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LEVITICUS 18:5 IN GALATIANS 3:12

BY

SEIMA AOYAGI

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT OF
LEVITICUS 18:5 IN GALATIANS 3:12

By Seima Aoyagi

In Galatians 3:12, Paul says “The law is not of faith, rather, the one who does them shall live by them” citing Leviticus 18:5. At first glance, Gal 3:12 seems to present Paul’s blunt statement rejecting the law and Lev 18:5 seems to be cited to prove that the law is in opposition to faith. This impression is enhanced by noticing that Lev 18:5 is put antithetically to Habakkuk 2:4, which is also cited in Gal 3:11. Because Hab 2:4 is promoting justification by faith, putting Lev 18:5 in opposition seems to suggest that Lev 18:5 advocates meritorious works-righteousness.

Because both Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 are from the OT, it seems odd for Paul to treat one OT passage as promoting a good theology and the other as promoting bad theology. These difficulties become more obvious when we notice that Lev 18:5 in its original context never promotes meritorious works-righteousness. Instead, Lev 18:5 encourages God’s people toward righteous living as a proper response for God’s chosen people. This verse is an encouragement for Israel to walk in the law instead of pagan teachings because only the Lord’s law would bring people to life. Why then in Gal 3:12 is Paul citing Lev 18:5 in such a seemingly negative way?

In this paper, I will study Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 in its original context, then study how Paul uses both text in Gal 3:10-12. As I do this, I will focus especially on how the prepositions כּ (in/by) is translated in LXX for Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4. What I will show is that while “live *by/in* them” in Lev 18:5 and “live *by/in* faith” in Hab 2:4 both use the preposition כּ (in/by), in LXX they are translated differently. Lev 18:5 translates it as ἐν νόμῳ “in the law,” and Hab 2:4 translates it as ἐκ πίστεώς “by/from faith.” While we usually treat ἐν and ἐκ interchangeably, I point out the fundamental differences that ἐν is for ‘motions *in*’ with a consecutive sense more fitting, and ἐκ is for ‘motions *from*’ with a causal sense more fitting. This sensitive difference that LXX makes suggests that Lev 18:5 should better be translated as “shall live *in* them (אֲחַיֶּיךָ),” which makes the relationship between life and law as consequential, rather than causal. While a causal relationship makes obedience to the law based on cause and merit in order to gain life, this consecutive relationship makes life a natural consequence of the obedience. Both could be said as “conditional,” but it is not a meritorious condition, rather, it is a consecutive condition.

I will also point out that Paul respects the non-meritorious significance of ἐν νόμῳ “in the law” in Lev 18:5. Of all the occasions where Paul is against meritorious works-righteousness, he only condemns those who are ἐκ νόμου “from the law,” not ἐν νόμῳ “in the law.” Paul is not against the law by itself, rather he is against the misuse of the law, ἐκ νόμου “from the law.” Instead, he is presenting the proper function of the law, the law is for one to live ἐν νόμῳ “in the law.” Paul is citing Lev 18:5 to present the proper function of the law and to rebuke the improper use of the law. For Paul, the law is not to make someone “justified by it,” but it should be used to be “lived in it,” by the people of God.

The law is not a gate to enter into the righteous status, but a realm to live in after one has passed through.

To Naoko,
my amazing wife, my best friend and partner in the gospel,
who has been a great helper and encourager,

and to our four children,
Senri, Towa, Satoki, and Akari,
who are indeed a treasure from the Lord,

and to the leadership and the congregation of Grace Harbor Church in Tokyo,
who kept encouraging me to complete this work,
and graciously gave sabbatical months to their only pastor.

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Acknowledgement

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List of Abbreviations

OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
LXX	Septuagint

Modern Bible Translations

ESV	English Standard Version
NIV	New International Version
NKJ	New King James Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
KJV	King James Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version

Apocrypha

2Macc	2 nd Maccabees
Bar	1 st Baruch

Dead Sea Scroll

1QpHab	Peshier on Habakkuk from Qumran Cave 1
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Writings of Josephus

Jos.Anti	Antiquities of the Jews Josephus
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Writings of Philo

Philo.Prb	Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit
Philo.Sqe	De Specialibus Legibus

Reference Works

BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, Greek-English Lexicon of the NT, 2 nd Edition
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis
NIDNTT	The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction of Leviticus 18:5

Leviticus 18:5b “if a person does them, he shall live by them” (ESV) would not become a topic for scholars if it was not cited by Paul in his epistles. Paul quotes Lev 18:5 in Galatians 3:12, to be set side-by-side with Habakkuk 2:4 “the righteous shall live by his faith” (ESV). Along with the statement “the law is not of faith” (Gal 3:12), it appears Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 are set antithetically to suggest that the law has nothing to do with faith, or even that the law stands in opposition to faith. If Hab 2:4 is the representative passage for justification by faith, then Lev 18:5 seems to be treated as the representative passage for meritorious works-righteousness.

The difficulty comes because both passages are from the OT and it seem odd when Paul treats one OT passage as promoting good theology and the other as bad theology. And the difficulty increases when it seems, as we see later, that Lev 18:5 is not meant to convey bad theology in its original context. Rather, like Psalm 1 “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night,” it is an encouragement for Israel to walk in the law rather than pagan teaching because only the Lord’s teaching would bring people to life. Why then in Gal 3:12 is Paul citing Lev 18:5 in such a seemingly negative way?

1.2. Recent Discussions on Leviticus 18:5

At the Reformation, Martin Luther opened up the longstanding post-reformation tradition that sees the works of the law, and virtues within as strongly tied to legalistic works-righteousness. According to Luther, the law and faith are always set antithetically, and he sees our salvation as the salvation from the works of the law.¹

E. P. Sanders is one of the prominent scholars and the front runner of the so-called New Perspective on Paul, that raised a voice against that traditional view of the law, and proposed a positive view of the law. He said that the OT law was not supposed to be a means to gain meritorious moral achievement by which one can “get-in,” rather it is given in the gracious covenant context and should be obeyed to “stay-in.”² He did not mean that the Jewish law was so gracious that there is no need for obedience. Sanders understands the importance of obedience to the Torah for Jews, but the point is it was not meritorious;

“As long as he maintains his desire to stay in the covenant, he has a share in God’s covenantal promises, including life in the world to come. The intention and effort to be obedient constitute *the condition for remaining in the covenant*, but they do not *earn* it... [The rabbi’s] legalism falls within a larger context of gracious election and assured salvation... they did not think that they earned their place in the covenant by the number of *misvot* [commandments] fulfilled. Nor did they think that the transgression of more commandments than were fulfilled would damn them...”³

¹ See Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2004), 33-34, for brief depiction of Luther.

² E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Pattern of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 420f.

³ *Ibid.*, 180f.

What then, was Paul rejecting about Judaism? According to Sanders, it was not the meritorious aspect of Judaism (since it was a gracious religion,) rather simply because “it is not Christianity.”⁴

The discussion, after Sanders, went broad among other New Perspective scholars including James Dunn and N. T. Wright,⁵ yet the basic premise that Sanders set remains the same, that is, OT law was gracious law and Jews were encouraged to obey the law to remain in the covenant community (or “to be finally vindicated” for N. T. Wright). While it is almost impossible to grasp all the points that critics raise against the New Perspective, this rather positive view on Judaism is definitely one of the main points that has received refutation from the traditional view that the Jews were trying to gain personal salvation

⁴ Ibid., 552.

⁵ Seeing Sander’s answer was too simple to explain why Paul was objecting against his opponents, James Dunn further developed it by saying what Paul was objecting was not the meritorious law observance in general, but the practice of the Torah as Jewish identity markers. According to Dunn, even keeping the law was taken in gracious context, Paul was opposed to the Torah since such ethnically distinguished practices as circumcision and food observance were contrary to God’s plan for a universal kingdom as now Jews and Gentiles are equally included in God’s people. Dunn’s numerous essays written from 1990-2004 are collected in James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008 [2005]). Still, finding a lack of treatment on what then Paul was pursuing by taking out the boundary between Jews and gentiles in Sanders and Dunn, N. T. Wright suggested that “justification by faith” for Paul is final vindication of someone based on his/her participation in God’s kingdom to which one can be brought into only through faith in Jesus. Although this focus on participation sounds foreign to orthodox doctrine of justification of sinners by faith, N. T. Wright does not say that forgiveness of sins is outside of Paul’s view. N. T. Wright says, “When we talk of God’s vindication of someone, we are talking about God’s declaration, which appears as a double thing to us but, I suspect, a single thing to Paul: the declaration (a) that someone is in the right (his or her sins having been forgiven through the death of Jesus) and (b) that this person is a member of the true covenant family, the family that God originally promised to Abraham and has now created through Christ and the Spirit—the single family that consists equally of believing Jews and believing Gentiles” [Wright, N. T. “New Perspectives on Paul,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 258]. Also, N. T. Wright does not mean that it is only about future vindication and there is no present sense of justification. He says, “For Paul, there will be a future verdict which will take into account the totality of the life that has been led. He says this again and again. But this verdict is anticipated in the present by the ‘justification’ which consists of the divine declaration when someone believes the gospel. And this, in turn, is based on the past act whereby the one God vindicated Jesus by raising him from the dead” [N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters: Some Contemporary Debates* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 72].

before God through legalistic pursuit of the Law.⁶ N. T. Wright summarizes well what has been at stake in the volume of essays from the anti-New Perspective scholars, saying “the volume highlighted the issue which has become one of the main topics of post-New-Perspective conversation about Judaism, namely the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. How do ‘grace’ and ‘works’ relate to one another.”⁷ So, the question we should ask to help clarify the discussion could be, “Is the OT law legalistic and meritorious?”

This tension between grace and works is not a new one. Even in the time of the Reformation, we can trace the nuanced argument on this topic. The Westminster Confession of Faith (7.5) speaks about the covenant of grace: “This covenant [of grace] was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the Gospel.” Here, the Mosaic Law was categorized under the covenant of grace. Yet, it is nuanced by saying that it is under the time of the law, contrasted from the time of the gospel.⁸ Among the Reformers there are voices that explain that the Mosaic Law was a republication of the

⁶ C.f. Watson “Sanders does not intend to detach covenant from law observance, but he does maintain a clear order of precedence. Always first elect, and only then does God command; God does not elect *in order* to command. Yet this is to underestimate the extent to which, in the literature of this period, covenant and commandment are inseparable. In this literature, it is widely assumed that the Sinai event belong to the *foundation* of Israel’s election, together with the calling of the patriarchs and the Exodus from Egypt... There seems to be broad agreement that Israel’s observance or non-observance of the law is fundamental to the covenant itself” (Watson, 9).

⁷ N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, 109.

⁸ N. T. Wright expressed his speculation saying, “I suspect that the negative reaction to Dunn’s proposal has to do with a deep-seated western protestant reading of the whole question. From the sixteen century onwards, many have taken it as axiomatic that God made a ‘covenant of works’ with the first humans: they should obey, and then they would have life. They disobeyed, of course, but God then gave them Torah, which was like the first covenant of works only (so to speak) more so” (N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, 95).

covenant of works.⁹ Edmund Calamay (1600-1666) says that the Ten Commandments was a “perfect copy” of the covenant of works; William Perkins (1558-1602) said that it is “an abridgment of the whole law, and the covenant of works”; Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679) said that the Mosaic Law was a “renewing of the ‘first covenant’.”¹⁰ But at the same time, it is important to notice that a reformer such as Samuel Rutherford also clearly says, “But the truth is, the law as pressed upon Israel was not a covenant of works.”¹¹ How should we understand the relationship between grace and works in the Mosaic Law, when even Reformers are in a nuanced disagreement?

It was this question that motivated recent scholarship to pay more attention to Lev 18:5, because Lev 18:5 seems to be suggesting the need of human obedience as a condition to merit life, and if so, that could be the proof for a legalistic meritorious understanding of the law in Judaism. Actually, not a few Reformers use Lev 18:5 as a prooftext to show the presence of a covenant of works in the Mosaic Law. Thus, according to Ferry, “Reformed writers describe the covenant of works and support what they say about it by citing Lev 18:5 where Moses is talking about the Mosaic covenant.”¹² Modern scholars who are in the anti-new perspective camp also cite Lev 18:5 to support the works-righteousness aspect in the Mosaic Law. Francis Watson says,

⁹ A collection of articles of faculties from Westminster Seminary focus on the topic of republication of covenant of works. Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen, eds., *The Law Is Not of Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009).

¹⁰ All these citation from reformers are cited in Benton C. Ferry, “Works in the Mosaic Covenant: Reformed Taxonomy,” in *The Law is Not of Faith*, eds., Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 90-92.

¹¹ Cited in Benton Ferry, “Works in the Mosaic Covenant: Reformed Taxonomy,” in *The Law is Not of Faith*, 91.

¹² Brenton F. Ferry citing Karlberg in Brenton F. Ferry, “Works in the Mosaic Covenant: Reformed Taxonomy,” in *The Law is Not of Faith*, 91.

... If it is possible to generalize about these texts, there seems to be broad agreement that Israel's observance or non-observance of the law is fundamental to the covenant itself. The demand imposed on Israel by Israel's God, with the conditional promise attached that "the one who does these things shall live by them," is integral to the form and content of the covenant.¹³

So, then what does Lev 18:5 really teach? To answer this question, I would like to examine first Lev 18:5 in its original context, asking if the law was presented as the way for works-righteousness or not. Then I would like to do a brief study on Hab 2:4 in its original context, which is then followed by exegesis of Gal 3:10-12 where Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 are contrasted. I hope this process will shed clearer light on how Paul uses Lev 18:5 in his own discussion in Gal 3:12.

¹³ Watson, 9.

Chapter 2. Leviticus 18:1-5 in Leviticus

The main discussion concerning Lev 18:5b is a relationship between law and life. Is the law presented as the way to gain life, or is it simply describing how to live? Those who see Lev 18:5 as the proof text for the works-righteousness read the relationship as meritorious. Observing the law does merit us the better life. It causes us to earn the life everlasting.

