
Introduction

He does not project theological speculations out of his own mind; he is not concerned about a system; he is and he remains a student and teacher of Holy Scriptures. Whoever tries to understand him as other than this will not understand him at all.

—Eduard Thurneysen, “Die Anfänge”

What delights *me* most is . . . *Paul! That’s what it is!* Next to him all dogmatics is slime, and ethics too.

—Karl Barth to Eduard Thurneysen, May 18, 1924

Bringing an Old Outsider into a Perennial Debate

When it first hit the scene almost a century ago, Karl Barth’s interpretation of Paul’s theology in both the first and second editions of his *Römerbrief* was the subject of much critique, debate, and mostly dismissal by the New Testament guild.¹ As Richard Burnett points out,

1. This is not to say that his Romans commentary, in the first and second editions, was entirely ignored or failed to bring Barth any accolades. On the contrary, the first edition earned him an honorary professorship at the University of Göttingen, and the second edition quickly made him one of the most influential theologians of his day. As Ernst Käsemann observes, “Barth’s *Epistle to the Romans* brought ‘thoroughgoing eschatology’ back out of its existence among the shades and made it into the keynote of New Testament interpretation in Germany.” See Ernst Käsemann, “On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic,” in *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press, 1969), 109n2. Similarly, Rudolf Bultmann comments that “Barth

the most common allegation against Barth was that his exegesis had little to do with the actual content of Paul's letter to the church in Rome but was instead a reading of his own theology into Paul's letter.² Sadly, the legacy of the critiques leveled against Barth by his first reviewers still lives on in some quarters. Far too often, Barth's theological exegesis remains untapped by biblical scholars and theologians alike.³

Today there are old debates raging with new fire within Pauline studies—debates not unknown to Barth and his contemporaries. In particular, in discussions about the theology of the apostle, a frequent question surfaces as to the extent to which Paul even has a concept of justification by grace through faith, a concept so crucial to the Reformation and much Protestant theology that followed after.⁴ While the Reformers found fodder for this doctrine in their reading of Paul's letters, the “Lutheran” conception of justification by faith alone has, since the twentieth century, been under constant fire in various works within Pauline scholarship. This recurrent trend was inaugurated, to a great extent, by the work of four scholars.

First on the scene were William Wrede and Albert Schweitzer, each of whom, in his own way, argued that justification is entirely peripheral to Paul's thought. For Wrede, justification is Paul's polemical doctrine.⁵ For Schweitzer, it is merely a “subsidiary crater.”⁶ A seminal essay by Krister Stendahl in 1963, warning of the danger in reading Paul through Luther, has had a lasting effect on Pauline

has grasped Paul's view . . . in its depths . . . through his exegesis many details have become more alive.” See Rudolf Bultmann, “Karl Barth's *Epistle to the Romans* in Its Second Edition,” in *The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology*, ed. James M. Robinson, trans. Keith R. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1962), 1:119.

2. Richard E. Burnett, *Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis: The Hermeneutical Principles of the Römerbrief Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 17.
3. However, Barth's contribution to New Testament studies was officially recognized in 1925 through an appointment at Münster to a chair in dogmatics and New Testament exegesis.
4. For a survey of some of the important works in the twentieth-century debates in New Testament studies regarding the study of Paul and understanding his teaching on justification, see David E. Aune, “Recent Readings of Paul Relating to Justification by Faith,” in *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 188–245.
5. William Wrede, *Paul*, trans. Edward Lummis (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001).
6. Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 225.

studies.⁷ The fourth scholar credited with pummeling the doctrine of justification is E. P. Sanders, whose 1977 groundbreaking work, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, not only attacks a “Lutheran” understanding of Paul’s Jewish context but also argues that distorted and limited views on Judaism in Paul’s day have resulted in distortions of Paul’s writings.⁸ The conclusions of these scholars have been further developed with the advent of the so-called New Perspective⁹ on Paul, such that many today doubt the validity of any sort of “Reformational” reading of Paul, finding it to be highly anachronistic, overly psychologized, and/or inappropriately focused on the role of the individual’s faith in salvation.¹⁰

To be fair, it must be said that the scholars debating justification in Paul are not the sole actors in the current movement within the

7. Krister Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963): 199–215; repr. in *The Writings of St. Paul: Annotated Text and Criticism*, ed. W. A. Meeks, Norton Critical Editions in the History of Ideas (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

8. I absolutely grant that the great benefit of the work of Sanders and many after him is the improved view of Second Temple Judaism it has afforded us, especially given the relatively negative view of Judaism during the Reformation, resulting from Luther’s tendency to conflate the Jews with the scholastic theologians against whom he was reacting.

9. The phrase itself comes from an essay by James D. G. Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 65 (1983): 95–122; repr. with an additional note in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 183–214. While there are many scholars whose work can be classified within the New Perspective on Paul category, Dunn has been one of the most energetic. For a sampling on Dunn’s reexamination of justification, particularly in Romans and Galatians, see James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993); *Romans 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary 38A (Waco: Word Books, 1988); *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary 38B (Waco: Word Books, 1988). It should be noted, however, that Dunn argues that the New Perspective on Paul is not opposed to the classical Reformation doctrine of justification, even agreeing that it is *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*; see “The New Perspective: Whence and Whither?” in *The New Perspective on Paul*, WUNT 185 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 17–22, esp. 21, 33.

Right beside him is N. T. Wright, who followed immediately after Sanders’s *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* with his own important essay in 1978 on Paul’s relationship to Judaism, arguing that “the tradition of Pauline interpretation has manufactured a false Paul by manufacturing a false Judaism for him to oppose.” See N. T. Wright, “The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978): 78. Other New Perspective on Paul contributions by Wright include “Justification: The Biblical Basis and Its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism,” in *The Great Acquittal: Justification by Faith in Current Christian Thought*, ed. Gavin Reid (London: Collins, 1980), 13–37; *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); “Romans and the Theology of Paul,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 3, *Romans*, ed. D. M. Hay and E. E. Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 30–67; *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

10. For a helpful overview of the history and representatives of the New Perspective, see Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 101–200, 249–60.

academy to call into question the validity of the Protestant doctrine of justification. To their ranks, the following must be added: (1) the trend in ecumenical discussions to focus on the themes of union with Christ and deification, notwithstanding the advances made in 1999 with Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches in signing the “Joint Declaration in the Doctrine of Justification;” (2) the ambiguity among Protestant laypersons and scholars about their theological identity; and (3) recent scholarship on the Reformation that aims at downplaying the Reformers’ commitment to a judicial framework (forensicism).¹¹ One regrettable outcome is that Protestant theology, and most especially the doctrine of justification, has fallen into disrepute and been subjected to caricatures of its key tenets. Yet, for the Reformers, justification was not simply one doctrine among many. The doctrine of justification was the Reformation, full stop. Justification is *the* hallmark doctrine that makes Protestant churches and theology Protestant. For Martin Luther, the stakes were always high: justification was the doctrine by which the church stands or falls. But John Calvin, too, called justification “the main hinge on which religion turns. . . . For unless you first of all grasp what your relationship to God is, and the nature of his judgment concerning you, you have neither a foundation on which to establish your salvation nor one on which to build piety toward God.”¹² It is with full awareness of the seriousness of what is being called into question that this book seeks to lessen the widening chasm between Paul and Reformation theology by offering a thorough analysis of Karl Barth’s Pauline theology of justification.

