

The Blessing of Abraham,
the Spirit, and Justification
in Galatians

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*Their Relationship and Significance for
Understanding Paul's Theology*

CHEE-CHIEW LEE

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IN GALATIANS

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Pickwick Publications
An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W. 8th Ave., Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

www.wipfandstock.com

ISBN 13: 978-1-61097-372-4

Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

Lee, Chee-Chiew.

The blessing of Abraham, the Spirit, and justification in Galatians : their relationship and significance for understanding Paul's theology / Chee-Chiew Lee.

xvi + 240 pp. ; 23 cm. Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 13: 978-1-61097-372-4

1. Bible. Galatians—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Bible. Galatians—Theology. 3. Holy Spirit—Biblical teaching. 4. Abraham (Biblical patriarch). 5. Justification (Christian theology)—History of doctrines I. Title.

BS2685.52 L33 2013

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

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Foreword

AS A SINGLE BOOK with two distinct divisions, the Bible poses a challenge to everyone who seeks to understand its ultimate meaning. How are we to integrate the OT and NT into a single story and single message for the church? This question has challenged Christian interpreters since the beginnings of the church, and it continues to attract considerable attention from the scholarly community. Many interpreters find more contrast than continuity; and Paul is often singled out as a particularly notorious instance of one who forces the OT to say what it did not originally mean in order to commend Christ and his people as the fulfillment of God's first testament promises.

I therefore welcome a book, such as the one I here commend, for its argument for continuity across the testaments. But it is not only its conclusion that I welcome. Facile claims for harmony between the testaments are all too common; too many sweep awkward exegetical details under the rug in order to keep conclusions neat and tidy. Not the least of the virtues of Chee-Chiew Lee's book is her determination to tackle the specifics of the text at the same time as she seeks to move from those specifics to wider biblical-theological conclusions. Her work is marked by careful and even innovative exegetical work in both OT and NT as well as stimulating reflection on larger theological themes.

Dr. Lee begins with a simple yet difficult exegetical question: how are "the blessing of Abraham" and "the promise of the Spirit" to be related in Galatians 3:14? She argues convincingly, I think, that the two are not to be equated—the "blessing" is *not* the Spirit—but that the Spirit functions as both the evidence of the presence of that blessing and the means by which that blessing can be perpetuated. She bases this conclusion on the way in which key OT prophetic texts speak of the eschatological gift of the Spirit in relationship to God's fulfillment of his promises to the patriarchs. Among other important consequences, this argument enables her to shed light on the vexing issue of the unity of the argument of Galatians

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and to set the work of God's Spirit in the new covenant in a rich biblical-theological context.

I trust that her book, and its argument, will attract the attention they deserve.

Douglas Moo
Wheaton, IL, 2012

Abbreviations

1 <i>En.</i>	1 <i>Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)</i>
1 Macc	1 Maccabees
1 Pet	1 Peter
1 Thess	1 Thessalonians
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings
1–2 Sam	1–2 Samuel
11QPs	<i>Qumran Psalms Scroll</i>
11QT ^a	<i>Temple Scroll^a</i>
1QH ^a	<i>Hodayot^a or Thanksgiving Hymns^a</i>
1QpHab	<i>Pesher Habakkuk</i>
1QS	<i>Serek Hayaḥad or Rule of the Community</i>
2Q18	Qumran Hebrew manuscript of Ben Sira
4Q196	Qumran manuscript of Tobit
4Q225	Qumran manuscript of <i>Jubilees</i>
4Q252	<i>Commentary on Genesis A</i>
4Q504	<i>Divrei Ha-me'orot or Words of the Luminaries</i>
4QDeut ^d	Qumran manuscript of Deuteronomy
4QDibHam	<i>Divrei Ha-me'orot or Words of the Luminaries</i> ; also named as 4Q504
4QpNah	<i>Pesher Nahum</i>
8HevXIIgr	<i>The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AD	anno Domini