The other way to understand it is as regulative in the sense that the law regulates everlasting life for a member of a covenant community. The causal and meritorious view would understand the law to have the power to give life, and its observer will gain that life. But the regulative view sees God as the giver of life, and keeping the law is an indispensable part of life by God's people in order to enjoy the life that is already given.

Those who advocate the meritorious position base their arguments on the view that the observance of the law is *the condition* for life. But in this chapter, I will argue that the conditional relationship does not necessarily mean the meritorious relationship. Keeping the law could be the condition for life, but it is not because the law merits life, rather it is because it regulates life for God's people. The blessed life is the natural consequence of the obedience to the law.

2.1. Translation of Leviticus 18:1-5

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:	1. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ^{14 15}
דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:	2. “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ¹⁶ I am the Lord, your God. ¹⁷
כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבְּתֶם־בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְכַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ־כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְבִיא אֲתֶכֶם שָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וּבְחֻקֹּתֵיהֶם לֹא תֵלְכוּ:	3. As the deed of the land of Egypt which you inhabited, ¹⁸ you shall not do. And as the deed of the land of Canaan to which I am bringing you, you shall not do. In their statutes, you shall not walk
אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי תַּעֲשׂוּ וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ לָלֶכֶת בָּהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:	4. My rules, you shall do; And my statutes, you shall keep and walk in them. I am the Lord your God.

¹⁴ “וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר” (The Lord spoke to Moses, saying)” is “the most frequent heading.” [John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1992), 8] which separates the following section from the previous. (See Hartley, *Leviticus*, 4. See also, *Lev* 4:1; 5:14; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1, etc). Thus, it serves as the opening for 18:1-30.

¹⁵ The Law is introduced as “the Lord spoke to Moses.” Wenham rightly emphasizes that this means that “all the laws are set within a narrative framework,” which implies that “they were revealed to Moses during Israel’s wilderness wanderings to meet specific problems that arose at that time” [Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 5].

¹⁶ Watson rightly observes that the pericope is addressed “only the people of Israel,” therefore, “The theme of these chapters is the distinctive way of life of the people of Israel, summarized in the call to be holy as God is holy” (Watson, 316).

¹⁷ The phrase first appears after once appeared in 11:44, and will be frequently used throughout chps. 18-26.

¹⁸ Most of translations including NASB, NIV, and ESV, translated the word יָשַׁב as “to live,” but to make a distinction from חָיָה in v.5 which is also translated as “to live,” I prefer to translate יָשַׁב into “to inhabit.”

<p>וּשְׁמֹרֶתֶם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה: ס</p>	<p>5. And you shall keep my statute and my rules,¹⁹ which²⁰ the man shall do them²¹ and shall live in²² them. I am the Lord.</p>
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2.2. Literary Context

2.2.1. Context in Pentateuch

Lev 18:1-5 is a part of the book, Leviticus. While the title “Leviticus,” originated in the LXX, it gives us an impression that the book is all about the priestly matters of the Levites.²³ It is important to note that the content of the book is also concerned with the life and worship of the laity.²⁴

Leviticus comes after Exodus. This is obvious, but the implication is rather significant. To exegete Lev 18:1-5, it is important to understand the theology of Leviticus

¹⁹ The combination of the words, “My statutes (חֻקֹּתַי) and my rules (מִשְׁפָּטַי)” occurs elsewhere in Leviticus, especially in a section so called the Holiness Code (Lev 18:26; 19:37; 20:22; 25:18; 26:15, 43, 46). As Hartley rightly says, “Often מִשְׁפָּטִים appears with חֻקֹּת (e.g., 19:37; 20:22); together the two terms mean the whole law given by Yahweh” (Hartley, 293.) So, Sprinkle, who is against Douglas Mohrmann who says that ‘statutes and rules’ in Lev 18:1-5 refers only to the sexual laws in chapter 18. See Preston M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Lev 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 214 (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 30.

²⁰ Watson notes that the phrase is syntactically awkward, and “probably reflects the semantic indeterminacy of the Hebrew connective ’šr” (Watson, 319), and it “requires to be supplemented by another word in order to define the nature of the relation more precisely” (Watson, 319 n11).

²¹ אֲשֶׁר refers to “my statute” and “my rule.” It is redundant, but is inserted to make it clear that אֲשֶׁר is relative pronoun (Watson, 319).

²² Many translate here as “by them” with an instrumental or causal sense. Yet I propose to translate here as “in them” with locative sense upfront. The reasoning is explained below.

²³ Literal translation of the Greek title is “that which concerns the priest” [Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 23].

²⁴ Scholars understands that the whole Israel is the matter of the concern. See Wenham, 3; Hartley, 7.

in its relationship to the whole Pentateuch. In Exodus, God delivered Israel from the oppression of Egypt (Ex 1-14), and made a covenant with them (Ex 19-24), then ordered them to build the tabernacle for God so that he might dwell in the midst of his people (Ex 25-40). The event of the exodus, deliverance of Israel from Egypt, was not an event caused by God's general interest in human beings. Instead, as Ex 15:13 tells us, the exodus happened because of God's covenantal love for His people; "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed" (Ex 15:13). Thus, Leviticus is meant not for those who are outside of the covenant, but for God's people whom God has already loved, and brought into the covenantal relationship with himself.

The extent of God's relational presence among Israel is more vivid in Leviticus than in Exodus. In the middle of the book of Exodus, the cloud, where God's glory was present, appears on Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16; 24:16). But right before Leviticus starts, Exodus ends with "the glory of God filled the tabernacle," and "the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle" (Ex 40:38). While in Exodus, the Lord "called Moses from the middle of the cloud" (Ex 24:16) at Mount Sinai, in the opening phrase of Leviticus; The Lord "called Moses... from the tent of meeting" (Lev 1:1). The Lord who was in the cloud now is in the tabernacle in the midst of his people. The last verse of Exodus emphasizes God's unceasing presence, when it says, "For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys" (Ex 40:38). Leviticus strongly presented God's presence with a quantitative difference from that in Exodus. The laws in Leviticus, therefore, are not told the people who are outside of the Covenant, but the people who are brought into the covenantal relationship with the Lord. The covenantal relationship of God and Israel has come to the

point that God himself came to dwell in the midst of his people. Israel now needs to receive more detailed instructions about how they should live as the people of God, in the presence of God himself.

2.2.2. Context in Leviticus

Lev 18 is usually treated as an opening section that covers Lev 18-26,²⁵ whose main theme is the holiness of God's people which is well expressed in Lev 20:26 "You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy." Taking chps. 18-26 as a unit, Lev 18 serves as an opening of the unit which then is concluded in chp. 26. As the opening chapter for the section about holiness, in chapter 18, "there is a strong polemical thrust in these laws," says Wenham with a strong call to obey the law and not follow the customs of surrounding pagan nations.²⁶

Yet this polemical sense should not be mistaken as a sign of promotion of works-righteousness, since chps. 18-26 are still set in the context of Israel being God's people and God being the God of Israel. As the opening of Lev 18 says "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the LORD your God," the addressee of the command to be holy is the people of Israel, God's people, to whom God is delighted to call himself "*your* God." The phrase "I am the Lord (your God)" is repeated 47 times in chps. 18-26,²⁷ while in previous

²⁵ See Christopher Wright, "Leviticus," *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. G. J. Wenham, J. A. Motyer, D. A. Carson, and R. T. France (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 145; Watson, 318-319; Wenham, 6-7. Many critical scholars, however, take chp. 17 as related to chps. 18-26. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, The Anchor Bible 3B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1448-1449; Hartley, xxx-xxxv. But as Christopher Wright points out, the subject change happening in Lev. 18:1 seems to indicate the section begins in chp. 18. In either case, though, almost all commentators agree that chp. 27 serves as appendix thus chp. 26 serves as concluding chapter. See Christopher Wright, 145.

²⁶ Wenham, 250.

²⁷ Only in chapter 18, there are already six times the phrase shows up. See Wenham, 250.

chapters the phrase appears only in one place in Lev 11:44-45, which points back to the exodus redeeming event.²⁸ It is noteworthy that in Leviticus, the phrase “usually comes after a law or at the end of a group of laws,”²⁹ as if Moses carefully calls its audience to hear the laws with the phrase “I am the Lord” also in mind. As יהוה (The Lord) is often explained as God’s covenantal name, the phrase is highlighting the covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel.³⁰ Even in Leviticus, where the main theme is the law, Moses did not forget to reemphasize that the laws are from God who redeemed Israel and became their God.

What we should note is the prominence of the gracious initiative of the Lord in his redemptive work towards his people. The persistent call for Israel to be different from neighboring nations in Lev 18-26 is set before them because of the initiative redeeming grace of God himself. In Lev 11, God says, “For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Lev 11:45). Yes, the people of God are called “to be holy.” But it is not a meritorious obedience. It is a proper response to God’s work. Collins rightly says, “[doing] is the right response to God’s grace that provides covenant and moral instruction to man; it never presents

²⁸ See Christopher Wright, 146. He says that “It was a powerful summary of the covenant relationship. It pointed to God’s initiative of grace in the exodus redemption (11:45) and the corresponding requirement on Israel to fulfil their distinct role in the world as a holy nation (cf. Ex 19:3-6)” (Christopher Wright, 146).

²⁹ Hartley, 291.

³⁰ See Walter Kaiser, “Leviticus 18:5 and Paul: Do This and You Shall Live (Eternally?),” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 14 (1971), 24; So Rooker, who says, “I am the Lord your God... This phrase indicates that the Israelites already have a relationship with God; they are not called to obey in order to enter or initiate this relationship” (Rooker, 241).

obedience as the way of gaining that grace.”³¹ Wenham, discussing the covenantal background of Leviticus, says,

“God gave his law to Israel after they had been redeemed from Egypt, not as a means for securing their redemption. God’s call to Israel to be his holy people preceded the revelation of the law at Sinai, but only obedience could make holiness a living reality.”³²

Sklar also, acknowledging the grace context, comments on Lev 18:1-5, saying,

“It is crucial to understand that this verse does not mean the Israelites were to earn relationship with the Lord through their obedience. The larger context makes clear that the Lord gives the Israelites the law *after* he redeemed them. Law regulates this relationship; it does not create it.”³³

That the law is given in the established gracious covenantal relationship between God and Israel provides an important hermeneutical grid for exegesis of Lev 18:1-5.

³¹ C. John Collins, “Leviticus 18:5 in Its Context and in the NT” (class handout, Grad Seminar in OT, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO, Fall 2008), 1. So, Wright, who says, “[obedience to the law] was the response to salvation; it did not achieve or earn it” (Christopher Wright, “Leviticus,” 146). Hartley also rightly points out that “The role of this formula in Lev 18-26 then is to teach that Israel’s distinctive existence as a people rests on Yahweh’s self-revelation of his holy character” (Hartley, 293).

³² Wenham, *Leviticus*, 31.

³³ Jay Sklar, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 229.

Chapter 3. Exegesis of Leviticus 18:5b

Now I would like to move into a detailed discussion on Lev 18:5b, and I will focus the discussion on two exegetical points from the verse.

אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחָי בָּהֶם

Which the man shall do them and shall live in them (Lev 18:5).

3.1. הָאָדָם – the Person

The author suddenly switches the subject from the second person plural in v.5a (*You* shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules) to the third person singular in v.5b (which *the man* shall do them and shall live in them). Why did he change from 2nd person to 3rd person? Why did he not simply keep 2nd person and say, “which *you* shall do them”?

Scholars, such as Bryan Estelle, who thinks Lev 18:5 underscores a universal works-righteousness, suggest that this is a proof that the law is to be applied to all humans and says, “this would seem to imply the universal implications for the works principle stated in Lev 18:5”³⁴ However, in Lev 18:1-2, the opening for the whole of chap. 18, God spoke to Moses saying, “Speak to the people of Israel.” This opening word seems to indicate that the whole law was primarily intended to be kept by Israel, and those who live

³⁴ Bryan Estelle, “Lev 18:5 and Deut 30:1-14,” in *The Law is Not of Faith*, ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 117.

in the Land with Israel. Also, Lev 18:26, which has some overlaps with 18:5, says, “But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you.” By taking Lev 18:26 into consideration, it is most likely the case that the commandment in chap. 18 is not only to be kept by the native Israelites, but also by the stranger, sojourner who lives among Israel in the land.³⁵ Therefore, Jacob Milgrom says, “to speak of ‘the universal tenor’ of this message is carrying things too far, since it applies solely to residents of God’s land, Canaan.”³⁶

In addition, when we survey how אָדָם (man, person) is used in Leviticus, sometimes the commandments that אָדָם (man, person) should obey are Jewish specific laws, such as, “When any one (אָדָם) of you brings an offering to the LORD” (Lev 1:2); “When a person (אָדָם) has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, ... then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest” (Lev 13:2). With these, I take this word change from “you” to “man, person” as more a stylistic change, than a sign of universal works-righteousness.³⁷

But this does not mean that the OT law in Lev 18:5 should be limited to the Jews and sojourners in the Land. On the contrary, the OT Law was from the beginning not meant

³⁵ So, Jacob Milgrom, “Why the switch to third person? ... The answer is obvious: “person” includes the gēr [sojourner], who also must observe these incest prohibitions or face the death sentence of kārēt (v.29)” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1522). So, Preston M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Lev 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 214 (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 29.

³⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1522. Francis Watson, also says “with the exception of a series of speeches in Lev 21-22, it is only the people of Israel whom Moses is commanded to address in the concluding section of the book (chapters 18-27).” (Watson, 316).