Throughout the debates over the relationship of the doctrine of justification to Pauline theology, Karl Barth’s later exegesis and

11. For a brief sampling see J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, English language ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther’s View of Justification* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2004).
12. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Library of Christian Classics, reissued ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 726.

theology have remained virtually unknown and untapped.¹³ John Webster has noted the “surprising and regrettable” fact that there is a lack of any thorough study of Barth’s work as a commentator on Holy Scripture.¹⁴ This lacuna is strange indeed when we consider (1) the sheer amount of exegetical work in the Pauline corpus done throughout Barth’s career; (2) the decidedly Pauline shape of his doctrine of reconciliation, which stresses that the apocalypse of God has already taken place in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and (3) his fundamentally Reformed doctrine of justification. While there have been numerous studies on the theologies of the atonement and justification in Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and John Wesley, as well as studies of contemporary Lutheran understandings of justification,¹⁵ an appraisal of Barth’s later work, in relationship to this debate, has been almost inexplicably absent.¹⁶

This book seeks to fill in this gap in theological and biblical scholarship by investigating Barth’s interpretation of Pauline

13. The exceptions to this trend are one essay by Douglas Harink, “Justification: Beyond Protestantism,” in *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), 23–65; and one essay by Benjamin Myers, “From Faithfulness to Faith in the Theology of Karl Barth,” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2009), 291–308.
14. John Webster, “Karl Barth,” in *Reading Romans through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 208. Webster comments that a “beginning is made in David P. Henry’s comparison of Barth’s practices as commentator in the two editions of *Der Römerbrief* against the background of some standard German commentators from the early twentieth century; but, quite apart from its restricted focus on only a portion of Romans 5, Henry’s work suffers from some mischaracterizations of both Barth’s exegetical practice and his theological commitments” (n9). See David P. Henry, *The Early Development of the Hermeneutic of Karl Barth as Evidenced by His Appropriation of Romans 5.12–21* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985).
15. Mark C. Mattes, *The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 3–20; Robert Kolb, “Contemporary Lutheran Understandings of the Doctrine of Justification,” in *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates?*, ed. Mark Husbans and Daniel J. Treier (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 153–76.
16. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, 3–97, 201–25; Husbans and Treier, *Justification*; Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III, eds., *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Bruce L. McCormack, ed., *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); and Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

The few treatments of Barth’s relationship to the Reformation and Pauline theology, especially on the doctrines of atonement and justification, can be found in the following essays by Bruce McCormack: “*Justitia aliena*: Karl Barth in Conversation with the Evangelical Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness,” in *Justification in Perspective*, 167–96; “The Ontological Presuppositions of Barth’s Doctrine of Atonement,” in *Glory of the Atonement*; 346–66; and “What’s at Stake in Current Debates over Justification?” in Husbans and Treier, *Justification*, 81–117.

justification in Romans. With the field of theological interpretation of Scripture burgeoning, Barth's work as both commentator and theologian has the potential to narrow the divide that often exists between the fields of systematic theology and biblical studies. Furthermore, such a study would enable students of Barth to look more closely at his work with Scripture and from this to consider "what may be learned about the overall character of Barth's theological commitments from the fact that he expended much labor on biblical commentary."¹⁷

Seeking Allies: Scholars of Pauline Apocalyptic Eschatology

It goes without saying that there are a myriad of ways to interpret the central theological concerns in Paul's letter to the church in Rome. For instance, with respect to the way salvation is described in Romans, there are readings ranging from the individual-spiritual to the sociopolitical, from the salvation-historical to the salvation from Roman tyranny. One rather recent strand of interpretation within Pauline studies reads Paul with an eye to his apocalyptic eschatology. The exegetical-theological reading of Paul done by these scholars places a high premium on the way that Paul draws out the radical in-breaking of God into this world, the full and inclusive judgment of God on humanity, and the nature of the relationship of God to the powers of sin and death.¹⁸

While Weiss and Schweitzer were the first to produce historical scholarship on apocalyptic, it was the scholarship of Ernst Käsemann that was instrumental in reviving interest in apocalyptic and its creative role within the New Testament. Most notably, he claimed, in a series of essays from the 1960s, that Paul's thinking is defined by

17. Webster, "Karl Barth," 208.

18. While Barry Matlock has noted that the term "apocalyptic" itself can denote a variety of things, thus lending it an air of ambiguity with such frequent usage, it is important to state at the outset that the Pauline interpreters who undertake an apocalyptic interpretation of Paul's texts do so with a more focused agenda. First, they are defining themselves in relation to different basic approaches to Paul. Second, they are most often influenced by the seminal work of Käsemann and, more recently, J. Louis Martyn. See Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 258–63.

apocalyptic eschatology.¹⁹ Against what he saw as Rudolf Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of Paul, Käsemann attempted instead to recover Paul's apocalyptic focus.²⁰ Initially he argued that Paul's perpetual focus on the return of Christ is the defining feature of his apocalyptic eschatology.²¹ Yet in Käsemann's later work, he also understood Christ's death and resurrection as the event of God's invasion of a world imprisoned by cosmic powers.²² Paul's theology, in his mind, asks the "the apocalyptic question": "To whom does the sovereignty of the world belong? To God or the evil powers?"²³ Another scholar of Pauline apocalyptic eschatology, J. Christiaan Beker, defines Paul's gospel as apocalyptic for the way it anticipates the

19. Käsemann's essays can be found in *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), and include: "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," 82–107; "The Righteousness of God' in Paul," 168–82; "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," 108–37; and "Paul and Early Catholicism," 236–51.