Abbreviations

AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>b. Yevamot</i>	Babylonian Talmud <i>Yevamot</i>
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BC	before Christ
BCE	before the Common Era
BDAG	Bauer, W., et al. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago, 2000
BDB	Brown, F., et al. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>BHQ</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i> . Edited by A. Schenker, et al. Stuttgart, 2004–
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
BibIntS	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BV</i>	<i>Biblical Viewpoint</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentaries
CCWJWCW	Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200
CE	Common Era
CEB	Commentaire évangélique de la Bible
CEV	Contemporary English Version

ch(s).	chapter
col(s).	column(s)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CurBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
Dan	Daniel
DCH	<i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by David J. A. Clines. 8 vols. Sheffield, 1993–2011
Deut	Deuteronomy
diss.	dissertation
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> . Edited by G. F. Hawthorne et al. Downers Grove, 1993
DSSSE	<i>The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition</i> . Edited by Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. 2 vols. Leiden, 1997–1998
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
ed(s).	editor(s), edited by
EDSS	<i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> . Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. 2 vols. Oxford, 2000
EgT	<i>Église et théologie</i>
Eng.	English
Eph	Ephesians
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
esp.	especially
ESV	English Standard Version
et al.	<i>et alii</i> , and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , and the rest
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
EvRT	<i>Evangelical Review of Theology</i>
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
Exod	Exodus
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
Ezek	Ezekiel
f(f).	and the following one(s)
FoiVie	<i>Foi et Vie</i>

Abbreviations

FZPhTh	<i>Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie</i>
Gal	Galatians
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
Gen	Genesis
<i>Gen. Rab.</i>	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>
Hab	Habakkuk
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Ludwig Köhler et al. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994–2000
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
Heb	Hebrews
Hos	Hosea
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
IBHS	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Waltke, Bruce K. and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, 1990
ICC	International Critical Commentary
idem	the same
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Isa	Isaiah
JB	Jerusalem Bible
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
Jer	Jeremiah
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
Job	Job
<i>Jos. Asen.</i>	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
Josh	Joshua
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JPSTC	JPS Torah Commentary
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods</i>

Abbreviations

JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
Jub.	<i>Jubilees</i>
KJV	King James Version
KUSATU	<i>Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt</i>
L.A.B.	<i>Liber antiquitatum biblicarum (Pseudo-Philo)</i>
Lad. Jac.	<i>Ladder of Jacob</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lev	Leviticus
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
lit.	literally
LXX	Septuagint (the Greek OT)
<i>m. Ned.</i>	<i>Mishnah Nedarim</i>
Mic	Micah
<i>Migration</i>	<i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
n(n).	note(s)
NA27	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . Nestle-Aland, 27th ed.
NAB	New American Bible
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	New English Bible
NEBKAT	Neue Echter Bibel: Kommentar Zum Alten Testament Mit Der Einheitsübersetzung

Abbreviations

Neh	Nehemiah
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . Edited by Willem VanGemenen. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version ©2011
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NT	New Testament
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
Num	Numbers
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
p(p).	page(s)
PAST	Pauline Studies
Phil	Philippians
<i>Prelim. Studies</i>	<i>On the Preliminary Studies</i>
Prov	Proverbs
PRSt	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
Ps (pl. Pss)	Psalm(s)
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
REB	Revised English Bible
ResQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>

Rev	Revelation
rev.	revised (by)
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
Rom	Romans
RRef	<i>La revue réformée</i>
RTR	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SBJT	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SCJ	<i>Stone-Campbell Journal</i>
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
Sir	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
Spec. Laws	<i>On the Special Laws</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica
Syr.	Syriac
T. Job	<i>Testament of Job</i>
T. Jud.	<i>Testament of Judah</i>
T. Levi	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. Translated by John T. Willis, Douglas W. Stott, and David E. Green. 15 vols. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, 1974–2006
Tg. Neb.	<i>Targum of the Prophets</i>
Tg. Neof.	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
Tg. Onq.	<i>Targum Onqelos</i>
Tg. Ps.-J.	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
Tg(s).	Targum(s)
ThTo	<i>Theology Today</i>