³⁷ It is interesting that Milgrom try to see a slight nuance in this change by saying, “Why does the text then address the Israelite as ’ādām?... the answer must be that ’ādām includes both male and female and is the equivalent of nepeš” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 145).

to be limited only to Israel, rather it should function as a model law that reflects God's wisdom to the whole world. This is what Deut 4:5-6 says:

“Keep them [statutes and rule] and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding *in the sight of the peoples*, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'”

God's covenant community is treated as the representative of all human beings. They are supposed to demonstrate righteous living as God's original plan for the whole of humankind.³⁸

3.2. יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם – shall do them

What is man required to do? How extensively do people need to obey the law?

Dunn in advocating that the law was primarily a boundary marker made the bar low when he said,

“I believe the talk of ‘remaining within everything in the book of the law to do them’ (Gal. 3.10 citing Deut. 27.26) has been *misunderstood* in terms of total, that is, perfect obedience. What Paul had in mind rather was a complete life-style – [...] a mode of living wholly Jewish in character.”³⁹

But Thomas Schreiner argues, which I agree, that ‘do them’ means to do all and perfectly, because of Lev 26:14-16 where the covenant curse is introduced, by saying “if you will not listen to me and will not do *all* these commandments” (26:14, italic mine).⁴⁰

³⁸ New Perspective scholars also agree that the OT Law was not limited to an ethnic identity marker. James Dunn says “By *nomos* Paul almost always means *the law per se*, Israel's Torah. But the reference can be narrow, to a particular commandment; or it can be broader – to scripture at large, or the will and wisdom of God expressed through scripture.” (Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 460-461).

³⁹ Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 225.

⁴⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 47. He thus concludes that in Gal 3:12 where Lev 18:5 is cited, “Paul's fundamental

Elsewhere in Leviticus Israel is told to obey “all the commandments” (e.g. Lev 19:37; 20:22) and there is no single line that says Israel can neglect a part of the law. N. T. Wright rightly sees this high requirement of the Torah, when commenting on Gal 3:10, he said ““works of the law” will never justify, because what the law does is to reveal sin. Nobody can keep it perfectly.”⁴¹

Yet this does not mean the Torah was bad because it sets up the impossible requirement for people to obey. Rather, as Lev 18:5 says the law was given so that it leads to life. N. T. Wright, referring that the commandment “promised life” (Rom 7:10), says “The problem was not with the law, but with the people to whom the law had been given.”⁴² That Lev 18:5 speaks about the need of obedience to the whole Torah was not to prove that the Law was an evil task master, rather simply to tell us that keeping the law leads us into life, not death. Lev 18:5 reminds the audience of an inseparable and blessed connection between God’s law and life.

3.3. חַיִּים – shall live

What, then, does ‘life’ mean?⁴³ It certainly does not merely mean ‘being physically alive,’ since to live here is tied to keeping the law and there were many gentiles who did

objection, though, is not with doing per se, but with inability to “do” perfectly” (Schreiner, 60).

⁴¹ N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan & Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 118. (This is a reissuance of the 2009 book with a new introduction).

⁴² N. T. Wright, *Justification*, 126.

⁴³ Sprinkle thoroughly presented various views on what “life” means in Lev 18:5 (Sprinkle, 31).

not keep the law yet were physically alive.⁴⁴ Lev 26:3-6 tells us in detail what the life in Leviticus means:⁴⁵

"If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them,⁴ then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.⁵ Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely.⁶ I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land."

The content of life described in Lev 26:3-6 is primarily earthly material blessings from the Lord: rains in the seasons, trees and fruits, grapes, breads, and peace. Elsewhere in the Pentateuch, it is promised that when Israel obeys the law, then they will "live and multiply, and the Lord God will bless them in the land that they are entering to take possession of it" (Deut 30:16-17). Wenham rightly says that, "What is envisaged is a happy life in which a man enjoys God's bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity. Keeping the law is the path to divine blessings, to a happy and fulfilled life in the present."⁴⁶ In short, using Jay Sklar's expression, to live is "to enjoy life under the Lord's favor."⁴⁷

But at the same time, one should not mistake the meaning of life simply as material blessing. Lev 26:11-12, after listing up material abundance, continues to say that, "I will

⁴⁴ See Sprinkle, 31.

⁴⁵ See also Deut 28:1-14.

⁴⁶ Wenham, 253. So, Hartley says, "It means that Israel will have a secure, healthy life with sufficient goods in the promised land as God's people" (Hartley, 293); Sprinkle says, "the covenantal blessing of abundant (and long) life in the land of Israel" (Sprinkle, 36); Kaiser says, "it will lead to an abundant life" [Walter Kaiser, "Leviticus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 1125]. Watson basically agrees that the life, in the light of Lev 26, "is a life of abundance and security within the land" (Watson, 119).

⁴⁷ Sklar, 229.

make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. *And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.*” The earthly material abundance is not separated from the covenantal relationship with the Lord. In Deut 30:20, after encouraging Israel to choose “life,” Moses also says, “he [the Lord] is your life.” Not only the earthly blessing is the contents of “life,” but ultimately the Lord himself is the content of life that is blessing.⁴⁸ חַיִּהּ in Lev 18:5, therefore, primarily means earthly blessing but this comes out from the covenantal relationship with the Lord. Christopher Wright rightly explains the word חַיִּהּ “In OT, to *live* in the fullest sense meant the full enjoyment of the blessing and wellbeing of the covenant relationship with God which was already established by his redeeming action.”⁴⁹

But how about life after death? Does חַיִּהּ only mean earthly life and has nothing to do with eternal life? Scholars recognizes that, often in the NT keeping the law is tied to eternal life (Matt 19:17; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12). Even the second temple Jewish literatures, uses Lev 18:5 to put focus on “the eternal life” theme.⁵⁰ Yet they are still hesitant to say that “the eternal life” is what you see originally in Lev 18:5. Hartley says, “Later interpreters have taken “life” to mean eternal life. There is little support in the Pentateuch for such a reading of this text,” explaining the NT “eternal” reading to be “God’s further

⁴⁸ So, Terry L. Bremsinger, who says, “Choosing life, which is nothing less than choosing Yahweh and loving him with all of one’s heart and soul (30:19-20), involves blessings, prosperity, and longevity” (Terry L. Bremsinger, “2649 חַיִּהּ,” in *NIDOTTE*, 2:109).

⁴⁹ Christopher Wright, 146. Life and Blessing is also directly connected in Prov. 3:18 “She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.”

⁵⁰ Pss. Sol. 14:3 “the holy ones of the Lord will live by it forever [ζήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα].” Here, Lev 18:5 is slightly modified with an addition of “forever.”

revelation in Jesus”⁵¹ Kaiser was much stronger in asserting the word means exclusively earthly life when he says, “keeping the law will not lead to eternal life, as some have mistakenly thought this verse teaches, but it will lead to an abundant life,” and the NT authors seem to make the sense of eternal life “contrived in its understanding of ‘life’.”⁵²

However, the apparent focus in Leviticus on the earthly blessing in the land cannot exclude the possibility that the sense of eternal life was already and slightly encapsulated in Leviticus. If, as we observed earlier, the relationship with the Lord is included in the core meaning of חַיִּה (life) in Leviticus, then since the relationship with the Lord lasts beyond this earthly life, חַיִּה (life) “life” could include a blessing from the Lord now and forever. Also, if one looks elsewhere in the Pentateuch, חַיִּה (“life”) first appears in Genesis where God created נַפְשׁוֹת חַיִּים (“living creatures”), whose climax is Gen 2:7 when with the breath of *life* man became a living thing (נַפְשׁוֹת חַיִּים). To understand the meaning of חַיִּה, the connection to Genesis chapter 2 should not be neglected.⁵³ That the man was told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Gen 2, saying, “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17) seems to indicate that the man was already in the life (חַיִּה) in which the man did not have to experience death.⁵⁴ Yoshinobu Kiuchi, who

⁵¹ Hartley, 297. So, Wenham, 253.

⁵² Kaiser, *Leviticus*, 1125.

⁵³ Brensinger who sees the close connection of command to choose life in Deut 30:19-20 (“I have set before you *life* and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose *life*, that you and your offspring may live,”) and the command not to take from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in Gen 2:17, says “Deuteronomy offers a choice that is unmistakably reminiscent of Gen 2.” (Brensinger, “2649 חַיִּה,” NIDOTTE, 2:109).

⁵⁴ So Collins as he says about Gen 3:19 in which physical death was introduced as a consequence of man’s disobedience, “if, as seems to be the case, the passage views physical death as following from the fall, then we may conclude that the first humans were not create mortal” [C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 161]. Noting the immortality of ‘life’ in its created stage, Collins rightly indicates that the man had a certain access to the tree of life which would make the man to live forever, when he says, “The tree of life is apparently some kind of sacrament (that is, there is no reason to believe it is magical) that would confirm the man in his

sees the Genesis narrative in the background of Leviticus, says that “it is possible to read this assumption that the present life is part of eternal life (cf. Eccl. 3:11; Gen. 3:22).”⁵⁵ “To live,” therefore, includes both blessed life in this life and the life that does not end.⁵⁶ Sprinkle rightly says, “a sharp distinction between a present experience of this life and a wholly future enjoyment of eschatological life should not be pressed. [...] eschatological life is both now and not yet.”⁵⁷

3.4. אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה ... וְחַי – which (a man) does and shall live

Then the important question we need to ask is what is the relationship between עֲשֶׂה (to do) and חַיָּה (to live). Is ‘doing’ the law a meritorious way to gain the blessed ‘life’? Often the eternal eschatological life is presumed to be earned by meritorious observance of the law. Yet, this does not have to be so.

moral condition: hence he needed to gain (or retain) access to it by obedience and would have been rewarded by being confirmed in holiness forever. This is why God does not want him to have it after his sin (Gen. 3:22)” (Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 115). Keil, while he does not agree that man had an access to the tree of life, he was at least right when he says that man was created to have eternal life: “had he continued in fellowship with God by obedience to the command of God, he might have eaten of it, *for he was created for eternal life.*” [C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, trans. James Martin, *Commentary on the Old Testament*: 10 volumes: by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, 10 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 67. Italics mine].

⁵⁵ Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 332. Kiuchi further reasons his thesis by pointing out that in Gen 2-3, the death is an outcome of disobedience to God’s commandment, which means obedience on the other hand is the life everlasting. He says, “Leviticus appears to assert that a man must die because he has violated the law; if he observes all of them, he lives” (Kiuchi, 332).

⁵⁶ In this sense, I agree to the definition of Watson: “To live is the covenantal blessing promised to those who observe the commandments” (Watson, 322).

⁵⁷ Sprinkle, 195-6. So, Dunn, who is often considered to hold exclusively earthly blessing, still says about earthly life and eschatological life that, “the two emphases should not be polarized: the Torah was seen both as ‘the way of life and the way to life’, and the twin emphases should not be played off against each other” (Dunn, *New Perspective*, 74).

3.4.1. In LXX – Subordinating relationship

To see the relationship between “doing” and “living,” it is helpful first to take a brief look at the Septuagint reading of the passage.⁵⁸

LXX ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς
(which, *having done*, a man *will live by them*)

MT אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אַתָּם הָאָדָם וַחֲיֵי בָהֶם
(which the man *will do* them and *live by them*)

In LXX, a verb יַעֲשֶׂה (will do) is in an imperfect tense, but is translated into ποιήσας (having done) in a participle form. While one may question the validity of such a modification, Sprinkle rightly says, “the syntax of the Hebrew, where an imperfect is followed by a waw + perfect, is capable of conveying the sense of subordination rightly captured by the LXX.”⁵⁹ The LXX rendering of Lev 18:5, therefore, is suggesting that “*having done*” the law is logically subordinating to “*live*.”⁶⁰ But what kind of subordination is it? “Having done” could have various meaning. Sometimes it means “by doing” with a conditional sense, but in another time it has more nuanced meaning, such as “after doing,” or “as you are doing” which is less conditional in a sense.

⁵⁸ Dunn, who is often considered to hold exclusively earthly blessing, still says about earthly life and eschatological life that, “the two emphases should not be polarized: the Torah was seen both as ‘the way of life and the way to life’, and the twin emphases should not be played off against each other” (Dunn, *New Perspective*, 74).

⁵⁹ Sprinkle, 48. He brings up Deut 2:25 which has the same construct to Lev 18:5 with אֲשֶׁר, followed by imperfect verb יִשְׁמְעוּן (will hear) and a waw consecutive, וַיִּרְנוּ (will tremble). Here LXX translates using participle as “οἱ τινες ἀκούσαντες τὸ ὄνομα σου ταραχθήσονται καὶ ὠδύνας ἔξουσιν ἀπὸ προσώπου σου” (who, having heard your name, shall tremble and have anguish from your presence.) In Deut 2:25, an imperfect verb “will hear” is translated in LXX as participle “having heard.”

⁶⁰ So, Moisés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2001), 803.

3.4.2. Conditional sense

To answer the question, we should investigate how “doing” and “living,” or a concept of blessed life, are related in other places in the Pentateuch, especially where “the commandments” and “statutes” are used.⁶¹

Lev 25:18-19 Therefore you shall do my statutes and keep my rules and perform them, *and then* you will dwell in the land securely. The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and dwell in it securely.

Lev 26:3-4 If [אם] you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, *then* I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

The verses above show that the blessed life is a result of “doing” or “keeping” the law. In a sense, it seems there is a conditional relationship between the “doing” and “living.” A more explicit clue for this conditional relationship is found in Lev 26:3-4 which is a conclusion for chps.18-26. Here, conditional character seems evident with a conditional particle אם (if) as grammarians, Joüon and Muraoka, note: “Most common way of expressing a condition consists in using in the protasis a conditional particle, most frequently אם if ...”⁶² Leviticus seems to be clearly saying that the experiencing of God’s blessing either in this life or in an eschatological sense, is conditional upon ‘doing’ the commandments.

⁶¹ Waltke and O’Connor, citing Lambdin, explains conditional relationship as “Any two clauses, the first of which states a real or hypothetical condition, and the second of which states a real or hypothetical consequence thereof” [Bruce Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 32.2.a].