20. While the debates between Käsemann and his teacher, Bultmann, are well known, what is not well known is that in his later years Käsemann ended up affirming and extending "Bultmann's program of demythologizing in a way that reveals the surprising continuity between Bultmann and apocalyptic theology. . . . Despite his debates with Bultmann in his younger years, Käsemann later proved himself to be one of Bultmann's most faithful students." See David W. Congdon, "Eschatologizing Apocalyptic: An Assessment of the Present Conversation on Pauline Apocalyptic," in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: With and beyond J. Louis Martyn*, edited by Joshua B. Davis and Douglas Harink (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 126n29. See also Ernst Käsemann, *On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene: Unpublished Lectures and Sermons*, ed. Rudolf Landau and Wolfgang Kraus, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 100–101, 177, 199–200. For a full defense of Bultmann as himself an apocalyptic theologian, see Congdon's *The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann's Dialectical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

21. Käsemann, "'Righteousness of God' in Paul," 181; "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," 109n1, 131; and "Paul and Early Catholicism," 241.

22. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 134.

In an effort to bring greater precision to the increasingly divergent scholarship on apocalyptic, whether biblical or theological, Congdon has suggested a schematic of "Apocalyptic A" and "Apocalyptic B." See "Eschatologizing Apocalyptic: An Assessment." In Apocalyptic A are scholars such as Käsemann and Beker, who view the apocalyptic event "as something literal, immanent, and directly observable" (132). In Apocalyptic B are scholars such as Martyn and Christopher Morse, who view "the apocalyptic event as something nonliteral, transcendent, and indirectly or paradoxically present" (132). Congdon clarifies that the mature theological work of Käsemann fits better within Apocalyptic B (126n29). However, I would add that his work as a Pauline scholar, as evidenced in his *Commentary on Romans*, also demonstrates that he fits in Apocalyptic B. This will become clear throughout this book. While Congdon cites nothing from Beker to defend his claim for putting him in camp B, in another essay he names Beker's misinformed critiques and dismissals of Barth's and Bultmann's projects. See Congdon, "Bonhoeffer and Bultmann: Toward an Apocalyptic Rapprochement," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15, no. 2 (2013): 172–95. While Congdon's insights into Beker's misreading of Barth and Bultmann are on target, my work with Beker, in chap. 2, will show that he does not neatly fit in Congdon's camp B category.

23. Käsemann, "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," 135–36.

final triumph of God in Christ over all the powers that oppose God's redemptive plans.²⁴ Thus, according to Beker, the center of the gospel for Paul is the unwavering certainty that the divine invasion of Christ's death and resurrection into our world have made possible both a new future and a new creation. More recently, J. Louis Martyn, Leander Keck, Beverly Gaventa, and others have highlighted Paul's passionate conviction that God has invaded our world to set it right—not by anything humans can do, but by God's sovereign "rectification."²⁵ Martinus de Boer's work focuses on bringing out the elements in Paul's apocalyptic eschatology that, like the Jewish apocalyptic eschatology that precedes it, make for a cosmic drama played out between divine and cosmic forces.²⁶ Above all, Martyn is credited with advancing even beyond Käsemann in defining apocalyptic in Paul, having argued convincingly that for Paul both apocalyptic and the heart of the gospel are concentrated in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²⁷ According to Martyn, Pauline apocalyptic eschatology centers on "God's liberating invasion of the cosmos,"²⁸ which is enacted "in

24. See J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

25. It should be noted that most current biblical scholars of Pauline apocalyptic eschatology prefer to use the term "rectification" instead of "justification" in order to highlight that the "subject Paul addresses is that of God's *making right what has gone wrong*" (250). As far as I can tell, Martyn and Keck were some of the first to do so. Käsemann, Bultmann, and Barth do not use this language, and scholars writing on apocalyptic theology, such as Morse, Nathan Kerr, and Congdon, use the language of justification.

Martyn's explanation of what is at stake in translating Paul in this way is instructive. He notes that the "thrust of the verb [*dikaioō*] and of the noun [*dikaïosyne*] is exceedingly difficult to grasp, and equally difficult to render in a modern language." Martyn goes on to clarify that while these words in Greek are linguistic cognates, this connection is often obscured when translating them in English as "to justify" and "righteousness." Compounding this linguistic difficulty is the more serious issue, according to Martyn, that the English translations put Paul's terms in linguistic realms in which he does not intend for them to be. For the verb, translated as "to justify," the realm is the law, with implications of "the existence of a definable legal norm." For the noun, the realm is religion and morality, with the implication of "a definable religious or moral norm." See J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 249–50; see also 263–75.

26. Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988); "Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John J. Collins, vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 345–83; and "Paul, Theologian of God's Apocalypse," *Interpretation* 56 (2002): 21–33.

27. Richard E. Sturm, "Defining the Word 'Apocalyptic': A Problem in Biblical Criticism," in *Apocalyptic and New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 24 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 39.

Christ” as old creation is crucified (including our enslavement to the cosmic powers of “Sin” and “Death”) and then delivered, by the Spirit, into new creation, the in-breaking of which “is itself revelation, apocalypse.”²⁹ He submits that Paul’s apocalyptic perspective has three foci: Christ’s future coming, Christ’s past advent (his death and resurrection), and the present war against the powers of evil, inaugurated by his Spirit and taking place between these two events.³⁰ The present powers of evil are classified by Martyn as anti-God powers whose appearance on the scene fundamentally changes things and by this change indicates “what has really gone wrong and what is really involved in God’s making right in the whole cosmos.”³¹ Moreover, he also emphasizes that God’s liberating invasion causes an “epistemological crisis” for those whom it encounters, since it reveals their world in a wholly different light. Such an apocalyptic confrontation causes them to see “bifocally” “both the evil age and the new creation simultaneously.”³²

It is Pauline apocalyptic eschatology with which I will put Barth’s own work in conversation. Before adducing why this is so, it will be helpful to articulate what is meant by the use of the term “apocalyptic.” Generally speaking, Pauline scholarship that falls within this strand of interpretation can be characterized as emphasizing these four notions in Paul’s work: (1) the sovereign, unconditional action of God in the world to set right what has gone wrong; (2) an emphasis on divine revelation that discloses a new reality and age; (3) a christological understanding that the old age was characterized by humanity’s oppression by evil powers; and (4) an eschatological construal of the cosmic horizons of Christ’s death and resurrection expressed in Paul’s account of the gospel.³³

28. J. Louis Martyn, “The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians,” *Interpretation* 54, no. 3 (2000): 244–66 (on 254).

29. Martyn, *Galatians*, 104.

30. *Ibid.*, 105.

31. *Ibid.*, 272–73.

32. *Ibid.*, 104.

