenant curses (e.g., Lev 26:14–46; Deut 28:43–52, 64–67; 29:22–28; 31:14–29) by observing the law and ensuring proper separation from other nations (cf. Ezra 9:10–15; Neh 10:30; Tob 4:12–13; Let. Aris. 151) became of greater concern (Thielman, “Law,” 533). Although an unavoidable oversimplification, it is from this context that a view of the OT law guiding all aspects of life developed greater prominence (e.g., Let. Aris. 129, 139; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.170–171, 173–174; *Ant.* 4.230; Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 107). Josephus even calls the law Israel's constitution (e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 1.5, 10, 18; 4.194, 198, 230). It is interesting to note that it appears Paul's use of the OT law has more similarities with a general use of that law during the OT times than a common view of the law in his own. Such a study may bear interesting results (e.g., see Michael M. Tolliver, “The Old Testament Use of the Law: The Oldest Perspective of Paul” [ThM thesis, Covenant Theological Seminary, 2013], doi:10.2986/tren.030-0257), but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹⁷⁵ As Wright summarizes, “He did from time to time give people blunt and direct instructions, to keep them on the rails for the immediate future. But he was far more concerned to teach them to think through, with a mind renewed by the spirit, what it meant to live in the New Age when the two Ages were still overlapping. Indeed, he was concerned to teach them to think, reflexively as it were, about the mind itself, and about its role within the total self-sacrificial obedience of the whole person. This, he would have said, is what it means to have the mind of the Messiah” (Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1125).

Yet, Paul does provide some statements and examples that offer insight into his approach to ethics and the OT law. One factor that Paul indicates has altered the OT law in some way is the Christ event (Rom 3:21–26; 6:1–6; 7:1–6; 8:3–4; cf. Gal 3:15–18; 4:1–7; 5:2, 4–6; 6:15).¹⁷⁶ In this new reality, Paul focuses on living in the new creation (Gal 6:15) and on the inclusion of the Gentiles (Rom 3:19–31; 4:13–17; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 3:26–29; 5:6; 6:15; Eph 2:11–16; cf. Rom 2:29; 15:14–21; Gal 2:15–16; 4:21–31; 5:2). In this phase of God’s plan of redemption, some OT instructions are no longer necessary, or they actually impede God’s plan. Three areas of instruction Paul repeatedly indicates are *adiaphora* are those that were closely tied to Jewish identity: (1) circumcision (Rom 2:25–29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2–3, 6; 6:15; cf. Rom 2:26); (2) dietary regulations (Rom 14:2–3, 6; 1 Cor 8:8; 10:23–33); and (3) holy days (Rom 14:5–6; Gal 4:10–11). Yet Paul does not just address these three areas of the OT law. Paul unequivocally states that Christians are no longer under the Sinaitic covenant and its entire law—they are no longer subject to its power or authority (Rom 6:14–15; 7:4; 1 Cor 9:20–21; Gal 3:10, 22–25; 4:3, 8–9, 24–31; 5:3–6, 13; cf. Gen 17:13; Exod 12:44; Lev 12:3; Josh 5:2–9; Luke 2:21–27; Acts 7:8; Gal 4:21; 5:3).¹⁷⁷

The conclusion up to this point may reflect the first part of 1 Cor 7:19 when Paul says, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing”

¹⁷⁶ Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 210.

¹⁷⁷ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 126; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 432.

(NRSV). As discussed earlier, the tension exists when Paul continues, “but obeying the commandments of God is everything” (v. 19 NRSV). This latter half of v. 19 may be related to those statements in Paul’s letters when he implies a connection between his ethics and the OT law. Even though most of the time Paul bases his ethics on things other than the OT law, he does not completely sever the relationship. The clearest example of this is the only time he explicitly and directly quotes the OT law (as opposed to the narrative, wisdom or prophetic literature, etc.). Paul plainly uses Deut 25:4 as instruction for the Corinthians by saying that this OT command “was indeed written for our sake” (1 Cor 9:10 NRSV; cf. vv. 8–14). Paul further emphasizes this connection when he says that his application of Deut 25:4 is a commandment from God (1 Cor 9:14). This instance may be the exception that proves the rule; and Paul may not have had the same concern about the Corinthians’ use of the law as he did about the Galatians’ or Romans’. However, if Paul had an overwhelming concern to dissociate Christian ethics from the OT law generally, it is hard to imagine that he would be this explicit even once.