⁶² “Most common way of expressing a condition consists in using in the protasis a conditional particle, most frequently אם if ...” [Paul Joüon, *A Grammer of Biblical Hebrew*, Translated by T. Muraoka, 2 vols. (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000), §167.c; See also, Waltke-O’Connor, 32.2.1.b].

3.4.3. Consecutive sense

But at the same time, there is another important aspect we should notice in the relationship between “doing” and “living,” which is a consecutive relationship.

Now we take a close look into our immediate text, Lev 18:5.

אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אַתֶּם הָאֲדָמָה וְחַי בָּהֶם

Which the man shall do them and shall live in them (Lev 18:5).

From previous passages in Leviticus, I positively discussed this conditional relationship. However, the immediate passage is not so one-sided for a conditional relationship. Rather, there is another layer of nuance which is more up front in this verse, that is a consecutive sense. There are three facts to be pointed out.

First, in Lev 18:5, there is no explicit indicator for conditional sense, such as conditional particles “if” (אם, הן, or כי). Surely the conditional sense can be expressed without the particles above, and several other important types for conditional clauses are introduced thoroughly in Joüon and Muraoka.⁶³ According to them, a conditional protasis clause can often be introduced by either, 1) the volitive,⁶⁴ 2) *waw*, 3) a conditional particle “if” (אם, הן, or כי), or 4) לוֹ. But Lev 18:5b does not have *waw*, or any of the indicators above, therefore, most likely a conditional force is less prominent in the text.⁶⁵ While there

⁶³ In rare case, it is introduced by simple juxtaposition or the relative particle אֲשֶׁר in the sense of כי (Joüon-Muraoka, §167).

⁶⁴ Cohortative, Jussive, and Imperative, according to Joüon-Muraoka. (See Joüon-Muraoka, §114; §116).

⁶⁵ Sprinkle concludes that *waw* in וְחַי בָּהֶם (waw + perfect) is “apodosis-waw,” which leads apodosis clause following a protasis clause (see Sprinkle, 49). But according to Joüon-Muraoka, the apodosis-waw,

might be cases where the conditional sense is conveyed without any of the grammatical indicators above,⁶⁶ yet missing those explicit indicators tells us that the conditional force was less prominent in Lev 18:5.

Second, instead of conditional indicators, what is prominent in 18:5 is imperfect followed by *waw* + *perfect*, which could be also described as *w-qatali* form or *waw inversive*, as 18:5b says “which the man *shall do* (imperfect) them *and shall live* (*waw* + *perfect*) in them.” This grammatical structure is often called “*waw-consecutive*” and is primarily used to convey the consecutive sense either temporal or logical.⁶⁷ As Joüon and Muraoka say, “the *inversive waw* [their terminology to mean *waw-consecutive*] is not used except with consecutive force.”⁶⁸ Note also what Waltke and O’Connor also says about the structure:

“Often *waw*-relative with the suffix conjugation represents a situation as a simple (con)sequence, whether logical, temporal, or both, of a preceding situation represented by the non-perfective conjugation.”⁶⁹

This consecutive force is not unique to Lev 18:5. Indeed, considering other Leviticus passages above (Lev 25:18-19; 26:3-4), in both passages what is used is “*waw-*

when it is used in conditional clause, begins “with **אם** or **כי**” (Joüon-Muraoka, §176.d). So, Waltke-O’Connor, 32.2.1.b.

⁶⁶ “while a conditional sentence often begins with a **אם**, **אם**, **אם**, or **כי**, sometimes it has no indicators as in Lev 18:5.” (Sprinkle, 49) I can see that “which man shall do” (Lev 18:5b) can convey imperative sense carried through from Lev 18:5a “You shall keep my statutes and my rules.” But 18:5b is still different from straightforward imperative mood. It is still “which man shall do.”

⁶⁷ “The *waw* of the *wayyiqtol* and *w-qatli* forms expresses a slight idea of succession; it is an exaggeration to translate it always by *and then*. [...] *Waw inversive* has rather varied secondary meanings, the most common of which is that of logical consequence.” (Joüon-Muraoka, §117.d,e).

⁶⁸ Joüon-Muraoka, §170.i.

⁶⁹ Waltke-O’Connor, 32.2.2.c.

consecutive.”⁷⁰ Seeing a more prominent presence of waw-consecutive throughout the Pentateuch, we should say that the main thrust in the verse is the consecutive relationship that simply means “living” is the consequence of “doing” the law.

Third and finally, see Deut 4:1 and 8:1 below where “doing” and “living” appear side by side in tight connection.

Deut 4:1 And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, *that* you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

Deut 8:1 "The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, *that* you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers.

Here, “doing” and “living” are connected with לְמַעַן (so that) which is the conjunction usually used for a purpose clause,⁷¹ but as Joüon and Muraoka say, “לְמַעַן, which is especially used to indicate a purpose, is also used sometimes with a consecutive force.”⁷² Deut 4:1 and 8:1 both tell us that the “doing” and “living” has purpose or consecutive relationship. This means, “doing” has an in-built purpose to “live.” “Doing” the law and “living” are so tightly connected that doing will naturally lead to its goal, “the living.” Blessed life is a natural consequence of doing God’s commandment.⁷³

⁷⁰ In 26:3-4, although conditional particle “if” אִם is used, the chain of “waw consecutive” is outstanding. This makes me wonder then if the particle אִם in 26:3-4 has more of temporal force than conditional force, suggesting to be translated as “when you walk in my statutes..” in stead of “if you walk..,” as Joüon and Muraoka say, “אִם is occasionally used in the temporal sense.” (Joüon-Muraoka, §166.p.)

⁷¹ See Joüon-Muraoka, §168.d. Watson, rightly says about Deut 4:1 and 8:1 that, “Here, doing the commandments leads to life as the way leads to its goal (Watson, 321).

⁷² Joüon-Muraoka, §169.g.

⁷³ See Hartley: “The keeping of God’s commandments bears the promise of life” (Hartley, 293). When he sees ‘the life’ as “the goal of “doing,”” he is right. But he misunderstands that this immediately means conditional relationship. He fails to distinguish consecutive/purpose use and conditional use.

3.4.4. Conditional and Consecutive

This consecutive relationship does not mean that there is no conditional relationship between doing and living. What I suggest is that even if there is a conditional relationship between “doing” and “living” which is clear from elsewhere in Leviticus, the grammatical form of Lev 18:5 shows the relationship is consecutive. This means that the conditional relationship and consecutive relationship are not conflicting with each other. Rather, this teaches the nature of the conditional relationship between the law and the life. The law is the condition for the life, not because the law merits us the life, but rather, it is because the life is the natural consequence or the result of observing the law.⁷⁴ Obeying the law does not make one gain meritoriously what one was alienated from before. Blessed life is a natural and logical result of the flow of staying in the law, because the law is good and is a gift from the God of blessing. In Psalm 1, it is said that the one who meditates on the law, day and night is like a tree planted in the water. And in the course of life, the tree will thrive through the drought and yield its fruit in its season. This imagery rightly fits in the consecutive idea. It is important, or even should be said as “condition” to reach out to the stream of water through meditating on the law, day and night, but this does not merit you to be planted by the water. You are already planted by the water, and taste that the law is good will naturally and logically enrich you with life. The consecutive force in the grammatical form of Lev 18:5 speaks against the meritorious view and tells about the true nature of conditional relationship.

⁷⁴ According to Joüon and Muraoka, consecutive sense also means a sense of “result.” (Joüon-Muraoka §169.) Whereas Sprinkle, though he also says “life’ is a result,” still understands in a meritorious sense by saying, “it is gained by means of doing the commandments” (Sprinkle, 34). This suggests that the line between meritorious-conditional and consecutive-conditional is very delicate.

3.5. ׀ָֿ – in them

Most of the major English translations including the ESV, translate it as “(which the man shall do and) shall/will live *by* them,”⁷⁵ which is understood by some as a strong evidence for the meritorious relationship between “doing” and “living.” But this word could also be translated as “(which the man shall do and) shall/will live *in* them.”⁷⁶ This gives quite a different nuance that speaks against the meritorious sense. Then, is it “by them,” or “in them”?

3.5.1. Locative meaning of ׀ָֿ

The preposition that is used here is ׀ָֿ and it is known for a broad range of meaning, as Waltke and O’Conner say, “the diversity of the senses of ׀ָֿ is remarkable.”⁷⁷ The major translations include, *in, on, against, with, by, for*.⁷⁸ BDB list “in” (locative, temporal,) “at, on” (denoting proximity,) and “with, by” (instrument, means), as major meanings.⁷⁹

Scholars who prefer to translate it as “*by*” usually understand the meaning of the preposition as “of instrument, and means.” Watson, for example, says, “‘by them’ suggests an instrumental understanding of the Hebrew or Greek preposition: the divine commandments are the means to an end, which is life.”⁸⁰ But not a few of them also

⁷⁵ So, ESV, NIV, NKJ. Also NASB, “by which man may live” still translate the preposition as “by.”

⁷⁶ King James version translate it as “Which if a man do, he shall live in them.”

⁷⁷ Waltke-O’Connor, 11.2.5.a.

⁷⁸ Joüon-Muraoka, §133.c.

⁷⁹ BDB, 88.

⁸⁰ Watson, 320. Milgrom also says that the preposition is “beth instrumenti (instrumental)” by which he means that “the fulfillment of these laws *gives* life” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1522-23: *Italic mine*). Milgrom, reading instrumental sense too much in Lev 18:5, went too far when he says that while in other

understand that “doing” functions as *meritorious* means to cause someone to gain “life,” this fits also to what Joüon and Muraoka list as “instrumental cause.”⁸¹ BDB also gives translation options for such a causal usage as “with a causal forces, *through, on account of,*”⁸² listing as an example Deut 9:4 “It is *because of* (ב) my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land.” While it is difficult to name how each scholar defines the use of ב in each reading, for the sake of argument, I assign the meritorious reading of Lev 18:5 into the use “of instrumental cause,” as a sub-set under general category “of instrumental, and means.” But then should ב in Lev 18:5 be understood as “instrumental cause,” with meritorious sense?

I have already shown in the previous discussions that the meritorious reading should be avoided, thus, even when translating it as “*by them,*” general sense of “instrumental and means” should be preferred over “instrumental cause.” However, here I would like to suggest the alternative reading “*in them*” as the more appropriate translation, which indicates “instrumental cause” impossible. Below, I would like to give three reasons for the “*in them*” reading.

First, while “instrumental cause” is surely one of the translation options, grammarians agree that the natural and prominent meaning of ב is simply spatial “*in*”. Joüon and Muraoka say “ב properly means *in*. In the first place it expresses the fact of

passages (Num 21:8-9, Deut 19:4, etc) it is said that “God, not the laws, gives life to those who fulfill them,” in Lev 18:5 states that “the laws themselves have the inherent power to grant life” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1522-23).

⁸¹ Joüon-Muraoka, §132.e, §133.c.

⁸² BDB, 90b.

finding oneself (or of moving) *in* a place.”⁸³ Waltke and O’Conner also say; “Spatial senses are basic.”⁸⁴ “Law” is not a physical place, yet taking it as a sphere, or realm or circumstance in which life could be enjoyed, this locative spatial translation fits well.⁸⁵ This locative interpretation, following BDB, would more precisely mean “of a state or condition, whether material or mental, in which an action takes place.”⁸⁶ Waltke and O’Conner also lists that **ב** could be used to specify the circumstance where the action takes place, saying, “The *beth* of specification serves to qualify the realm with regard to which the verbal action obtains.”⁸⁷ An example they give for such a use is Deut 26:11 “You shall rejoice *in* all the good ...,” which tells a very similar concept as Lev 18:5. With such a strong basic sense for “in,” inherited in **ב**, I suggest translating **ב** in a “spatial, locative” sense with “*in*”. The nuances in this usage are “circumstance” where action takes place, “a state of thing” that an action resulted in, arena or sphere in which things happen. This makes Lev 18:5 read as, “which the man shall do, shall live *in* them.” For the sake of argument, in this thesis, I will name all of these in-the-sphere-of readings as “locative” meaning. The blessed “life” can be found in the sphere of the law. Observing and embracing the law of blessings, is indeed the blessed life. The law is not a simply means

⁸³ Joüon-Muraoka, §133.c.

⁸⁴ Waltke-O’Connor, 11.2.5.b.

⁸⁵ Waltke and O’Conner says that **ב** could be used to specify the circumstance where in the action takes place, saying, “The *beth* of specification serves to qualify the realm with regard to which the verbal action obtains.” An example they give for such an use is Deut 26:11 “You shall rejoice in all the good ...,” which tells very similar concept as Lev 18:5.

⁸⁶ BDB, 88.

⁸⁷ Waltke-O’Connor, 11.2.5.e. Though they categorize it under a separate “circumstantial use; often with,” which also includes “instrumental” and “causal” in a broad sense. Thus, they say about the causal use that, “it is sometimes hard to distinguish from simple circumstantial uses.” (Waltke-O’Connor, 11.2.5.e.).

to an end (blessing), rather, the law is also the end (blessings) in a sense. How to find a blessed life? You can find it *in* the law of God.

Kaiser also translates ב as “in,” with a locative sense prominent.⁸⁸ The phrase “shall live in them,” says Kaiser, “means that life will be lived *in accordance with* God’s laws and commandments.”⁸⁹ He is right in translating with a locative sense, and “in accordance with” can be a right translation, if he means that God’s law is a sphere where a blessed living takes place. But since he takes the exclusively physical way of understanding the word ‘life,’ saying, “keeping the law will not lead to eternal life, ... but it will lead to an abundant life.”⁹⁰ “To live *in accordance with* the law” is explained as primarily to support his interpretation of physical life, as if “to live in accordance with the law” is synonymous to “to walk in accordance with the law.” Many scholars who uphold the eschatological interpretation of “to live” reject a locative interpretation of ב since it is misunderstood to be tightly connected to the earthly reading of “to live.”⁹¹ It is wrong, however, to disregard the locative meaning all together simply because it is read together with a physical interoperation of ‘life.’ Instead, the locative reading can go along with an eschatological reading. “To live in them” would mean to live the blessed life (both earthly and eternally) in the sphere of the law of blessing. In other words, it means to experience God’s blessing, both in this earthly life and the eternal life, in the sphere of the law of God. God’s blessing cannot be experienced apart from God’s law. Whenever one does

⁸⁸ So, James Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 612.