33. Fleming Rutledge has defined the following dimensions as crucial to the approach: “divine agency is central . . . ; Sin and Death are Powers who have invaded the world and established their dominion; the human condition is genuinely tragic because humanly speaking, there is no escape

There are three reasons for choosing scholars of Pauline apocalyptic eschatology as allies with Barth. The first reason is that, albeit at times indirectly, their work fundamentally challenges some of the key “New Perspective” conclusions that aim to distance the Reformation’s doctrine of justification as at all connected to Paul’s own notion of justification. Westerholm’s judicious observation throws the situation into sharp relief: “if central to the new perspective is the claim that Paul’s rejection of the works of the law had nothing to do with opposition to a role for human activity in justification, then ... [scholars of Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology] ... must be reckoned among its most forceful critics.”³⁴ This being the case, the work of these scholars maintains a certain commitment, along with Barth, to the view that it is God and God alone who effects justification/rectification in Christ and that human response and/or decision contributes nothing to the achievement of redemption within Paul’s theology. Insofar as Barth’s exegetical work and doctrine of reconciliation might strike similar chords within the spectrum of Pauline interpretation with these scholars, Barth’s work can be seen as an ally and resource for the debates over Pauline justification today.

The second reason these scholars are appropriate allies with Barth is that many of the scholars of Pauline apocalyptic eschatology see ties between their own work and Barth’s.³⁵ As Douglas Harink has, to a large

from bondage to the Powers; the earthly human world is subject to incursion from the divine world—‘cosmic breaking and entering’ (Martyn)—in Jesus Christ, the end of the ages has come upon us ... ; the divine apocalypse is less a disclosure than it is an invasion; justification (*dikaiosisune*) is understood less as individual salvation, more as rectification constituting a new world ... ; there are *three* parties in the apocalyptic drama, not two: God, enslaved humanity, and the Powers of Sin and Death ... ; Jesus Christ waged apocalyptic warfare against these demonic forces ... ; the apocalypse of Jesus Christ means the end of conventional warfare, because the line between good and evil runs through each person ... ; apocalyptic metaphor is God’s poetry (Martyn), telling us the truth about our condition and our hope; the New Creation dawns even now, in the Church’s participation in the Cross and Resurrection; and cruciform Christian witness is anchored by secure confidence in God’s triumph at the ultimate End, the Last Day when God puts an end to Sin, Death, and the devil, establishing the Kingdom of God in its eternal, victorious completeness.” See Fleming Rutledge, “A Modest Proposal: Apocalyptic Theology,” *Generous Orthodoxy Blog*, October 23, 2009, <http://ruminations.generousorthodoxy.org/2009/10/modest-proposal-apocalyptic-theology.htm>.

34. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, 240.

35. Martyn has remarked that “Barth was an exegete as well as a systematic theologian; for over a considerable period of time he correctly emphasized that Paul saw Adam in the light of Christ, sin in the light of grace, and so on.” See J. Louis Martyn, “God’s Way of Making Right What Is Wrong,”

degree, correctly observed, Barth's work in the second edition of his *Römerbrief* has a "powerful *apocalyptic* tone and message."³⁶ Yet what is interesting is that Harink then goes on to argue that Barth's work, both in the *Römerbrief* and *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, has anticipated the "discoveries" of recent Pauline scholarship regarding a more "genuine Pauline theology of justification,"³⁷ a theology that, according to his classification, is quite antithetical to the "usual Protestant story of justification and faith."³⁸

Harink's argument demands further attention for several reasons. First, he wants not only to distance his apocalyptic reading of Paul's theology of justification from the "usual" Protestant doctrine of justification but also to enlist the aid of Karl Barth in so doing. Second, insofar as Harink pits a Protestant conception of justification against what he calls a more "genuine Pauline theology of justification,"³⁹ his

in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 144n8. Martyn himself claims to follow after Barth in his own work in Paul. He also finds E. P. Sanders's famous observation that Paul thinks from solution to plight to have been anticipated in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 95n43. Furthermore, Martyn sees something in the biblical work of Paul Meyer that cannot be otherwise accounted for except to note that he was Barth's student for a year. See Martyn, "A Personal Word," in *The Word in the World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology*, ed. Paul W. Meyer and John T. Carroll (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), xviii. Harink finds Barth's early commentaries on Romans and later volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* to be a thorough outworking of Harink's own portrayal of the Pauline theme of "justification by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ." See Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 45. Hays indicates that his appreciative reading of Barth while studying at Yale in the 1970s, together with his contact with David Kelsey's narrative interpretation of Barth and Hans Frei's project to retrieve from Barth the category of realistic narrative, were factors that influenced his book on the faith of Jesus. See Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xxiii–xxiv. Gaventa regularly cotaught a course at Princeton Theological Seminary entitled "Paul and Karl," in which she shared with students the impact that reading Barth's second Romans commentary had on her during her graduate studies, as well as the similarity she finds in Barth between her own work on God "handing them over" in Rom. 1:24, 26, 28 and Barth's discussion of Judas being handed over in a small-print section of CD II/2. See Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Interpreting the Death of Jesus Apocalyptically: Reconsidering Romans 8:32," in *Jesus and Paul Reconnected: Fresh Pathways into an Old Debate*, ed. Todd D. Still (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 131n12.

36. Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 46. Harink is not the first to discover the apocalyptic tones in Barth's *Römerbrief*. Käsemann engages with Barth's *Römerbrief* throughout his own Romans commentary. Martyn, too, while referring occasionally in his scholarship to passages in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, also seems familiar with the apocalypticism in Barth's reading of Paul in his *Römerbrief* because he used to assign it in his course on Romans at Union Seminary, New York. (Gaventa relayed this piece of information in her opening lecture for the Princeton Theological Seminary course she cotaught on "Paul and Karl." As she narrates it, Martyn's course on Romans was her first introduction to Barth's *Römerbrief*.)

37. Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 46.

38. *Ibid.*, 45.

39. Bruce McCormack argues that Harink, in *Paul among the Postliberals*, has polemicalized against

work only recycles the same dismissal of the core theological insight of the Reformation first promulgated by Wrede and Schweitzer⁴⁰ and so propagates the widening gap between Paul and Reformation theology. Thus even as it has been recognized that scholars of Paul's apocalypticism pose a sure challenge to the New Perspective on Paul, it seems that, at times, they also want to distance Reformation theology from Paul's apocalyptic eschatology.⁴¹ This is seen not only in Harink's essay but also in the decision to translate *δικαιοσύνη* as "rectification" rather than "justification," which, at the very least, does away with the linguistic connection between Paul and the doctrine of justification. Finally, Harink's use and understanding of Barth reveals that among those Pauline scholars who find an advocate in Barth's second Romans commentary, it is not always well known how Barth's doctrine of justification developed from its earlier roots in the second edition of his Romans commentary to his more mature theology in the fourth volume of the *Church Dogmatics*.⁴²

This brings us to the final reason for choosing scholars of Paul's apocalyptic eschatology as allies. Though Barth never abandoned his actualistic account of revelation, set forth in the second edition of his Romans commentary, which does indeed line up well with apocalyptic readings of Paul, he nevertheless expands on and corrects his earlier

the Reformation by creating false either-or decisions for his readers. See Bruce McCormack, "Justitia aliena," 168. See Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 25–26. Harink is not the only one, however. Richard Hays targets Luther. See Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 119–22. Meyer, too, classifies Reformation interpretations of Romans 7 as anachronistic understandings that inhibit the text from being read according to the original form and function Paul had in mind. See Paul W. Meyer, "The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 62–84.