Abbreviations

<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
Tob	Tobit
trans.	translation, translated by
<i>TTJ</i>	<i>Trinity Theological Journal</i>
<i>TTKi</i>	<i>Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
USB4	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , United Bible Societies, 4th ed.
v(v).	verse(s)
vol(s).	volume(s)
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
Vulg.	Vulgate
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
Zech	Zechariah
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

1 INTRODUCTION

The Juxtaposition of the Blessing of Abraham and the Spirit in Galatians 3:14

A SHORT EPISTLE BUT a key focal point of many scholarly debates—this description of the epistle to the Galatians was true not only during the Reformation, but also in contemporary scholarly discussions on Paul and his theology, especially on the topic of justification.¹ Many aspects of the letter have been studied, but of particular relevance for this research is the area of biblical intertextuality.² Despite the short length of the epistle, Galatians has a relatively high number of OT quotations and allusions. Abraham and his biblical and theological significance are especially prominent, and because of this, Galatians has also become an important resource in the study of Paul and Scripture as well as the *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of Abraham.³

1. Luther's formulation of his doctrine of justification by faith is informed substantially by his exegesis on Galatians. He wrote a commentary on Galatians first in 1519, and then again in 1535, in which he states that the later commentary was intended "to set forth the doctrine of justification as clearly as possible" (Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, 27:87). This epistle is also a major subject of contention in contemporary discussions on Paul sparked off mainly by Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.

2. The term "intertextuality" here refers to the comparative study of literature in terms of "inter-literature relationships, inter-literature parallelism as well as trans-literature connections" (Tschuggnall, "Das Wort ist kein Ding," 160). Although the term "intertextuality" may have been connected initially with radical postmodernism and its denial of the role of the author in interpretation, this term is now used more broadly without its original connotation. In line with this development, I am using the term "intertextuality" to refer specifically to the interactions between the Pauline writings, Scripture, and the Second Temple Jewish literature.

3. Some of the recent works include: Baumbach, "Abraham unser Vater," 37–56;

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The highest concentration of OT quotations and allusions occurs in Galatians 3 and 4, especially in Gal 3:6–13, where six scriptural citations are compacted within a short span of eight verses.⁴ It is no wonder that Gal 3:6–13 has received so much attention from such a considerable number of scholars.⁵

In arguing that justification is by faith rather than by works of the law, Paul cites the example of Abraham in Gal 3:1–14. He starts by questioning the Galatians about whether they have received the Spirit based on the works of the law or by faith (Gal 3:1–5). Next, he claims that since Abraham is justified by faith (Gal 3:6; cf. Gen 15:6), all those who are “of faith” (ἐκ πίστεως) are blessed along with Abraham (Gal 3:7–9; cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18).

Paul contends that all who rely on the works of the law are cursed and that the crucifixion of Christ has brought about redemption from the curse of the law (Gal 3:10–13). Following the scriptural citations in Gal 3:6–13, an interesting phenomenon can be observed in Gal 3:14. Paul concludes his arguments in Gal 3:1–14 with two ἵνα clauses in Gal 3:14:

1. ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (“in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus”)
2. ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως (“in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith”)

Paul juxtaposes these two clauses, intertwining the main themes of Gal 3:1–5 and Gal 3:6–9 in a climax.⁶ Grammatically, these two ἵνα clauses may be purpose or result clauses, while structurally, they may be in a coordinate or a subordinate relationship.⁷ Regardless of how these issues

Bethune, “Abraham, Father of Faith”; Calvert-Koysis, *Paul, Monotheism and the People of God*; Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*; Harrisville, *Figure of Abraham*; Longenecker, *Triumph of Abraham's God*; Oeming, “Der Glaube Abrahams,” 16–33.

4. (1) Gen 15:6 in Gal 3:6; (2) Gen 12:3 in Gal 3:8; (3) Deut 27:26 in Gal 3:10; (4) Hab 2:4 in Gal 3:11; (5) Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12; and (6) Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13.