⁸⁹ Kaiser, *Leviticus*, 1125. Contra, Sklar, 229.

⁹⁰ Kaiser, *Leviticus*, 1125.

⁹¹ So, Sprinkle, 31-4; Watson, 320.

experience the blessing, one’s life at the same time is conformed into God’s law.⁹² We are not saved by the law, but we are saved into the conformity of God’s standard, which is, “the life in the law.”

Second, the parallelism between v.4 and v.5 throughout suggests the locative reading in v.4 is then also carried to v.5 “*in* them.” When we see v.4 and v.5 closely together, we notice the strong parallelism between them.⁹³

4a You shall do **my rules**, and you shall keep **my statutes**, **and walk in them.**

4c **I am the Lord** your God.

5a And you shall keep **my statutes** and **my rules**,

5b which the man shall do them **and live in them.**

5c **I am the Lord.**

4 אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי תַּעֲשׂוּ / וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ // לֵלֶכְתָּ בָהֶם ||| אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: |||
[I am the Lord, your God] [walk in them]

5 וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי / וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי || אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתְּם / הָאָדָם // וְתִי בָהֶם ||| אֲנִי יְהוָה: |||
[I am the Lord] [live in them]

(Above, the disjunctions are shown as ||| (strong), || (weak), And precursors before disjunctions are in // and /)⁹⁴

Verse 4 and v.5 both have אֲנִי יְהוָה “I am the Lord” at the end. They both use the same words; מִשְׁפָּטַי “my rules,” חֻקֹּתַי “my statutes,” and עֲשֶׂה “do.” The accents as I indicate with inserted disjunction bars, are almost identically placed especially at “walk in them, I

⁹² This would teach sanctification of the Christian life rather than justification of it.

⁹³ Milgrom is right when he is against the view that v.5 is interpolation, rather he sees v.5 is a repetition of what is said in vv.3-4 (Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1521).

⁹⁴ Disjunction bars are placed according to an instruction given by Joüon-Muraoka (§15.j).

am your God,” and “live in them, I am the Lord.”⁹⁵ And **בָּהֶם** (in them) is exactly identical with the preposition **ב** in it.

v.4 |||| **בָּהֶם** לִלְכֹת // תִּשְׁמְרוּ (… and walk **in them**)

v.5 |||| **בָּהֶם** וַתֵּי // הָאָדָם (… and live **in them**)

This strong parallelism would suggest that **בָּהֶם** in both v.4 and v.5 have to be read in the same way. Many English Bibles translates v.4 as “walk in them,”⁹⁶ and most scholars agree that **בָּהֶם** in v.4 should be translated as “(walk) *in* them.”⁹⁷ This most likely indicates that **בָּהֶם** in v.5 also means “(live) *in* them.”⁹⁸

Those who are against this locative reading might point out that “walking (in a sense of obeying and following)” and “(blessed, and possibly eternal) living” is different, thus “walking” should merit a higher gift of “living (eternally).” However, from reading Leviticus 26, we find “walking” has much more overlap with “living.”

Lev 26:3,12 If you *walk* in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, [...] And I will *walk* among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

Lev 26:27-28 But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but *walk* contrary to me, then I will *walk* contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins.

⁹⁵ Especially, v.4 **בָּהֶם** לִלְכֹת // תִּשְׁמְרוּ “(you shall do) my statutes and walk in them” and v.5 **בָּהֶם** וַתֵּי הָאָדָם “man shall live in them” has the same set of accents.

⁹⁶ So, ESV, RSV, NKJ, KJV. NIV with dynamic translation, “follow my degrees.” NASB “live in accordance with them.”

⁹⁷ So, Watson, 320; Sprinkle, 33.

⁹⁸ Sprinkle admits a possibility of this interpretation: “This view is possible from both the syntax and the context (cf. v.4)” (Sprinkle, 31), although he rejects this reading in the end. Watson also admits the possibility of this rendering saying, “this is a serious exegetical possibility,” though he concluded that it is probably wrong (Watson, 320).

Here, “walking” in the law is not simply obeying the law, following the law, or living in accordance with the law, etc. It is more than that. “walking” in the law would at the same time make us to enjoy God “walking” among us. Considering how God will “walk” among us, helps us to see what lies behind the word, which is the living relationship with God. “To walk in the law” means to embrace the fullness of God’s law and live in the relationship with God, and not walking in the law is walking contrary to God himself. It is about relationship. Seeing the relational nature of “walking,” there is strong overlap with “living,” since I have already discussed the relational nature of “living” from Deut 30:19-20 “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, [...] for he is your life and length of days.” The main blessing about “life” is God himself. “To live” in God’s law is “To live” in the blessed covenantal relationship with God himself. Taking this relational factor both in “walking” and “living” seriously, we see v.4 and v.5 as strongly parallel. In v.5 to enjoy the blessed life and relationship with God “in” the sphere of law is a rich elaboration of v.4 “walk in” the law.

3.5.2. In LXX – Difference between ἐν and ἐκ

Third, another indicator of the locative interpretation which requires a separate treatment can be found in the LXX rendering of the preposition כּ.

Lev 18:5 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתָּם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם
 ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς
 (which, having done, a man will live *in* them)

In the LXX, כּ is translated into ἐν. The Greek preposition ἐν is known for its variety and range of meaning, as Walles states, “ἐν is the workhouse of prepositions in the NT,

occurring more frequently and in more varied situations than any other.”⁹⁹ In its wide range of meaning, ἐν has locative meaning (in), instrumental meaning (by, with), or even causal meaning (because of), according to Wallace.¹⁰⁰ However, the basic sense of the proposition ἐν is best represented in its local/spatial sense “in.”¹⁰¹ Harris says,

“The basic figurative sense of *en* corresponds to its original local signification. It is used to denote the sphere within which some action occurs or the element or reality in which something is contained or consists.”¹⁰²

Adopting Harris’ explanation of the basic meaning of ἐν, “shall live *in* them” means that a person who orients his life in the sphere of the law, and embrace the law, they experience the blessed life. The law is the arena where people enjoy the blessed life, because the law is good and in the law, people find relationship with God.

This LXX translator’s choice of ἐν to translate ב is significant when we compare it with Hab 2:4 where ב is used in the context of life, similar to Lev 18:5.

Hab 2:4 בְּאִמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה יְצִדִּיק
 ó δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται
 (the righteous shall live *by* his faith)

⁹⁹ D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 372.

¹⁰⁰ Wallace lists categories with broad strokes as “1. Spatial: in; 2. Temporal: in, within, when, during; 3. Association: with; 4. Cause: because of; 5. Instrumental: by, with; 6. Reference: with respect to; 7. Manner: with; 8. Thing Possessed: with; 9. Standard: according to the standard of.” (Wallace, 372).

¹⁰¹ I put local meaning here, because Harris says, “Most preps. may denote three relations, (local, temporal, mental or ideal,) but the primary representation is local.” (M. J. Harris, “Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 3:1172.

¹⁰² Harris, *NIDNTT* 3.1191.

Almost all major English Bibles translate Hab 2:4 as “live *by* his faith.”¹⁰³ This passage is used in Gal 3:12 side by side with Lev 18:5 to make a careful comparison between “live *by/in* (ἐν) the law” and “live *by/in* (ἐν) his faith.” In these very similar phrases, however, there is a major difference. The LXX on Hab 2:4 does not translated ἐν as “ἐν πίστει” (*in* faith,) rather it is translated as “ἐκ πίστεώς” (*by* faith).¹⁰⁴

A Greek preposition ἐκ, as such was the case for ἐν, also has a broad range of meaning, including “Cause: *because of*,” and “Means: *by, from*.”¹⁰⁵ Since both ἐκ and ἐν have “*by*” in the range of meaning,¹⁰⁶ translating ἐν into ἐκ or ἐν to be rendered in English as “*by*” with a instrumental causal sense does not seem strange. Yet the question is, if ἐκ could also be a good candidate to denote the sense of instrumental cause, “*by*,” then why did the LXX translator of Lev 18:5 not chose ἐκ? Is it just a mere stylistic choice? I do not think so. Below, I point out two reasons why the LXX translator deliberately picked ἐν to communicate the locative sense.

First, even though both ἐν and ἐκ have instrumental/causal meanings in their range, still they carry a very different original sense. The prepositions “ἐκ” and “ἐν” are generally different in their inherent concept, that is, while ἐκ denotes “motion from (*out of*),” ἐν denotes “at rest (*in*).” Harris says about ἐκ that, “Originally *ek* signified an exit “from within” something with which there had earlier been a close connection. Therefore it

¹⁰³ So, ESV, NIV, NASB, KJV, NKJ, RSV.

¹⁰⁴ Notably, this is the only occasion that ἐν is rendered as ἐκ, among occasions of ‘to live’ + ἐν. This shows that even apart from “law” languages, ἐν is rarely translated into ἐκ.

¹⁰⁵ Taken out from the list Wallace made; “1.Source: out of, from; 2.Separation: away from, from; 3.Temporal: from, from [this point]...on; 4.Cause: because of; 5.Partitive (i.e., substituting for a partitive gen.): of; 6.Means: by, from)” (Wallace, 371).

¹⁰⁶ BAGD says about the translation “*by*” as “to denote origin, cause, motive, reason” (BAGD, 234).

naturally came to be used to denote origin, source, derivation or separation.”¹⁰⁷ Harris notes that Greek prepositions have the tendency to “overlap” or cause “confusion” between one another, and “failure to make adequate allowance for a writer’s stylistic variation” is, says Harris, “exegetical danger attained to preposition.”¹⁰⁸ However, he also said “the incidence of such ‘interchange’ needs to be carefully analyzed.”¹⁰⁹ He suggests that “one must assume that a writer chooses his preps. with care,” because the author may have used the preposition “to express a distinction in sense.”¹¹⁰ According to Harris, though some prepositions are overlapping (such as ἐν and εἰς, or ἐκ and ἀπο,) ἐκ and ἐν are not considered to often overlap. The list of considerable important “interchange” among prepositions given by Harris does not include ἐκ and ἐν.¹¹¹

Although one can be hesitant to put a heavy emphasis on the use of a preposition, many would agree that in a passage like Rom 1:17 (“the righteousness of God is revealed from (ἐκ) faith for (εἰς) faith”), prepositions are used in a different sense and with a great theological significance.¹¹² So, since ἐκ and ἐν have distinguished nuances inbuilt, I would

¹⁰⁷ Harris, *NIDNTT* 3: 1188.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 3:1176.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:1174.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3: 1176.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3:1174.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1189. Gregory Sterling successfully layout the Greek philosophical world in Paul’s contemporary to show how the prepositions are used with the very technical sense. One of the examples he brings up is a Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, who used prepositions distinctive from each other when he says, “many things must come together for the generation of something: the by which (τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ), the from which (τὸ ἐξ οὗ), the through which (τὸ δι’ οὗ), and the for which (τὸ δι’ ὅ),” which is followed by the definition of each, “the by which (τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ) is the cause (τὸ αἴτιον), the from which (τὸ ἐξ οὗ) is the matter (ἡ ὕλη), the through which (τὸ δι’ οὗ) is the tool (τὸ ἐργαλεῖον), the for which (τὸ δι’ ὅ) is the purpose (ἡ αἰτία)” (Philo, *Cher.* 124, cited in Gregory E. Sterling, “Prepositional Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christian Liturgical Texts” *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism*, ed. David T. Runia (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 227. Sterling concludes his study by noting that the NT use of prepositions are the reflections of the concept current in the contemporary

suggest that the LXX translator deliberately chose $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ over $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ because \aleph is best translated in the locative sense “*in*”.

Second, careful observation of the LXX translation of \aleph elsewhere in the OT also suggests the simple stylistic reason is unlikely. The list below contains the almost all occasions in the OT of \aleph in syntax with either \aleph (statute), \aleph (rule), \aleph (commandment), or \aleph (law).¹¹³ This helps us to see how “ \aleph +law” is translated in the LXX. To see how the preposition is translated easily, the list below is grouped based on the LXX translation. Sometimes, when the “ \aleph +law” is translated without a preposition, such as genitive, accusative, or dative. I grouped them under “no prep.”¹¹⁴

\aleph with the law in Old Testament

God’s commandments are “written” *in* the law

$\acute{\epsilon}\nu$: Jos 8:31,34; 23:6; 24:26; Deut 28:61; 29:20; 30:10; 1Ki 2:3; 2Ki 14:6; 1Chr 16:40; 2Chr 23:18; 25:4; 31:3; 35:26; Ezr 3:2; Neh 8:14; 10:35, 37; Dn 9:11,13.

God’s commandments were “read” *from* the law

$\acute{\epsilon}\nu$: Neh 8:8, 18; 9:3, 9.

God’s people are called to “walk”¹¹⁵ *in* the law

$\acute{\epsilon}\nu$: Ex 16:4; Lev 18:4; 1Ki 8:61; 2Ki 10:31; 17:19; 2Chr 6:16; 17:4; Neh 10:30; Ps 78:10; 119:1; Jer 26:4; 32:23; 44:23; Ezek 5:7; 11:20; 18:17; 20:13, 18, 19, 21; 33:15; 36:27; 37:24.

philosophical world. He makes his case by comparing statements concerning God in the NT (e.g. Col 1:15-20) and ‘Supreme Being’ in philosophical literatures. (Sterling, 232). Yet, I think it is proper to assume the same kind of technicality even in the argument on justification in the text of Romans 10 and Galatians 3.