40. See Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 44–45. For a helpful summary of the scholarship of Wrede and Schweitzer on this issue, see Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, 101–16.

41. As McCormack notes, "If there is a consensus that stretches across these rather diverse groupings where Paul's doctrine of justification is concerned, it is this: the so-called Lutheran Paul constitutes a serious distortion of Paul's teaching." See McCormack, "Can We Still Speak of 'Justification by Faith?': An In-House Debate with Apocalyptic Readings of Paul," in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. Mark W. Elliott, Scott J. Hafemann, N. T. Wright, and John Frederick (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 161.

42. Even Myers's essay "From Faithfulness to Faith in the Theology of Karl Barth," which is more nuanced in its understanding of Barth's theology, still only highlights the Pauline thread running through the second edition of Barth's Romans commentary to CD IV to the neglect of paying attention to the significant developments that occurred between them.

doctrine of justification in ways that nuance current apocalyptic readings of Paul and ultimately create heretofore unnoticed or underdeveloped ties between the work of scholars of Paul's apocalyptic eschatology and a Barthian revision of the Reformation's doctrine of justification. This project proceeds on the conviction that Barth's later theology and exegesis in *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* and the *Church Dogmatics* also need to be mined for ways that both challenge and contribute to the apocalyptic readings of Pauline theology. Yet this must be done without leaving behind the core insights of the second edition of Barth's Romans commentary. As Bruce McCormack has convincingly argued: "the gains made in *Romans II*⁴³ are everywhere presupposed throughout the *Church Dogmatics*; . . . the continuity in theological perspective between these two great works so greatly outweighs the discontinuity that those who wish to read the dogmatics without the benefit of the lens provided by *Romans II* will understand everything in the wrong light."⁴⁴

The Significance of Barth's Genetic-Historic Development

A significant element of this study is the movement that will be made from the second edition of Barth's commentary on Romans (chap. 2) to his later exegesis of Romans, contained within *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*, and his doctrine of reconciliation in *CD IV/1* (chaps. 4–8), plus three brief ventures into *II/2*, *Christ and Adam*,⁴⁵ and *IV/3.1* in chapters 3, 6, and 8, respectively. Even more defining is the reason for this movement across texts. While it is true that a more comprehensive picture of the depth of Barth's Pauline-shaped doctrine of justification will be gained, there is a more fundamental impetus underlying the decision to seek after the fullness of Barth's thought. The impetus lies in the fact that the reading Barth gives to Paul in the second

43. This is McCormack's shorthand for the second edition of Barth's *Römerbrief*.

44. Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909–1936* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), 244–45.

45. Karl Barth, *Christus und Adam nach Römer 5* (Zollikon-Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952); Eng. trans., Karl Barth, *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5*, trans. T. A. Smail (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956).

edition of his Romans commentary, while honing in on several defining aspects of Pauline apocalyptic eschatology, gives only half the story. The second edition of the Romans commentary is one-sided in its understanding of the relationship of God to humanity set forth by Paul. This is because Barth was singularly focused on the problem of revelation: how God could reveal God's self to humanity in time and space without ceasing to be God. Barth's aim throughout his second commentary study was to look to Paul's letter to the church in Rome to answer the question of how the sovereign, high, and unknown God could be known. Barth's discovery, simply put, is that God can only be known in and through God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. "Knowledge of God is possible only as a divine possibility (miracle!) and never as a human possibility."⁴⁶

Barth's focus in the second edition of the Romans commentary is absorbed with the problem of how God can be known without then becoming something that humans can possess. The solution, Barth argues, is that God must only be known *indirectly*, by way of an intermediary. More importantly, the revelation of God through the intermediary must always remain distinct from the intermediary itself. In Jesus Christ, God veils God's self completely, in order that God may unveil God's self only to faith. Thus in the second edition of the Romans commentary, Jesus Christ is *not* the revelation of God but only the medium of God's self-revelation. While Jesus is the locus of revelation in his commentary, Barth's understanding of the incarnation, and its place in Pauline theology, is largely undeveloped.

Noting the one-sidedness of the second edition of the commentary, however, does not mean that Barth was not intent on listening to Paul's witness to the subject matter (*Sache*) to which all biblical texts point. In the preface to the second edition, Barth defines the *Sache* of the Bible as the "'infinite qualitative difference' between time and eternity, between God and the human. The relation—or, more accurately, the *relating*—of God to the human was understood to be a dialectical one, a dialectic of judgment and redemption."⁴⁷ McCormack points out that

46. McCormack, *Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 248.

for Barth “[w]hat did change from time to time was his description of the one ‘subject-matter’ of which all biblical texts, with greater or lesser clarity, speak.”⁴⁸ This is indeed what happens for Barth from the second edition of the Romans commentary to *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* and the *Church Dogmatics*.

While Barth’s transition to his more mature Christology from *CD II/2* onward was a gradual one, there were two decisive occurrences that affected Barth’s theological thought. Both of these events occurred in the years after the second edition of the Romans commentary, and the transition in Barth’s thinking, which these events help to bring on, directly affected his later readings of Paul and his further development of the doctrine of justification. The first of these occurrences came in May 1924, when Barth happened on the anhypostatic-enhypostatic christological dogma of the ancient church while reading post-Reformation theologians Heinrich Schmid’s and Heinrich Heppe’s textbooks on Reformed dogmatics.⁴⁹ The net effect of the discovery of this christological doctrine, in relationship to the doctrine of revelation set forth in the second edition of the commentary, was that it allowed Barth to shift away from the time-eternity dialectic, which was his chosen way of maintaining the primacy of God in his self-revelation, to achieving the same results through christological means. The anhypostatic/enhypostatic doctrine affirms that the second Person of the Trinity took on human nature completely and lived a human life in and through it. Outwardly, Jesus is a human just like any other, but inwardly the subject of the human Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity. Barth could now preserve the critical distance between God and humanity within his Christology and, at the same time, take into full account the doctrine of the incarnation, rather than reducing the location of revelation to the single point of the event

47. Bruce L. McCormack, “The Significance of Karl Barth’s Theological Exegesis of Philippians,” in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 98.