5. E.g., Bekken, “Abraham og Ånden (Abraham and the Spirit),” 265–76; Caneday, “Redeemed from the Curse,” 189–209; Martyn, “Habakkuk 2:4 and Leviticus 18:5,” 465–73; Silva, “Abraham, Faith, and Works,” 251–67; Sprinkle, *Law and Life*; Wakefield, *Where to Live*; Willitts, “Context Matters,” 105–22; Wisdom, *Blessing*.

6. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123; Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 221.

7. Wallace points out that, due to Semitic influence, the ἵνα clause may sometimes be both purpose and result (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 472–73). See also Moule, *Idiom*, 142. The term “juxtaposition” is sometimes used for the purposes of contrast

are decided, it is clear that there is some kind of relationship between the reception of the Spirit and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise.⁸ How did Paul arrive at this juxtaposition? Perhaps there was “something within the realm of Jewish expectations that *did* associate the Spirit with the promises of Abraham?”⁹ How are these two motifs related to justification?

On the surface, the blessing of Abraham and the promise of the Holy Spirit do not seem to be directly related in the OT. The blessing of Abraham in Genesis is related to land, posterity, and the blessing for the nations in a covenantal context, but there is no mention of the Spirit.¹⁰ Although the phrase “blessing of Abraham” does not appear directly in the prophecies of the promise of the Spirit, a few of the passages in these prophecies allude to the language used in the Abrahamic covenant.¹¹

There seems to be a development and some kind of relationship between the two theological motifs that invite further investigation. The following questions still remain: (1) Was there an understanding in the Latter Prophets and in early Judaism that associated the Spirit with the blessing of Abraham and which might lead Paul to relate the two?¹² (2) If there is such a traditional association, how has Paul further developed the relationship? (3) If there is no such traditional association, how does Paul derive the relationship between the two?

This study will seek to answer the questions above and to articulate the relationship between the Abrahamic blessing and the promise of the Spirit in Gal 3:14 by tracing the development and association of these two theological motifs through the OT and the Second Temple literature, how this development may have influenced Paul in his juxtaposition of these two motifs in Gal 3:14, and how their relationship would shed light on Paul’s overall argument in Galatians and his theology of justification.

or comparison. However, in the case of Gal 3:14, these two clauses are correlated or coordinated, rather contrasted. Most commentators understand these two *ἵνα* clauses in Gal 3:14 to be coordinating. A few are inclined to see them as subordinating (e.g., Harrisville, *Figure of Abraham*, 10; Duncan, *Galatians*, 103).

8. For a discussion on juxtaposed *ἵνα* clauses in the Pauline letters, see pp. 53–56 below.

9. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 182; emphasis in original.

10. Gen 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–14; 22:15–18; cf. 26:3–5; 28:13–15.

11. See, e.g., Isa 44:2–3 and Ezek 36:26–28.

12. I am using the term “early Judaism” to refer to the various forms of Jewish belief from the third century BCE until the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.

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HISTORY OF RESEARCH

In this survey on the history of research, we shall begin by first looking at scholars who regard the blessing of Abraham to be the promise of the Spirit. Second, we will proceed to those who think that, while the two are not the same, there is some kind of relationship. Finally, we will look at those who hold that there is no relationship between the two. We will be evaluating the views of these scholars as we go through the history of research. Some of the views may be dismissed in the course of this evaluation, while others will need to be dealt with in more detail in later chapters.

Interpreters Who Identify the Blessing with the Spirit

Despite the amount of literature on Galatians 3, many interpreters do not address the issue of the relationship between the blessing of Abraham and the promise of the Spirit in Gal 3:14.¹³ Nonetheless, as early as 1519, Martin Luther understood the bestowal of the Spirit as part of the content of the Abrahamic blessing.¹⁴ Since then, most modern interpreters have taken a similar stance, even to the extent of equating the blessing of Abraham with the promise of the Spirit.¹⁵

In spite of this, not many of these interpreters are able to articulate clearly or convincingly why Paul has supposedly identified the Spirit with the blessing of Abraham. Lagrange and Betz explain that Paul may have identified the two on the basis of the experience of the Galatians.¹⁶ However, Paul's argument from Scripture in Gal 3:6–13 suggests that there might also be some scriptural grounds on which he bases the association.