¹¹³ I also included the syntax, \aleph +“the book of the law,” as well.

¹¹⁴ Often accusative or genitive is used to make “the law” as the direct object of the verb.

¹¹⁵ It appears, “to walk” is the most common verb for \aleph + \aleph (statute), \aleph (rule), \aleph (commandment) or \aleph (law).

No Prep.¹¹⁶ Lev 26:3; 1Ki 6:12; Ps 89:31; Jer 44:10; Ezek 11:12; Dn 9:10.

God's people are called to "delight" *in* the law
 ἐν: Ps 1:2; 112:1; 119:16; 119:47.

God's people are called to "meditate" *in* the law
 ἐν: Ps 1:2; 119:23, 48.

The psalmist prays that he may "regard" *for* the law.
 ἐν: Ps 119:117.

The psalmist professed that he "believes" *in* the law.
 No Prep.¹¹⁷ Ps 119:66.

The psalmist prays his heart to "be blameless" *in* the law
 ἐν: Ps 119:80.

The priests should "devote themselves" *to* the law.
 ἐν: 2Chr 31:4.

The priests should "judge" *according to* the law.
 No Prep.¹¹⁸ Ezek 44:24.

Levites "praise and give thanks" *according to* the law
 ἐν: Neh 12:24.

Faithful leaders "tremble" *at* the law
 ἐν: Ezr 10:3.

Ezra was a scribe "skilled" *in* the law
 ἐν: Ezr 7:6.

Hezekiah "did" *in accordance with* the law
 ἐν: 2Chr 31:21.

¹¹⁶ Lev 26:3, Ps 89:31, Dn 9:10: Dative with locative sense, thus "in the law." Jer 44:10 οὐκ ἀντείχοντο τῶν προσταγμάτων μου: Genitive of direct object, thus "did not devote themselves to my law." 1Ki 6:12 and Ezek 11:12 do not have LXX translation.

¹¹⁷ Ps 119:66 ταῖς ἐντολαῖς σου ἐπίστευσα: Dative, most likely in locative sense, thus "in your commandments, I trust."

¹¹⁸ Ezek 44:24 ἐπιστήσονται τοῦ διακρίνειν τὰ δικαιώματά μου: Accusative as direct object, thus "stand to judge my judgement."

God's people did not "listen" *in* the law
 No Prep.¹¹⁹ Is 42:24.

God's people should not "reject" the law
 No Prep.¹²⁰ Lev 26:15, 43; Jer 6:19; Ezek 5:6, 20:16.

God's people should not "sin" *against* the law
 ἐν: Neh 9:29.

What we should notice above is that when "ⲛ+law" is translated with preposition, the LXX translator chose exclusively ἐν "*in*." Surely there are some dynamic variations in the LXX translation when it is translated without preposition, such as into dative, genitive, or accusative. But these variations are relatively few, and in most cases when the LXX uses a Greek preposition in the context of "the law," the preposition used is only ἐν. If the prepositions, ἐν and ἐκ were interchangeable and subject to a stylistic choice, there could have been more variation other than ἐν. Thus, the reason the LXX translator chose ἐν is not from a stylistic reason, rather the translator deliberately selected ἐν to carry the nuance that ἐν could best communicate, which is a locative sense, "*in*."

To prove my point, now I would like to take another look into the occurrences of the preposition ⲛ particularly with the verb ⲛⲓⲛⲓ "to live" in syntax. To study the occurrence of the preposition translated in the LXX, they are grouped into three types. One type translates ⲛ into ἐν, a second translates into ἐκ, and the third translates without using any preposition. (To make my point clear, I translate the LXX "ἐν" as "*in*," and "ἐκ" as "*by*" below.)

¹¹⁹ Is 42:24 οὐδὲ ἀκούειν τοῦ νόμου αὐτοῦ: Genitive of direct object, thus "did not listen to his law."

¹²⁰ Lev 26:15 ἀπειθήσητε αὐτοῖς: Dative, thus "reject in the them (statutes)." Lev 26:43; Jer 6:19; Ezek 5:6, 20:16: Accusative of direct object, thus "reject the rule."

Translated into ἐν

- Psa 119:37 תַּעֲבֹר עֵינַי מִרְאוֹת שׁוֹא בְּדַרְכֶּיךָ חַיִּי
ἀπόστρεψον τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς μου τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν ματαιότητα ἐν τῇ
ὁδῷ σου ζῆσόν με
Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in
your ways.
- Psa 119:40 הִנֵּה תִאֲבָתִי לְפַקְדֹתֶיךָ בְּצִדְקֹתֶיךָ חַיִּי
ἰδοὺ ἐπεθύμησα τὰς ἐντολάς σου ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ σου ζῆσόν με
Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!
- Psa 119:93 לְעוֹלָם לֹא-אֲשַׁכַּח פְּקוּדֶיךָ כִּי בָם חַיִּיתֵנִי
εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα οὐ μὴ ἐπιλάθωμαι τῶν δικαιωμάτων σου ὅτι ἐν
αὐτοῖς ἔζησάς με κύριε
I will never forget your precepts, for in them you have given me life.
- Lam 4:20 בְּצִלּוֹ נַחִיָּה בְּגוֹיִם
ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ αὐτοῦ ζησόμεθα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν
in his shadow we shall live among the nations.
- Psa 33:19 וְלִחְיֹתָם בְּרָעַב
καὶ διαθρέψαι αὐτοὺς ἐν λιμῷ¹²¹
that he may ... keep them alive in famine.
- Gen 47:28 וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁבְעַ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה
ἐπέζησεν δὲ Ἰακωβ ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ δέκα ἐπτὰ ἔτη
And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.
- Ezek 18:22 בְּצִדְקָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה יַחִיָּה
ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ αὐτοῦ ἣ ἐποίησεν ζήσεται
in the righteousness that he has done, he shall live.

¹²¹ “To live” here in LXX is dynamically translated into “διαθρέψαι” (to sustain continuously).

- Ezek 20:11 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחֵי בְּהֵם
(c.f. 13,21) ὅσα ποιήσει αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς
(the law) which, if a person does, he shall live in them. (= Lev 18:5)
- Neh 9:29 וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ חָטְאוּ-בָם אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם וְחֵיהּ בְּהֵם
καὶ ἐν τοῖς κρίμασί σου ἡμάρτοσαν ἃ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος
ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς
but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall
live in them. (= Lev 18:5)
- Ezek 20:25 נָתַתִּי לָהֶם חֻקִּים לֹא טוֹבִים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לֹא יָחִיו בְּהֵם
ἔδωκα αὐτοῖς προστάγματα οὐ καλὰ καὶ δικαιώματα ἐν οἷς οὐ
ζήσονται ἐν αὐτοῖς
I gave them statutes that were not good and rules in which they could
not have life.

Translated into ἐκ

- Hab 2:4 וְצַדִּיק בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יַחִיהּ
ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται
but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Translated without using a preposition

- Ezek 33:12 וְצַדִּיק לֹא יוּכַל לַחְיֹת בְּהֵם לְחַיֹּת
καὶ δίκαιος οὐ μὴ δύνηται σωθῆναι¹²²
and the righteous shall not be able to live in his righteousness when
he sins.

The list above tells us that occasions of “(to live)+ב,” even not showing up in the context of law, are still mostly translated into ἐν. Among the LXX translations with preposition, only Hab 2:4 is translated into ἐκ. All the other verses are translated into ἐν. Ezek 33:12

¹²² In Eze 33:12, לַחְיֹת בְּהֵם (ESV “to live by his righteousness”) is translated in LXX dynamically summarized into one word “σωθῆναι (to be saved).”

is neither ἐκ or ἐν, yet it is at least not translated into ἐκ. The context of Ezek 33 seems to suggest that “(to live)+ב” in v.12, if it would have been translated with a preposition, it most likely should have been ἐν with a locative sense.¹²³ Thus, with numerous occasions where ב is translated into ἐν, it is outstanding that Hab 2:4 (“but the righteous shall live by his faith”) translates ב into ἐκ. Seeing how consistent it had been to translate ב into ἐν, it is unlikely that the translator used ἐκ simply for a stylistic reason. The LXX translates into ἐκ with great care, because ב in Hab 2:4, unlike other occasions of ב, should be translated into ἐκ with the sense of instrumental cause in it. English translations rightly translated Hab 2:4, therefore, “shall live *by* faith.” This, in the same token, shows that the places where the LXX translates ב into ἐν do so because ב in these passages are best translated into ἐν to carry out a careful nuance of locative “*in*.”

This stark contrast of loudness of ἐν and silence of ἐκ suggests that ב has the “locative” meaning which is better to be translated into ἐν rather than ἐκ. Therefore, it would be natural to take בְּהַרְוֹתֶיךָ in Lev 18:5 as a locative sense, “to live *in* the law.” The law is regarded as a sphere where God’s people have life *in*. People “walk,” “delight,” “meditate,” “believe,” pray to “be blameless,” and sometimes “sin,” *in* the law. These are the various scenes of life of God’s people. The law and the preposition ב sets the stage for the life of God’s people to be exercised, that is, “*in* the law.” In the law, you will enjoy the life, and outside of the law, you will not. Indeed, Ezek 33:15 says, God’s law that Israel

¹²³ Since Ezek 33:18-19 where the same concept is explored in detail says, “When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die in (ἐν) it. And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live in (ἐν) this,” using ἐν for the LXX translation for ב, I suggest that Ezek 33:12 might better be translated with locative sense as “to live *in* his righteousness.” And indeed the context of Ezek 33 is not necessarily causal-instrumental. It talks that how the law is sphere of life for God’s people, and thus is surely a condition in which God’s people experience life, or death outside of it. However, it is not a causal-instrumental in a sense that the keeping the law would merit those outside of covenant to be brought into the covenant.

should walk *in* is בְּחֻקֵי חַיִּים “statutes of *life*.” When people walk in the law, people will walk in the life. Thus, Lev 18:5b means that as God’s people, Israel should live and experience blessings in the sphere of the law.

3.6. Conclusion on Leviticus 18:5

What I proposed in the careful discussion above is the non-meritorious nature of Lev 18:5. The law is a gift from God. It provides a sphere of life, which God’s people enjoy earthly in the land, and would continue eternally. In God’s law, people enjoy the relationship with God. Thus in a sense, God’s people are saved into the law, that regulates the blessed life with God. The law and life are so inseparable that inside of the law is the life and outside of the law is death.

Therefore, in a sense, the law is also a condition for life. But this conditionality is not as such meritorious. Keeping the law does not merit you a more prestigious state of blessing. Keeping the law makes you continuously enjoy what you are already in, that is the sphere of law, the sphere of blessed life now (and forever.) Without being afraid of confusing the discussion of this thesis, keeping the law also could be said in a sense as “means” or “instrumental” for blessed life. Because by means of being in the sphere of law, God’s people embrace life. So, it is conditional or instrumental, but not meritorious or causal. Keeping the law does not cause someone to be one of God’s people, or merit you a higher blessing. Rather it is conditional in a sense of natural consequence, or result. Or, borrowing Sanders’ phrasing, it is a condition “to stay in”, but not to “get in.”

Chapter 4. Leviticus 18:5 in Ezekiel and Nehemiah

Now, I would like to briefly explore several important passages in the OT where Lev 18:5 is cited. Lev 18:5 is cited three times in Ezekiel (20:11, 13, 21), and one time in Nehemiah (9:29).

וְאַתֶּן לָהֶם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי הוֹדַעְתִּי אוֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם

I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, *in* which, if a person does them, he shall live (Ezek 20:11).

בְּחֻקֹּתַי לֹא־הִלְכוּ וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי מָאֲסוּ
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם

They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, *in* which, if a person does them, he shall live (Ezek 20:13).

בְּחֻקֹּתַי לֹא־הִלְכוּ וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי לֹא־שָׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם

They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, *in* which, if a person does them, he shall live (Ezek 20:21).

וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ לְמִצְוֹתַי וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי חָטְאוּ־בָם
אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם וְחַיָּה בָהֶם

They did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live *in* them (Neh 9:29).

4.1. Leviticus 18:5 in Ezekiel and Nehemiah is still Positive

The difference between these passages and Lev 18:5 is that these passages have phrases, like “They did not walk in my statutes,” surrounding them. Another difference is that their context is after the Exile. Noting their grief expressed in Lev 18:5 over the cursed status of Israel, Sprinkle rightly says that “the text is used to describe what Israel should have done but failed to do.”¹²⁴ Willitts also is right when he says that these citations of Lev 18:5 ironically came to “signify the *unrealized purpose* of the covenant within redemptive history.”¹²⁵ But although the connotation of grieve is certainly present in Ezekiel and Nehemiah, it goes too far to say the authors neglected any positive connotation that was originally embedded in Lev 18:5. We should not forget the role of prophets, like Ezekiel, to call people to repentance by preaching the covenantal promise. In Ezek 33, the law is still a covenant promise that God will forgive Israel and bless them with “life.”

“Again, though I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die (Ezek 33:14-15 ESV).”

The promise that “the law” is “life” for God’s people, highlighted in Lev 18:5, is true even after they became “wicked.” Ezekiel and Ezra adhered to the promise of life, crystallized in Lev 18:5, and used the passage to encourage the people for the faithful obedience with a trust in the promised life still available for them when they repent. Thus, Lev 18:5 cited

¹²⁴ Sprinkle, 43.

¹²⁵ Joel Willitts, “Context Matters: Paul’s Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 54, no.2 (2003): 113. This hypothesis on pessimistic self-view of Israel in second temple Judaism, has been popularly advocated by scholars, including James Scott, and N. T. Wright. Willitts basically follows the N. T. Wright and James Scott who understands the time before Christ as the continuation of Exile based on the study of Deuteronomy, and tries to derive same idea from Lev 18:5.

in Ezekiel and Nehemiah state nothing different from Lev 18:5 in the original context. It is a strongly positive depiction of law as life.