48. *Ibid.*

49. For a full narration and exploration of the significance of this discovery for Barth’s theology, see chap. 8 of McCormack’s *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*. McCormack has, more recently, made a “modest correction” to his paradigm of Barth’s development. See Bruce L. McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found: A Response to Edwin Chr. Van Driel,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 1 (2007): 63–64.

of the resurrection, as he did in the second edition of the Romans commentary.

The second occurrence that helped further Barth's theological thought came during the summer of 1936, when Barth heard a lecture given by Pierre Maury on the doctrine of election. Maury's lecture was given at a conference of Calvin scholars. His lecture was titled "Election and Faith," and the upshot of his argument was to reground election in Christology rather than treat it in abstraction from the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the first instance, the subject of election is God's Son, who chooses to be for humanity by taking the consequences of human sin against God onto himself. The effect of Maury's lecture on Barth's own thinking did not take long to sink in. Barth subsequently gave a series of lectures in Debrecen, Hungary, in September 1936 on "God's Gracious Election," which provided the basic structure of his full-length treatment of the doctrine election in *CD II/2*.⁵⁰ However, Barth's thinking in 1936 was still in development. Matthias Gockel has shown that in the Debrecen lectures, it was the "eternal God and thus also the eternal Son of God [who] is the *electing* God"⁵¹ for Barth, as it was for Maury. Not until *CD II/2*, whose material Barth presented "prior to its publication in regular lecture-course at the University of Basel, . . . between the autumn of 1939 and the summer of 1941,"⁵² does Barth arrive at the new conclusion, which is his alone, that the person of Jesus Christ is both the object *and* the subject of election. Additionally, it was Barth and/or Charlotte von Kirschbaum who introduced the idea of Jesus' "election for damnation" into Maury's lecture, which was translated into German in 1940 by Kirschbaum, in order to bring Maury's ideas more in line with Barth's own emerging thought at the time.⁵³ McCormack has argued that Barth's new foundation of Jesus Christ as both the object and subject of election had an all-encompassing impact for the whole of his subsequent theology.

50. McCormack, *Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 458.

51. Matthias Gockel, *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election: A Systematic-Theological Comparison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 161n8.

52. *Ibid.*, 164.

53. *Ibid.*, 162n14.

It is the key to his mature theology; it marks the difference between his earlier focus on revelation in the second edition of the Romans commentary and his christological concentration in volumes 2–4 of the *Church Dogmatics*. Incidentally, the incorporation of *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* into this study, in addition to providing further insight into Barth's exegesis of Romans, also gives the benefit of illuminating Barth's reading of Romans after he had been affected by Maury's lecture on election *and* after he had developed Maury's thinking about the subject of election in an even deeper way in *CD II/2*. The commentary was compiled from the manuscript of a course of lectures on Romans that Barth gave in Basel during the winter of 1940–41, which is concurrent with the time he was lecturing on the material presented within *CD II/2*.

The Argument

With the perennial debate over Pauline justification in mind, the interpretative allies identified, and the significance of Barth's genetic-historical development in view, what remains is to set forth the particular argument this study proposes. The aim of this study is to undertake a more sustained, accurate, and theologically complex reading of Barth's contribution to the question of a Pauline theology of justification. Furthermore, this study has the distinction of providing not only a broader treatment of Pauline apocalyptic eschatology in relationship to Barth but also of analyzing Barth's understanding of apocalyptic eschatology by taking closer account of the lines of continuity and discontinuity that run from his understanding of justification in the second edition of his commentary on Romans to his mature doctrine of justification in the fourth volume of the *Church Dogmatics*.

The main arc of this study is to sketch out the form and content of Barth's *forensic* apocalyptic understanding of justification, which emerges out of his mature Christology in his doctrine of reconciliation in *CD IV* and later readings of Paul both in the *Church Dogmatics* and *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*. It is the contention of this study that

while Barth's understanding of Paul's apocalyptic eschatology in the second edition of his Romans commentary is wholly compatible with Pauline apocalyptic, significant theological development occurred for Barth after the publication of the second edition of the Romans commentary, which resulted in his moving beyond the earlier perspective of the second Romans commentary. When Barth composed the commentary on Romans, in its second edition, he did so with no real knowledge of the Reformation and its theology. All of that would change when he took up the post of honorary professor of Reformed theology in Göttingen—a post that he was awarded based on the first edition of the Romans commentary. His honorary chair carried the requirement that Barth teach “introduction to the Reformed confessions, Reformed doctrine and Reformed church life.”⁵⁴ For such a task, Barth felt unqualified, remarking that he had not even read any of the Reformed confessional writings. He quickly set about to remedy that situation and soon was teaching various aspects of the Reformed theological tradition to his students. Through this process, Barth became well acquainted with the forensic (judicial) framework the Reformers gave to the doctrines of justification and atonement. This knowledge would later affect the unique forensic shape Barth gave to the whole of his soteriology in *CD IV*.

This study proposes that this development in Barth's knowledge and understanding of the Reformation, coupled with the revisions that he would make to his doctrine of election in *CD II/2*, created the necessary groundwork for him to adapt and intensify the forensic reading of Paul's theology of justification, which heretofore had been carried out by the Reformation. I will demonstrate that Barth's revision of forensicism, based as it is on the historicized theological ontology that comes to expression in his mature Christology, is apocalyptic in nature. Insofar as Barth's mature Christology is apocalyptic in nature, Barth's later reading of Romans takes up some of the same concerns as the cosmic apocalyptic readings of Paul, if on slightly different grounds.

54. Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barths Lebenslauf* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1975); Eng. trans., *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 128–29.

At the same time, because Barth revises Reformational forensicism according to Pauline apocalyptic eschatology, his doctrine of justification is not susceptible to the same criticisms commonly brought against forensicism, while his soteriology becomes more consistently forensic than that of the Reformation.