Cosgrove claims that both the early church and Hellenistic Judaism have a tendency to treat "all the divine promises as extensions of the

13. Hays lists a number of prominent NT interpreters who did not address this issue at all, such as Lightfoot, Zahn, Lietzmann, Bonnard, Oepke, Bligh, and Lührmann (Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 181n53).

14. Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, 27:263. First, Luther explains that the blessing of Abraham consists of the promise that "he should be the father of many nations." Second, he notes that "the Holy Spirit was promised to Abraham when the blessing of faith was promised to him."

15. E.g., Burton, *Galatians*, 177; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 128; Bruce, *Galatians*, 168; Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit*, 50; Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 126; Eckstein, *Verheißung und Gesetz*, 152; Martyn, *Galatians*, 323; Lambrecht, "Abraham and His Offspring," 526; Heckel, *Der Segen*, 148–49; Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 233; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 477.

16. Lagrange, *Galates*, 74; Betz, *Galatians*, 152–53.

promise to Abraham.”¹⁷ Therefore, the promise of the Spirit in the prophetic tradition is also identified as the blessing of Abraham.¹⁸ However, the evidence from the early church and Hellenistic Judaism that Cosgrove cites to support his assertion is not convincing.¹⁹

Interpreters Who Associate but Not Identify the Blessing with the Spirit

The fact that Paul juxtaposed the two themes does not necessarily mean that they are *equated*. The two could be related in other ways, as some scholars suggest. For example, (1) according to Hays, it may be the two effects resulting from Christ’s redemption (Gal 3:13);²⁰ or (2) as Fee argues, it may be that the reception of the Spirit is the way by which the blessing of Abraham is fulfilled.²¹ Fee notes that even though the experience of the Spirit is associated with the blessing of Abraham in Gal 3:1–14, the promise of the Spirit in Paul should probably be understood in the prophetic tradition of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.²² However, Fee stops short of explaining how the blessing of Abraham might be related to the promise of the Spirit and the new covenant in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Williams and Hong explain that the promise of numerous descendants, which is one of the elements of the Abrahamic blessing and implied in Gal 3:6, is fulfilled by means of receiving the promised Spirit.²³ According to Williams, the receiving of the sonship is closely connected

17. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit*, 105.

18. Ibid., 104–5. Earlier in his book, Cosgrove explicitly states that “the blessing of Abraham is above all the gift of the Spirit,” and “Paul identifies the promise (explicitly) and the blessing (by implication) with the gift of the Spirit (3:14)” (idem, 50).

19. The evidence that Cosgrove cites from the early church to support the notion of “promise by extension” are Acts 7:17; 13:32; 26:6 (Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit*, 105). However, he does not specify which Hellenistic Jewish sources he refers to, which perhaps could be those he cited pp. 90–101. Acts 13:32 and 26:6 depict Paul referring to the “good news that . . . God promised to the fathers,” and that he was on trial “because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers” (ESV). In view of Rom 4:1–25; 15:8–9; Gal 3:8, the promise Paul refers to in Acts 13:32; 26:6 is specifically the Abrahamic promise, not any other divine promise. Similarly, in Acts 7:17, the promise refers unambiguously to the Abrahamic promise to multiply the descendants.

20. Hays, “Galatians,” 262.

21. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 394–95. Fee explains that “the Spirit is the way the promised blessing made to Abraham has been realized.”

22. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 395.