4.2. Life-giving Spirit enables Obedience to the Law

Sprinkle uses these texts, especially Ezekiel, to point out the meritorious, causal function of the law. Sprinkle brings attention to the recurring phrase “Walking in my statutes and observing my judgments” throughout the book of Ezekiel.¹²⁶ The phrase occurs elsewhere in the book,¹²⁷ but it does not appear between chp. 20 and chps. 36-37. It is interesting to notice that before chp. 36, all the occurrences of the phrase are in a negative context. Israel is rebuked that they did *not* obey the commandments: e.g. “They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules” (20:13). But in the chps. 36-37, Israel became enabled to obey the law: e.g. “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (36:27). Sprinkle contrasts this as “statutes and judgments” unfulfilled before chp. 36, and fulfilled after chp. 36. He also noticed that, in correspondence with unfulfilled law and fulfilled law, ‘the life’ is also unfulfilled before chp. 36 and fulfilled in 37:1-14 where the Spirit made the dry bones alive: “And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD” (37:14). What happened in chp. 36 is the intervention of the Spirit. The Spirit changed the tide and “caused” Israel to walk in his commandments (Ezek 36:24), and the Spirit came into them so that they “shall live” (Ezek 37:14). The

¹²⁶ What I explain below is from Sprinkle, 37-40.

¹²⁷ Lev 5:6-7; 11:12, 20; 18: 9, 17, 19; 20:11, 13, 18, 19, 21.

Spirit thus functions as divine agency that fulfilled law observance and blessed life. I think his observation is correct and I am in full agreement with Sprinkle so far.

However I cannot agree with Sprinkle when he says, “What was previously conditioned upon human agency – “if the person does these things he will live by them” – is now replaced by divine agency. Israel will indeed do the “statutes and judgments” and “live by them,” but through God’s initiative.”¹²⁸ His reasoning is that now the Spirit gave life and enabled Israel to obey the commandment is a clear sign that the people’s obedience to the law was supposed to function like the Spirit did, that is, “to give life.” Bryan Estelle agrees with Sprinkle, saying, “In short, divine causation replaces the conditions incumbent upon the people. What they are unable to perform in and of themselves, Yahweh will accomplish through his own divinely appointed agency.”¹²⁹ The Spirit’s divine causation, to them, now replaces the human causation of the law, and Law-Life causal connection is now annulled by the Spirit.

But this Spirit=Law parallelism cannot stand when we see the texts, because even the Spirit gives life, this cannot mean that the law observance was supposed to give life also. Rather, the law observance is, even after the Spirit caused ‘life,’ still valid and tightly connected to the blessed life: “And I will put my Spirit within you, *and cause you to walk in my statutes*” (Ezek 36:27), “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. *They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes*” (Ezek 37:24). If the Spirit replaced the law, then why is the phrase from Lev 18:1-5 “walk in my rules, obey my statutes” still showing up? It appears that Ezekiel rather continued to

¹²⁸ Sprinkle, 38.

¹²⁹ Estelle, 121.

support the strong connection between life and law. As we saw above, because blessed life of covenant people should be lived *in the sphere of* law, Ezekiel, depicts true life, enabled by the Spirit to be lived and the law is to be observed. What we now see in Ezek 36:27 and 37:24 is a true fulfillment of the Lev 18:5 formula “live *in* them”.

A close look at Ezek 36:27-31 and 37:24-25 below also supports the Law-Life undivided connection.

²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you **to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.** ²⁸ You shall dwelt in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. ³⁰ I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations (Ezek 36:27-30).

²⁴ My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall **walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.** ²⁵ They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever (Ezek 37:24-25).

Notice what is stated after Ezek 36:27. Having law observance now enabled, what Israel experiences is dwelling in the land, abundant grain, the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field. These are the echoes of the blessed life that Leviticus envisioned (Lev 26:3-13). In Ezek 37:25, what follows the law observance is the secure dwelling in the land. I have already discussed that this abundant life in the land, secure dwelling in the land is a part of what ‘to live’ has meant. To live is to have a blessed life in the land, and life ever after. Then what we have in Ezek 36:27-31 is that Law–Life connection is a consecutive relationship, in which law leads to life. Even after the Spirit started to play a “causal” function, the Lev 18:5 formula still is valid. The blessed life is a natural consequence of

obeying God's commandment. The blessed life is never meant to be separated from the law, rather it is lived in the sphere of the law always. This is what Lev 18:5 means by stating, "which the man shall do them and live *in* them." Life in the law, so to say, is always the journey and the goal for God's people.

Then what does the Spirit do? The Spirit does not replace the law, as Sprinkle thinks, rather, the Spirit simply fills what was missing in Lev 18:5. Lev 18:5 presents the goal and the road map to the goal for Israel. It depicts how blessed the goal and journey towards it are. But it misses the ultimate power to achieve the goal. The Spirit now functions to enable Israel to walk in the law, and live in the law. Human obedience is still and will always be needed. This does not change. What the Spirit does is to empower God's people to obey the law. Using Sprinkle's category, the divine agency did not replace the human agency. The divine agency and human agency should not be treated as either/or which creates a false dichotomy. Rather, the divine agency activated the human agency. John 15:10 depicts life in the sphere of the law by saying, "if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love."¹³⁰ Sprinkle is right to see the causal function of the Spirit, but he is wrong to see it as a replacement of the law. What is happening is not a *replacement* of the law, but a *new-placement* of the Spirit.

¹³⁰ See Collins, *Leviticus 18:5 in Context*, 2.

Chapter 5. Comparing Leviticus 18:5 with Habakkuk 2:4

Before I go into the study of Gal 3:12 where Paul uses Lev 18:5 in juxtaposition with Hab 2:4, I want to give a rather limited exegesis on Hab 2:4. In chapter 3, I pointed out the LXX in Hab 2:4 translated the preposition **ב** into ἐκ, differently from Lev 18:5. As I discussed, ἐν (in) and ἐκ (by) have basic differences in their root meaning. In this chapter, I will discuss what is the exact meaning of ἐκ in Hab 2:4, and why the LXX translator translated Hab 2:4 differently than Lev 18:5.

Hab 2:4	וְצַדִּיק בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יַחִיָּה ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται but the righteous <u>shall live by his faith</u> .
Lev 18:5	אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם הָאָדָם וְחֵי בְהֵם ὃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς which, having done, a man <u>shall live in them</u> .

5.1. Literal Context of Habakkuk

The major difference of Habakkuk and Leviticus is that while Leviticus is written at the beginning of the nation of Israel, Habakkuk is written at the end of Israel, most likely right before the Babylonian captivity.¹³¹ With the death of Josiah, his reformation

¹³¹ Concerning the dates of the composition of the book of Habakkuk, scholars vary in the range of from the reign of Manasseh (686-642) to near 597 (the second deportation). But the mention of Chaldeans (1:6-11) most likely suggests that the book was written around the last quarter of the seventh century B.C., right before the Babylonian captivity at 586 B.C. So, John Goldingay, "Habakkuk," *Minor Prophets II*, by J.

movement also died and Judah started to experience the downfall of the nation, under kings who did “evil in the sight of the Lord.”¹³² Facing the prevailing evil in Judah, Habakkuk begins by saying “O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?” (1:2). The question Habakkuk has is why the just God does nothing when there is rampant evil oppressing the righteous? What makes the situation worse is that the prophet declares that in the hands of the wicked, “the law [תִּוְרָה] is paralyzed [תִּפְּוֵג], and justice never goes forth” (1:4a). The word תִּפְּוֵג “paralyzed” means also “to grow numb”¹³³ or “to become ineffective.”¹³⁴ The law became ineffective to restrain the evil and produce righteous living among the people of Israel.¹³⁵ Because the authorities in Israel failed to observe and execute the law, the justice intended in the law was never realized, instead, “justice goes forth perverted (BDB “crooked, bent”)” (1:4b).¹³⁶ As Robertson says, the stigma of this word is that “the best law in the world profits nothing if its statutes are not maintained.”¹³⁷ Habakkuk’s claim that the law is paralyzed is his mourning that the best law became so

Goldingay and P. Schalise, *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2009), 48; F. F. Bruce, “Habakkuk,” *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992-1998), 833.

¹³² 2Ki 21:6, 20; 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19.

¹³³ BDB, 807. It is a rare word in OT with only four occasions with Qal form.

¹³⁴ Goldingay, 54.

¹³⁵ See Rikki E. Watts, “‘For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel’: Romans 1:16-17 and Habakkuk 2:4,” *Romans and the people of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D Fee on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 6. “Habakkuk’s opening complaint is predicated on the apparent ineffectiveness of תִּוְרָה in restraining wickedness.”

¹³⁶ What is happening is, according to Bruce, that “The wicked surrounds (circumvents) the righteous in the sense of gaining a verdict against him or her before a corrupt court.” (F. F. Bruce, 845).

¹³⁷ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, *The New International Commentary on The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 140.

ineffective in the hands of the wicked that it was no longer effective in restraining rampant sin among Israel.

That the law became ineffective in the hand of the wicked, results in impending judgment. In responding to the first complaint of Habakkuk about rampant sin among Israel, God tells the Israelites to “look” and “see” (1:5) that He is bringing judgement in the hand of the Chaldeans, who are “dreadful and fearsome” (1:7) and ready for “swallowing up” Israel. Robertson rightly explains that the image of “swallowing up” portrays “an utter destruction” of all of Israel including the wicked and the righteous alike.¹³⁸ It is a declaration about utter judgement. Habakkuk noticed that the rise of the Chaldeans means a coming of judgment from which even the righteous are not under an exemption. Facing judgement ahead, Habakkuk still put faith in the Lord, saying, “Are you not everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? *We shall not die.*”¹³⁹ Hab 2:4, therefore, is set in a specific context that the law is paralyzed and, as a result, judgment is at hand.

Habakkuk does not set himself against the law. The law is good. What makes him grieve is not that the law was bad, but that Israel does not have power, or even willingness to embrace the good law. Where then is hope for Israel at this point, after proving themselves that they are so incapable to keep the law, and now are under impending judgement?

¹³⁸ Robertson, 160.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 157.

5.2. Habakkuk 2:4

The prophet Habakkuk cried out to God, asking why the Israelites are doomed for the impending judgement in the hand of more wicked Chaldeans. To Habakkuk's cry, God comforted him by saying "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith" (2:4). Facing the judgement, there is a way to live, a way to be delivered, because "the righteous shall live by faith" (2:4b)

Now, let us turn to Hab 2:4b. While this passage is often understood as if the sentence means "one shall be justified by faith," obviously the text is not thus phrased.

Hab 2:4b

וְצַדִּיק בְּאֵמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִיָּה

Righteous shall live by his faith

5.2.1. צַדִּיק "righteous"

What does it mean to be "the righteous" in Hab 2:4? The word first appears in the book of Habakkuk in 1:4 "the wicked surround the *righteous*." In 1:4, the righteous is in contrast to the wicked who are in 1:3 committing "iniquity," "wrong," "destruction," and "violence." What is described here is the ethical corruption caused by the wicked who violate the law of God. Having been contrasted with those wicked, "the righteous" are most likely the ones who respect the law and faithfully try to obey the law. Based on the thorough study of word group צַדִּיק "righteous" in the OT and Jewish literature, Gathercole concluded that "I would propose 'doing what God requires' as the basic sense of

righteousness in the OT and early Judaism.”¹⁴⁰ Goldingay states simply that “the righteous’ are “people who do the right thing in their relationships with God.”¹⁴¹

At the same time, scholars also recognize the presence of a forensic aspect of “righteous.” Robertson says, “The concept of righteousness in the OT ... is bound inseparably to the idea of judicial standing.”¹⁴² Indeed, two important words in Hab 2:4, צַדִּיק “righteous” and אֱמֵן “faith,” are used also in Gen 15:6, they are deliberately used to harken back to the story of Abraham, where “he [Abraham] *believed* the LORD, and he [God] counted it to him as *righteousness*” (Gen 15:6).¹⁴³ In Gen 15:6, “righteousness” is clearly a forensic, declared righteousness. Thus, the word צַדִּיק (righteous) in Habakkuk also carries a connotation of declared righteousness as well.

To me, therefore, “the righteous” in Hab 2:4 carries both a sense of ethical righteousness and forensic righteousness. Abraham was first declared righteous, yet, this reckoned righteousness never is apart from ethical righteousness. Abraham was always told to obey God, and James 2:22 make it clear that the declared righteousness goes hand in hand with obedience:

¹⁴⁰ Simon J. Gathercole, “The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond,” *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Academic, 2006), 237. He reasons based on early Jewish literatures: Sir 16:14 “everyone who does righteousness shall receive his reward”; 1 Enoch 82:4, Jubilees 35:2. Dunn, supporting the aspect of ethical righteousness, says that the righteous is “the man who is a faithful member of the covenant, who fulfills the obligations laid upon him by the law of the covenant as a loyal Jew” [James G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 45].

¹⁴¹ Goldingay, 69. So, Bruce: “the righteous lives by God’s own standard of righteousness; the forensic aspect of the term is not prominent” (F. F. Bruce, 860).

¹⁴² Robertson, 175.

¹⁴³ See Robertson, 178; Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 166-7; C. F. Keil, *The Minor Prophets*, trans. James Martin, *Commentary of the Old Testament*: 10 volumes: by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, 10 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 402.

You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” (Jas 2:22-23).

In the context of impending judgement in Habakkuk, those who are declared righteous are the ones who faithfully pursue righteous living and would be judicially vindicated at the judgement as righteous. In Habakkuk, if declared righteousness is in the back ground, then in the foreground are the righteous living in the midst of rampant evil. And both are inseparably important concepts. Habakkuk encourages God’s people to follow the steps of Abraham, declared to be forensically righteous, to remain faithful to practice righteous living even when surrounded by rampant evil and facing the impending judgement.