In choosing to use the term “forensic apocalyptic” to describe Barth’s doctrine of justification, it needs to be clarified what this term does and does not mean. The term itself comes from the scholarship of de Boer. De Boer, himself a scholar of Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology, has argued that there are two different patterns of Jewish apocalyptic theology present in Paul’s letters. He clarifies first that “[a]pocalyptic eschatology is fundamentally concerned with God’s active and visible rectification (putting right) of the created world (the ‘cosmos’), which has somehow gone astray and become alienated from God.”⁵⁵ De Boer further rehearses the important distinction, first made by Philipp Vielhauer,⁵⁶ that a defining characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology is its focus on an eschatological dualism between this age and the age to come. Out of this two-age dualism de Boer distinguishes two different patterns, within Jewish literature, of apocalyptic eschatology. The first pattern he names cosmic-apocalyptic. It is defined by the created world coming under the power of evil forces such that God’s sovereignty is seized and the whole world is led into idolatry. The righteous remnant of God’s people waits for the time when “God will invade the world under the dominion of the evil powers and defeat them in a cosmic war.”⁵⁷ The second pattern, de Boer notes, is a modified version of the cosmic-apocalyptic pattern. This is the forensic version of apocalyptic eschatology and, most notably, with this pattern the notion of evil cosmic powers does not play a role. Rather, human free will and individual human decisions are stressed. Sin results from an individual choosing to reject God, and death is the punishment. The law is God’s solution to humanity’s sin, and the final judgment is

55. De Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 350.

56. See Philipp Vielhauer, “Introduction,” in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–65), 2:581–607.

57. De Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 359.

not “a cosmic war but . . . a courtroom in which all humanity appears before the bar of the judge, God [who] will reward with eternal life those who have . . . chosen the law and observed its commandments (the righteous), while he will punish with eternal death those who have not (the wicked).”⁵⁸ De Boer notes that each of these two patterns of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology is present in Paul’s letters, though “christologically adapted and modified.”⁵⁹ While the patterns appear, in Jewish literature, to be alternatives to each other, with Paul as our example, this certainly need not be the case in Christian theology. However, de Boer argues that even though each of the patterns are christologically adapted in Romans, it is the cosmic-apocalyptic pattern that largely circumscribes and overtakes the forensic motifs. The language and perspectives of forensic apocalyptic eschatology predominate in Rom. 1:1–5:11, while those of cosmic apocalyptic eschatology prevail in Romans 6–8. Romans 5:12–21 is a key transitional passage in which the two patterns interpenetrate.⁶⁰ More will be said about this when de Boer’s argument is taken up again in chapter 6. For now, suffice it to say that Paul is adapting both patterns of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology in light of his Christology and that Barth’s own forensic apocalyptic eschatology is fully consonant with Paul’s adaptations of both patterns.

Two things need to be said about the “forensic apocalypticism” as it is used to describe Barth’s theology of justification. The first is that insofar as apocalyptic eschatology, of which forensic apocalyptic is but one version, is focused on bringing out the differences between this age and the age to come, Barth’s theological corpus as a whole could be characterized as apocalyptic eschatology. After all, Barth is famous for stating that if “Christianity be not altogether thoroughgoing eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever with Christ.”⁶¹ Ingolf Dalferth suggests that from the first edition of the

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 362.

60. Ibid., 365.

61. Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1967), 298. Eng. trans., Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from 6th ed., ed. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 314.

Romans commentary to the end of his life, Barth did not deviate from stressing that “the reality to which theology refers is the eschatological reality of the risen Christ and the new life into which we are drawn by the Spirit.”⁶²

The second thing to point out is that while this study proposes to use de Boer’s phrase “forensic apocalyptic eschatology” to describe Barth’s mature doctrine of justification, the actual content needed to fill out the specifics of this phrasing, as it describes Barth’s work, must be provided by Barth, not de Boer. Indeed, Barth’s version of forensic apocalyptic eschatology looks considerably different from the description de Boer provides of the version found in Jewish intertestamental literature. First of all, Barth follows Paul in understanding the eschatological event by which God deals with sin and the sinner to have already happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Second, rather than stressing the importance of one’s relationship to the law in determining one’s final destiny, Barth follows Paul in noting that the important relationship is between an individual and Christ, established by God.

Moreover, on a formal level, Barth’s forensic apocalypticism is not set over against cosmic apocalypticism. Rather, Barth adapts the forensic approach to the doctrine of justification set by the Reformers, making it more christocentrically focused by way of his historicized theological ontology. It is in this way that Barth’s forensicism gains its apocalyptic thrust. The doctrine of justification in the later Barth is an integration of a revised version of Reformational forensicism and Pauline apocalyptic eschatology. Again, this means that his version of forensic apocalypticism is not characterized by the same dimensions described by de Boer. Indeed, even as the second edition of Barth’s Romans commentary is apocalyptic in tone and thrust, in a manner consonant with Pauline apocalyptic eschatology, it is Barth’s engagement with the Reformation reading of Paul that introduces the forensic framework into his theology and, coupled with the revision

62. Ingolf U. Dalferth, “Karl Barth’s Eschatological Realism,” in *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 21.

of his doctrine of election, brings a new facet to his own apocalyptic eschatology.

Barth's attention to Paul's apocalyptic witness to Jesus Christ in *A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Christ and Adam*, and CD IV allows him to highlight the real connection between a forensic doctrine of justification and Paul's apocalyptic eschatology in Romans. When considering the features to any doctrine of justification, several key questions must be addressed: (1) What is justification? (2) How is it accomplished? (3) Who is the person who is justified? and (4) Where is justification located in the eschatology of salvation? Further, any attempt to construct a doctrine of justification on the basis of an exegesis of Paul's letter to the church in Rome brings together a constellation of doctrinal themes that not only can be mined in seeking to answer the questions above but also arise organically out of Paul's theology in Romans.⁶³ As Käsemann notes, the "various aspects of Pauline theology are thematically linked and have a mutual bearing. This theology possesses systematic power and completeness, with which we must not interfere . . . unless we are prepared to imperil the whole."⁶⁴ Guided by Rom. 1:16–17, Barth understood Paul's reason for writing to the church in Rome to be that he wanted them to know that Jesus Christ himself is the gospel—the good news of God's powerful work of salvation. In Jesus Christ, God has reconciled sinful humanity to Godself by putting sinful humanity to death and creating a new humanity in its place. Thus with Paul, Barth understands Jesus Christ to be the active subject of reconciliation. Such a christological understanding of justification implies several other overlapping and interrelated doctrinal themes, all of which are implied throughout various chapters in Romans and which will be treated in the chapters of this book.

63. This is not to imply that Romans is simply Paul's version of systematic theology. More on target, N. T. Wright has compared Romans to a symphony score, noting that "themes are stated and developed (often in counterpoint with each other), recapitulated in different keys, anticipated in previous movements and echoed in subsequent ones." See Wright, *Romans*, New Interpreter's Bible 10I (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 396.