23. Williams, “Promise in Galatians,” 714–16; Hong, “Does Paul Misrepresent the Jewish Law?” 172.

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with God's sending of the Spirit (Gal 4:4–5), and the Spirit also works to “create” the sons of Abraham (Gal 4:28–29).²⁴ With the inclusion of the Gentiles as children of Abraham and children of God by faith, the Abrahamic promise to bless the nations is also fulfilled through the Holy Spirit.²⁵

There are two main problems with this view of the Spirit as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise. First, in Galatians, Paul attributes the status of sonship to faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:7, 26–29; 4:4–5), not to the Spirit. Second, this view neglects the OT context of the promise of the Spirit and its possible influence on Paul's theology in his juxtaposition of the Abrahamic blessing with the promise of the Spirit.²⁶

Hays proposes that a “partial” answer may be found in Paul's use of an early Christian collection of scriptural *testimonia* concerning the messianic seed.²⁷ He postulates that Isa 44:3 might have been one of the Scriptures in the *testimonia* that associated the blessing of Abraham with the promise of the Spirit.²⁸ The LXX of Isa 44:3 reads: ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου [“I will place my Spirit upon your seed and my blessings on your descendants”]. Based on the parallel between πνεῦμα (“Spirit”) and εὐλογία (“blessing”) in Isa 44:3, Hays claims that “although Paul does not cite this passage, it probably underlies and surely illuminates Gal 3:1–14.”²⁹ However, he admits that there is a problem, as the passage is addressed to Jacob instead of Abraham.³⁰ Although the language of “blessing” and “descendants” may faintly allude to the Abrahamic promise, Hays has not shown how the “blessing” in Isa 44:3 is related to Abrahamic promise.³¹

24. Williams, “Promise in Galatians,” 715.

25. Ibid., 716; Hong, “Does Paul Misrepresent the Jewish Law?” 173. Both Williams and Hong also attempt to explain how the element of the land in the Abrahamic promise is fulfilled by the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, an evaluation of such a discussion regarding the land element would be beyond the scope of this study.

26. This is reflected in Williams's statements below: “the promise of many descendants is, at the same time, the promise of the Spirit. . . . In other words, Paul reads beyond the explicit words of scripture to the implicit meaning that for him they contain” (Williams, “Promise in Galatians,” 716).

27. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 182–83.

28. Ibid., 183.

29. Hays, “Galatians,” 261.

30. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 182.

31. I shall discuss in detail the relationship between the blessing of Abraham and Isa 44:3 in ch. 4 below.

Introduction: The Juxtaposition of the Blessing of Abraham

On the other hand, Sze-kar Wan points out that Paul's juxtaposition of the two motifs could be influenced by the Hellenistic-Jewish mysticism that is reflected in Philo.³² While Wan rightly draws attention to the importance of studying the interactions between Paul and contemporary Jewish thought, the evidence he puts forth does not seem to be conclusive. Wan contends that the promise of Abraham functions in both Philo and Paul as a "vital link between the patriarch and his descendants."³³ According to Wan, the content of the Abrahamic land promise for Philo is the "Wisdom of God" that is given by the divine Spirit, and Philo understands that all proselytes who convert to monotheism are Abraham's descendants.³⁴ Thus, in this way, the Spirit is related to the Abrahamic promise in Philo. However, when Paul juxtaposes the blessing of Abraham with the promise of the Spirit, he specifically refers to the Abrahamic promise of blessings for the nations, not the land promise, and the content of the promise is the "gospel preached ahead of time to Abraham" (Gal 3:8). Also, for Paul, all who believe in Christ, not those who adhere to monotheistic faith, are descendants of Abraham by faith (Gal 3:7–9). Although Wan admits that the content of God's promise in Philo is different from that of Paul, he argues that the manner by which both appropriated Abraham shows that there might have been "a great deal more contact" between the two than most scholars would assume.³⁵

Wan's conclusion is doubtful for the following reasons. (1) While Philo and Paul may be interpreting the same Abraham narrative, the similarity in the manner by which Abraham is appropriated is more formal than actual, since the content is starkly different. (2) The verbal parallels in Galatians 3 are nearer to the OT than to Philo. (3) Paul's interest is historical while Philo's interest is mystical.³⁶

32. Wan, "Abraham and the Promise of Spirit," 209.

33. Ibid., 224.

34. Wan, "Abraham and the Promise of Spirit," 217–19. Wan infers the content of the Abrahamic promise, specifically the land promise in Gen 15:18, as the "Wisdom of God" from Philo, *Heir* 96–99, 313–16 and that such wisdom is given to Abraham by the divine Spirit (Philo, *Virtues* 212, 217). Wan also argues that when Philo speaks of Abraham as the founder of "the Jewish people" (τὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος; Philo, *Virtues* 212), he "refers not simply to his fellow-Jews but to all who hold the right belief of God regardless of ethnicity. Gentiles can become 'Jewish' by means of adherence to monotheism" (Wan, "Abraham and the Promise of Spirit," 219–20).