The next clearest connection Paul makes between his ethics and the OT law is when he is instructing his audience to love—a key aspect of his ethics (e.g., Gal 5:6, 13–14; 6:2; Rom 13:8–10; cf. 1 Cor 13). Importantly, love is central in two of the three “fulfilment” statements (Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:13–14). In these statements, Paul uses Lev 19:18 to validate his ethic and motivate his audience to follow his instruction. It is through loving others that one fulfils the whole law since love, specifically Lev 19:18, is the defining characteristic of the lifestyle the

OT law was meant to produce in Israel.¹⁷⁸ Paul argues that his instruction to love is the same as Lev 19:18 and, therefore, when his audience follows his instruction to love, they are practically observing Lev 19:18 and fulfilling the law. It is clear that, for Paul, fulfilling the law is positive. Yet this is not an abstract concept. While not reducing the OT commandments to Lev 19:18, Paul does refer to some of the Decalogue as examples of what loving others looks like before *generally* including all OT instructions (Rom 13:9). While not all OT instructions are *specifically* included, Paul's ethics and the OT law share specific behaviours. These behaviours form part of the general pattern of life the OT law as a complete unit was meant to produce in God's people and which, in its essential aspects, continues to be the pattern expected of both Jews and Gentiles after the Christ event (cf. 2:25–29).¹⁷⁹ Stated in the inverse, this pattern of life avoids the pattern of sinful living the law also reveals (7:7), even if some things defined as transgression by the law are now acceptable. This pattern of sinful living continues to be of concern for Christians (6:1–2, 12–13, 15–18). This same thinking regarding the proper pattern of life likely lies behind the “fulfilment”

¹⁷⁸ Mott, “Ethics,” 271.

¹⁷⁹ Schreiber, “Law and Love,” 118; Thielman, *Paul and the Law*, 211, 241. Wright concludes, “There are some ways in which [Torah] is clearly left behind: the distinctive badges of ethnic identity such as circumcision and food laws on the one hand, the sacrificial cult on the other. There are other ways in which it is emphatically restated: the command to love the neighbour, and the strict rules on sexual behaviour. But we should never forget that Paul, like many of his contemporaries, saw Torah itself as much more than a list of commands. It was a narrative, and the commands were embedded within it as pointers to the character of the people of the covenant God. Paul saw that narrative fulfilled in the Messiah and the spirit. It is not surprising that in that fulfilment he should have found, though not yet fully explained, fresh ways of speaking of Torah and the way of life it always intended to generate” (Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1125).

statement in 8:4 when Paul speaks of walking and living according to the Spirit rather than the flesh and setting one's mind on the things of the Spirit as opposed to things of the flesh (vv. 4–5).

While Paul never encourages the Christian communities to look to the OT law as part of their discernment of God's will, likely for pragmatic and pastoral reasons, he never precludes that option. His one explicit example in 1 Cor 9:8–14 and “fulfilment” statements in Gal 5:13–15; Rom 8:3–5; and 13:8–10 reveal it to be a possibility. His general principle in 15:4 supports this option as well. Some of Paul's ethics may also allude to the OT law or contain terms and ideas that indicate a direct or indirect (e.g., traditional Jewish wisdom) connection without citing any commandments.¹⁸⁰ Although no longer covenantal legislation, the OT law—along with the other ethical bases Paul uses and encourages—ought not to be ignored as instructive for Christian ethics in our own time.¹⁸¹ This use of the law does not undermine Paul's position that, after the Christ event, the role of the OT law as part of the Sinaitic covenant ended along with the Christian belonging to the realm of the law, sin and death. There is another role the law may have for

¹⁸⁰ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 689; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 163; cf. Meiser, “Torah in the Ethics of Paul,” 125, 127 n. 27; see also Thompson, *Moral Formation*, 111–34. For example, see n. 31.

¹⁸¹ Schreiner's language that OT laws remain “normative” and that Paul considers some “still in force” is too imprecise (Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, 149, 171–72, 175). It would be better to say that the behaviour the laws reveal is normative for Paul and, therefore, Paul sees continuity between some of the OT laws and Christian ethics. Nevertheless, the practical implications are the same. For a discussion on Paul using the OT law as wisdom literature, see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 661–67; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 159–205.

ethical discernment;¹⁸² and Paul's appeal to reasoned deliberation suggests that such deliberation will be necessary in deciding how to appropriate the law. With that in mind, "obeying the commandments of God is [still] everything" (1 Cor 7:19 NRSV), but any use of the OT law to determine God's will must inevitably be complex, requiring discernment and sensitivity to one's context and the new creation reality.

¹⁸² Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 208. As Rosner states, "Paul did not think that believers in Christ are meant to 'keep', in the sense of 'observe', the law. But Paul most definitely does think that Christians are to 'keep', as in 'retain', the Law of Moses" (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 218).

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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