64. Ernst Käsemann, "On Paul's Anthropology," in *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 29.

The first doctrinal theme, implied in Romans 1 and consistent with Paul's proclamation of Jesus Christ himself as the content of the gospel, is that of revelation or apocalypse. Revelation is an event that happens outside us. The truth of God's action to make right what has gone wrong must be told to us. Atonement is the second, interrelated doctrinal theme answering the question of how justification is enacted, and Paul considers it in Romans 3. Sinful humanity is abolished insofar as Jesus Christ suffers the wrath of God for us and in our place. Justification, the twin doctrine of atonement, whose contours are explored most fully in Romans 5, is accomplished as the event of atonement not only justifies us but also God. God's glory is maintained, and our sinful nature is brought to an end as a new humanity is ushered in. The question of who is the justified person implies the doctrine of humanity, and Barth finds Paul's discussion in Romans 7 instructive. Our true humanity is subjectively realized as we turn away from our sinfulness and turn toward our true humanity, which is found objectively only in Jesus Christ. Finally, just as revelation is an event that happens outside us, so the reality that Jesus Christ is the subject of reconciliation implies that it is the perfect tense of salvation that is most decisive in Barth's eschatology. Romans 8 is Barth's guide here—Jesus Christ is God's efficacious promise of eternal life, and thus it is in him alone that we hope.

Given that these five doctrinal themes, which belong to any christologically focused doctrine of justification, find a certain expression in Romans 1; 3; 5; 7; and 8, respectively, the task of the second chapter of this study is to undertake a comparison of Barth's own theological exegesis of these themes in the second edition of his Romans commentary with the theological exegesis of a handful of the scholars of Paul's cosmic-apocalypticism: namely, Ernst Käsemann, J. Christiaan Beker, J. Louis Martyn, Beverly Gaventa, Paul Meyer, Martinus de Boer, Charles Cousar, and Leander Keck. The goal of this dialogue is twofold. The first is to identify stronger links between Barth's work and current Pauline apocalyptic scholarship so that Barth's work might be seen as a legitimate resource and dialogue

partner in debates over Pauline theology. The second is to highlight the way Barth's own exegesis and theological reflection in his second Romans commentary anticipate and complement cosmic-apocalyptic readings of Romans.

However, as this study proposes that Barth's mature theology of justification is best described as forensic-apocalyptic, it will be important to establish, in chapter 3, the precise nature of Barth's theological development after writing the second edition of the Romans commentary so that it is clear how he went from basic agreement with the cosmic-apocalyptic reading of Romans to his own version of forensic apocalypticism, which in turn shaped his mature doctrine of justification. In chapters 4–8, this study will analyze and evaluate the mature Barth's exegetical and dogmatic moves in his treatment of the doctrinal themes that arise out of a forensic-apocalyptic doctrine of justification—based on Romans 1; 3; 5; 7; and 8—in *A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Christ and Adam*, and CD IV/1 and 3.1. Throughout this investigation into Barth's forensic-apocalyptic doctrine of justification, I will argue that Barth's attention to Paul's apocalyptic witness to Jesus Christ allows him to highlight the real connection between a Reformationally grounded doctrine of justification and Paul's apocalyptic eschatology in Romans. I will also argue that Barth's commitment to and radical restating of the Reformation doctrine is a result of his intensifying of forensicism, which comes as he establishes his historicized theological ontology, works out a mature Christology from that, and then returns once again to listen to Paul's apocalyptic witness to the subject matter of the biblical text—Jesus Christ. Where the cosmic-apocalyptic readings seem to want, at times, to put distance between the Reformation doctrine of justification and Pauline apocalyptic eschatology, Barth's forensic-apocalyptic reading of Romans allows him to formulate a doctrine of justification that creates stronger ties between the Reformation doctrine and Pauline apocalyptic eschatology. The study concludes in chapter 9, where I summarize the gains made by Barth's forensic apocalyptic doctrine of justification and argue that the

discussion about the relationship between Pauline apocalyptic eschatology and the Reformation doctrine of justification must take a different approach.

A Different Approach

The concept of a new approach to the relationship between Paul and Reformation theology comes from the example set by Barth in his own treatment of Paul and the Reformers. In the preface to the second edition of the commentary on Romans, we find Barth extolling Luther and Calvin for their “genuine understanding and interpretation . . . that creative energy which Luther exercised with intuitive certainty in his exegesis; which underlies the systematic interpretation of Calvin.”⁶⁵ Barth finds in the Reformers a willingness to listen carefully to what Paul has to say. He praises Calvin for the way in which he, “having first established what stands in the text, sets himself to re-think the whole material and to wrestle with it, till the walls which separate the sixteenth century from the first become transparent! Paul speaks, and the man of the sixteenth century hears.”⁶⁶ It is clear to Barth that the Reformers are not at odds with Paul, but rather eager pupils. However, he never advocates listening only or unquestioningly to the Reformers. “‘Back to the Reformers,’ cannot promise us the help that we need to-day. ‘Back to . . .’ is never a good slogan.”⁶⁷ The danger lies in the fact that “it is sometimes precisely some insight that once opened up with fresh vitality the force of Paul’s gospel that now, taken as self-evident in another situation and frozen into convention, impedes the interpreter’s ability to cross the differences of historical space and time in order to approach again that elusive intent of the author.”⁶⁸ Barth wants us to go to Scripture to hear Paul for ourselves. So, while he upholds the Reformers for listening closely to Paul, he is not above criticizing their interpretation or theology. When Barth is found

65. Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 7 [xi].

66. *Ibid.*

67. CD IV/1, 372 [411].

68. Meyer, “Worm at the Core of the Apple,” 65.

critiquing the theology and biblical interpretation of the Reformers it always stems from one main issue: namely,

the lack of attention which was . . . paid to Christology . . . no independent attention was paid to this central theme. . . . It was, of course, said that Holy Scripture is the Word of God to the extent that it presents Christ. But the programme of Reformation theology did not allow for any radical consideration of the meaning, importance and function of Christology in relation to all Christian knowledge.⁶⁹

This book will demonstrate the ways in which Barth, by listening to Paul for himself, not only had ears tuned in to Paul's proclamation of the apocalyptic horizons of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but that, as a result, also heard Paul in the interpretation and theology of the Reformers. Therefore, if anything, Barth's forensic apocalyptic doctrine of justification and reading of Romans constitute not a departure from Protestant theology but a radical recentering of it on the subject matter to which it must be beholden. His approach to Paul's apocalyptic eschatology and the Reformation doctrine of justification opens up new possibilities for the current relationship between Pauline apocalyptic studies and Protestant theology by establishing that Barth is, indeed, a guide worth following.

69. *CD IV/1*, 366 [404].