35. Wan, "Abraham and the Promise of Spirit," 223–24.

36. Smith, "Pauline Literature," 278.

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More recently, Morales has proposed that Paul's association of the Spirit and the blessing of Abraham could reflect an early Jewish tradition found in the *Testament of Judah*, which connects the Spirit with blessings and Abraham.³⁷ *Testament of Judah* 24 speaks of the restoration of Israel after their judgment, which is meted out in the form of the covenantal curses described in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28–30, and their subsequent repentance. At that time, a messianic figure will appear, and “the heavens will be opened upon him to pour out the spirit as a blessing of the Holy Father. And he will pour the spirit of grace on you” (*T. Jud.* 24:2–3b).³⁸ According to Morales,

Following this description, the text proceeds to depict the resurrection of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to promise a kingdom to the sons of Israel (*TestJud* 25,1–2). Though the text does not explicitly speak of a “promise,” it does seem to present this outpouring of the Spirit as the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, intriguingly reinterpreting it in terms of resurrection. If one of the underlying presuppositions of Paul's argument in *Gal* 3,10–14 is Christ's resurrection and the eschatological life that it brings—as seems likely—and if the *Testament of Judah* represents a tradition that may have been available to Paul, then the connection between the Spirit and the promise to Abraham begins to make more sense.³⁹

Morales argues that the tradition of associating the Spirit with blessing in *T. Jud.* 24 is not necessarily Christian, as it can be traced to *Isa* 44:3 and is also apparent in the *Word of the Luminaries* (4Q504).⁴⁰

However, Morales's argument is not convincing. First, the association of the Spirit with blessing only implies that the tradition preserved in *T. Jud.* 24 associates the Spirit with Israel's redemption from the covenantal curses and the restoration of blessing. The text of *T. Jud.* 24:2–25:2 still does not show how the Spirit is associated with the *blessing of Abraham*. Second, the provenance of the *Testament of Judah*, whether Jewish with Christian interpolations or Christian using Jewish tradition, is hotly contested.⁴¹ In either case, even if a Jewish tradition is preserved in *T. Jud.* 24:2–3; 25:1–2, it is difficult to discern in its present Christian form,

37. Morales, “Words of the Luminaries,” 155–57.

38. *OTP* 1:801.

39. Morales, “Words of the Luminaries,” 277.

40. Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel*, 69–73.

41. On the provenance of the *Testament of Judah*, see p. 136n2 of ch. 5 below.

whether the interpretation of the Spirit and its association with blessing or Abraham, if any, is a Jewish tradition available to Paul or a Christian tradition influenced by Paul. Third, it is not clear from the text how the Spirit is connected with the Abrahamic blessing for the nations through the resurrection of Abraham, and Morales has also not shown how Paul would have associated the resurrection of Abraham (*T. Jud.* 25:1) with the “underlying presupposition” of the resurrection of Christ in Gal 3:10–14.

Interpreters Who Do Not Relate the Blessing with the Spirit

There are also scholars who argue that the Holy Spirit is not related to the blessing of Abraham. In his commentary on Galatians, Calvin thinks that Paul is not referring to the Holy Spirit here, but to “the spiritual promise,” received by faith, in contrast to ceremonial law and physical descent.⁴²

Following Calvin’s lead, Harrisville argues that πνεύματος should be understood as a “descriptive genitive” and the phrase τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος should thus be translated as “spiritual promise.” Even if it refers to the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Spirit should be understood to refer to the prophecy in Joel that is fulfilled at Pentecost, not to the Abrahamic promise.⁴³

He gives two further reasons why the Holy Spirit is not referred to here.⁴⁴ First, Harrisville argues that the two ἵνα clauses are dependent and not coordinate. According to Harrisville, a coordinate reading would require a strict parallel between the two ἵνα clauses, and thus, τὰ ἔθνη (“the nations”) would become the implied subject of the verb λάμβωμεν (“we might receive”). Harrisville argues that this is not possible, as λάμβωμεν includes Paul himself, who is not a Gentile. Second, nowhere else in Paul’s letters is it indicated that the Spirit is the content of the promise. On the contrary, Rom 4:13 identifies the content of the Abrahamic promise as ὁ κόσμος (“the world”).

Harrisville’s arguments are not convincing for the following reasons. First, the blessing of Abraham consists of progeny, land, and blessing for the nations. The Spirit is somewhat related to the eschatological fulfillment of progeny (cf. Gal 4:6), although there is a difficulty in accounting for the land.⁴⁵ Second, even if the two ἵνα clauses are dependent and not

42. Calvin, *Galatians*, 56.

43. Harrisville, *Figure of Abraham*, 11.

44. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

45. I am using the term “eschatological” in this study to refer to the expectation

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coordinate, it only implies that the two are not *equated*; they are still *related*. Third, it is unlikely that the genitive τοῦ πνεύματος is purely descriptive (“spiritual promise”) because the gift of the Spirit is mentioned in Gal 3:1–5 and 4:6–7. Paul continues to argue that all who believe in Christ are Abraham’s true children (Gal 3:29). Therefore, it is more likely that, in Gal 3:14, Paul sees the reception of the Spirit as related to, though not equated with, the promised blessing made to Abraham in some ways. Nonetheless, the gift of the Spirit should not be understood as the “fulfillment” of the Abrahamic blessing. Rather, Christ is the one who brings about the fulfillment by his vicarious death of the cross (Gal 3:13–14, 16–19).

Kwon also argues strongly against the prevailing understanding of the Spirit as being equated with the content of the blessing of Abraham, to the extent that he denies any relationship at all between the two. He puts forth several reasons why he thinks that “promise of the Spirit” is not related at all to “the Abrahamic promise.”⁴⁶ (1) Paul does not explicitly claim that the Spirit is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise. Many scholars have equated the “promise” in Gal 3:14 with the “promise” in Gal 3:16 onwards only on the basis of their proximity. (2) The association of the Spirit and the Abrahamic promise is unattested in any other contemporary literature. On the contrary, the Jews of Paul’s time understood the Abrahamic promise as the promise of the land in an eschatological and universal sense. (3) The alternation between the singular and plural forms of ἐπαγγελία “promise” in Gal 3:16–22 indicates that Paul could not have the singular “promise of the Spirit” in mind. (4) Galatians 3:18 clearly identifies the “inheritance” with the content of God’s promise to Abraham. (5) The Spirit is not involved in Paul’s discussion of the Abrahamic promise in Gal 3:15–29. Although Paul relates sonship to the gift of the Spirit in Gal 4:7, the notion of the Abrahamic promise is not in view. (6) Paul explicitly mentions the world, that is, the eschatological land as the content of the Abrahamic promise.

of “a period in which Yhwh triumphs over evil, redeems his people Israel, and finally rules the world in peace and salvation” that is present in the latter prophets (Arnold, “Old Testament Eschatology,” 25). This era is marked by the restoration of Israel from the exile, the renewal of the covenantal relationship with Yahweh, the rule of Yahweh or a Davidic king, the punishment of the wicked (both Gentiles and unfaithful Jews), and the conversion of some pagans to Yahweh as his people (Arnold, “Old Testament Eschatology,” 27–29). The NT writers believed that this era was inaugurated by the first coming of Jesus Christ, and it will be consummated at the second coming of Christ (cf. Acts 3:21) (Rowland, “The Eschatology of the New Testament,” 57, 59, 68–70).

46. Kwon, *Eschatology in Galatians*, 109–14.