Therefore, “being righteous” in Hab 2:4 is the same as “doing the law” in Lev 18:5. In Leviticus, obedience to the law is a blessed way of life given because of the righteous status as God’s people forensically given by God. Their judicial status as God’s people is the basis for their life in the law. Habakkuk encourages God’s people to remain faithful to the law and pursue righteous living, because being faithful to the law is still the blessed way for life. The law was a way for life in Lev 18:5, and in Hab 2:4 it is still the same. The life here in Hab 2:4 still includes the same meaning as Lev 18:5, that is a blessed life on earth and life ever after. In the context of impending judgement, the implication for “live” is the deliverance from the judgement.¹⁴⁴ Thus in Hab 1:12, Habakkuk professed his faith

¹⁴⁴ This salvation is not merely an earthly salvation that happens at the judgment on Babylonians. Hab 2:3 says “For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.” That the vision “awaits its appointed time” suggests eschatological nuance. Rikki Watt discussed Hab 2:3-4 cited in Rom 1:17 and says, “It is not surprising, then, that Paul might also interpret the adjoining verse 4 from an eschatological perspective (cf. Heb 10:37-38)” (Rikki Watts, 9).

when he cries, “We shall *not die!*”¹⁴⁵ Robertson is thus right when he comments on “to live” in Hab 2:4, saying, “So the justified by faith continue to live by faith. Despite the judgments of God, a remnant shall survive.”¹⁴⁶ Even to people who are fallen away from the law, and make the law paralyzed and ineffective, the law still remains the way for life, and indeed, those who remain faithful to obey God can even be delivered from the judgement.

5.2.2. אֱמוּנָתוֹ Faith

How can the deliverance from judgment and the blessed life in covenant be realized? Habakkuk fills in what was missing in Lev 18:5. It is “by faith.”¹⁴⁷ What then does אֱמוּנָה “faith” mean? While “faith” for modern readers usually means “trust,” in Hebrew the word אֱמוּנָה primarily means “steadfastness, faithfulness.”¹⁴⁸ In this sense, Habakkuk is calling its readers to remain faithfully obedient to God, observing the law, and pursuing righteous living.¹⁴⁹ While “faithfulness” is a correct meaning אֱמוּנָה, we

¹⁴⁵ As חַיָּה [to live] and מוֹת [to die] is often set antithetically in the OT (e.g. Deut 30:9 “I have set before you life and death.”) יְחִיָּה in Hab 2:4 is used in opposition to מוֹת in Hab 1:12. See Goldingay, 69: “the ‘righteous’ people...will live and not die (cf. 1:12).”

¹⁴⁶ Robertson, 183.

¹⁴⁷ While Hab 2:4 is sometimes understood to mean “the righteous by faith shall live,” telling how one can be justified, yet the structure does not support that reading. Instead, “by faith” explain how one can “live.” Robertson, grounding his argument on the structure (subject preceding the verbal clause) and Hebrew accents, thus concludes, “Instead of stating explicitly that the justified-by-faith shall live, the phrase asserts that the justified shall live-by-faith.” (Robertson, 177. So, Keil, *The Minor Prophets*, 402).

¹⁴⁸ BDB puts “firmness, steadfastness, fidelity” as the main range of the meaning of the word (BDB, 53).

¹⁴⁹ Dunn understand “the faithfulness to the law” is the exact meaning of the ‘faith’ in Habakkuk 2:4, and explains the meaning of the Habakkuk 2:4 that “It was by ‘his faith,’ that is, his faithfulness in regard to the law, that he lived his life” [James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 373]. While I admit “faithfulness” as the meaning for “his faith,” I am not satisfied as he seems to overlook the rich blessing in the word “life.” Qumran commentary on Habakkuk 2:4 says, “its interpretation concerns those who observe the law (1QpHab 8.1-3).

should be aware, as I noted above, אֱמוּנָה “faith” and צְדִיקָה “righteous” in Hab 2:4 also appear in Gen 15:6, thus as Keil says, “it is impossible to mistake the reference יְהוָה צְדִיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ to Gen 15:6.”¹⁵⁰ Since in Gen 15:6, Abraham “believed the LORD,” “faith” in Hab 2:4 is the faith that Abraham had.¹⁵¹ When Abraham believed, he *trusted* that God will bless him as God promised. However, at the same time, this trust was required to be expressed in obedience, patiently waiting till the promise was fulfilled. So, it is wrong to separate “trust” and “faithfulness.” Robertson says it as “steadfast trust,” and says “Steadfastness in *faith* is the way of receiving the gift of life. Continuation in trust alone can assure continued possession of the gift of life.”¹⁵² Bruce also admits the two-sided meaning in “faith,” saying, “the righteous person will maintain life because faithfulness to God—an attitude that includes both personal loyalty and that trust in his word that waits patiently until it is time for him to act.”¹⁵³ Faithful obedience that is full of trust in God is what is required.

This faithful trust or obedient faith also means that it has an object of faith, that is God, therefore it is the response to God’s initiative action. It is a *faith in* God. Moberly rightly says, אֱמוּנָה “to believe” has “the added sense of acting in response to what is heard

¹⁵⁰ Keil, *The Minor Prophets*, 402.

¹⁵¹ The word אֱמוּנָה is a Hiphil form of a verb, אָמַן, whose noun form is אֱמוּנָה “faith,” and should properly be translated as “to believe, trust.” (BDB, 58.) While the verb אָמַן, in Qal form with its most basic sense, means “to confirm, sustain, support” (BDB, 52), in Hiphil form, it is used in a sense “to regard firm or sure” (F. F. Bruce, 847), thus it means “to believe” (BDB, 53.) (See, אָמַן, NIDOTTEE, 1.431).

¹⁵² Robertson, 179.

¹⁵³ Bruce, 860. Although when he is pushed, he would say that the “faithfulness” take the precedence. “While אֱמוּנָה includes both faithfulness and faith, the quality emphasized in this context is that patient and confident waiting for God to act.” (F. F. Bruce, 861).

with trust or obedience.”¹⁵⁴ Therefore, “faith” in Hab 2:4 is the faith that *trusts* in God’s promise and *obeys* God as a response to his promise.¹⁵⁵ That faith is a “trusting” faith in God is also supported in the connection of Hab 1:5 and 2:4. Hab 1:5 says, “Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not *believe* [תִּאֱמִינֵנִי] if told.” Hab 1:5 is important because this is the only place where the word family of אָמֵן “faith” appears in the book of Habakkuk other than in Hab 2:4. In 1:5, God is telling the nation of Israel that God will do something that they won’t believe, that is to bring the judgment on the wicked in the hand of the Babylonians who are more wicked than wicked Israelites. In the confusion and fear, God encourages the audience to ‘believe’ (Hab 2:4) that God is doing what is right and good for his people, and faithfully wait for God with patience.

5.2.3. בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ (ἐκ πίστεώς) *by (from) Faith*

Then what does it really mean that the righteous shall live “*by faith*”? As I discussed earlier, the LXX translates ב into ἐκ. In light of the fact that all the other occasions “(to live) + ב,” when translated into the Greek equivalent is ἐν, that Hab 2:4 translates ב into ἐκ is significant. Even in the cases where ב has an “instrumental causal” sense, it is translated into ἐν. Then, what does ἐκ πίστεώς exactly mean? As I cited earlier, ἐκ is different from ἐν in that ἐν denotes a figurative sense of motion “in” and ἐκ is represented

¹⁵⁴ NIDOTTEE, 1.431.

¹⁵⁵ LXX translates Habakkuk 2:4 as ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται which could be translated as “but the righteous shall live *by my faithfulness*.” Because LXX has μου “my” which Hebrew bible does not have, Silva criticized that LXX translator “faltered at various points, obscured the syntax, and ended up with the view that *God’s faithfulness* is the basis of salvation” (Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 166). However, as Robertson points out, “it is possible that ‘by (the) faith of me’ in the LXX actually means ‘by faith *in me*’” (Robertson, 181), taking μου as objective genitive.

by the notion of motion “from.”¹⁵⁶ Introducing Harris’ explanation again, ἐκ denotes “an exit ‘from within,’ thus figuratively it also denotes “origin, source, derivation or separation.”¹⁵⁷ This basic sense of *source, origin*, is what I see as unique to ἐκ.¹⁵⁸ Hebrew preposition מִן has such a wide range of meaning that it could include this sense of *source* or *origin* under categories such as “instrument or means,” or “with causal force.”¹⁵⁹ Yet when it is translated into Greek whose prepositions could catch more nuanced meaning, the translator picked ἐκ to signify the sense of “source” or “origin” precisely. To make this point clear in the present study, I would like to translate ἐκ as “from” and ἐν as “in” from now on unless precisely following an English Bible, so that we may clearly sense the difference. I admit that the prepositions could have a more nuanced sense depending on the context. But still, I would like to make a hermeneutical decision to give a chance for the readers of the present work to pay closer attention to the different preposition used. Thus Hab 2:4 should be more properly translated here as “the righteous shall live *from* his faith.”

That the faith is the source and origin for life means that in Hab 2:4, “Faith” is an indispensable condition for life. It is not merely a condition in a sense of “means,” or “instrument,” rather in a sense of “source” or “origin.” It is a condition because with “faith” Israel started the blessed relationship with God. Without faith, the story did not start, or could ever continue. Why? Faith is the trusting response to God who originated the

¹⁵⁶ Harris, *NIDNTT* 3:1172.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:1188.

¹⁵⁸ Comparing the lists of meanings for each preposition by Wallace, while ἐν and ἐκ both has a range of meaning that closely overlap each other, such as “instrumental” (by), means (by) or “cause” (because of), yet “source” (out of, from) is unique to ἐκ. See Wallace, 371-2.

¹⁵⁹ Categories under מִן taken from BDB (BDB, 89-90).

covenant blessing. God is the source of life. Because God is the source of life, God could empower God's people to be faithful in righteous living. "Faith in God" is the source for empowerment. It is not just an instrument. It empowers and enable God's people to walk in law, and live in life. That God (thus faith in him) is the source of life is well explained in Robertson's commentary on Habakkuk when he says,

The locating of the channel to life in a person's steadfast trust occurs repeatedly in the OT Scriptures. Israel is admonished to hearken to the Lord's voice and to cling to him, "for he is your life" (Deut 30:20). Only by oneness with God, the source of life, may Israel expect to live. Only by a steadfast entrustment that inevitably produces obedience may this life-giving relation to God be maintained.¹⁶⁰

As the audience of Habakkuk was already failing in their attempt to be faithful to God, not walking in the law, bringing them the curse, and now facing the impending judgement, they needed to be brought back to the beginning where Abraham started his journey with God. In a sense, Israel is now brought to zero in their score, and because of that Habakkuk is calling them to remember how Abraham had hope when he had nothing of which to boast. Israel's journey with God started out of faith in God, and it should have always been so. Out of faith, it started, and out of faith it should continue. The law always depicts a blessed life. The law remains the goal and the road map towards the goal, but the power to obey the law only comes from our faith in God.

That "faith in God" as *origin* and *source* for righteous living is also proven in the context of Ezekiel as we saw in the previous chapter. When Israel is proven to be dead, what is needed is an empowerment by the Spirit. The Spirit of God gives life to the dry bones, and brings life to dead Israel. The Spirit is the *source* and *origin* that empowers

¹⁶⁰ Robertson, 183.

God's people for righteous living. The people in Habakkuk's time were not exactly clear how God can still bring His people to "the life," after such a failure, yet God had planned to restore Israel to life through His only Son, Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit. What the reader of Habakkuk has to do is to trust in God and his promise, as Abraham did at his beginning.

Chapter 6. Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12

In previous chapters, I explained that Lev 18:5 is a positive depiction of the law-life inseparable relationship, and it is not a meritorious way to earn life. How then does this conditional, but non-meritorious, rather, “consequential, locative, and resultative” understanding of the Law-Life relationship in Lev 18:5 fit into Gal 3:10-12 where Lev 18:5 is juxtaposed with Hab 2:4?

Gal 3:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written,
"Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for
"The righteous shall live by faith." (Hab 2:4)

¹² But the law is not of faith, rather
"The one who does them shall live by them." (Lev 18:5)

In Gal 3:12, Paul says “The law is not of faith, rather, the one who does them [the law] shall live by them [the law],” citing Lev 18:5. As it says, “the law is not of faith” (3:12), it seems that Paul is opposing the law to faith because it has nothing to do with faith. In light of our observation that Lev 18:5 is depicting as positive the law in leading to a blessed life, how should we understand what Paul is doing in Gal 3:10-12?

6.1. Literary Context and Structure of Galatians 3:10-12

Although I have argued for the positive view of the law in Lev 18:5, when it comes to Gal 3:12, it is not easy to remain positive about the law. Paul wrote to the Galatians to

argue against the teaching of Judaizers---Jewish Christians who insisted on the observance of the Mosaic ceremonial law, especially circumcision, as the indispensable practice for gentiles to become Christian. What is at stake is whether the gentile Christians should be bound by the Mosaic Law or not. Throughout chapter three, Paul tries to reason why they are sufficiently Christian enough by having a faith in Jesus, without following the Jewish ceremonial laws. In 3:6-9, Paul supports his argument by pointing out how Abraham was counted as righteous by faith, and not by observing the Mosaic Law. Those who have the same kind of *faith* that Abraham had (3:6, 9, 29) are already the true sons of Abraham, thus do not need to practice circumcision to become God's people. In 3:10-12, our immediate pericope, Paul then shows how by observing the Mosaic Law we are not able to attain the blessed life, by stating at the opening of this section that those "who rely on works of the law are under a curse" (Gal 3:10).

Then, what exactly is Paul's point in citing Lev 18:5? To see what Paul wants to say in his argument, we must see the pericope 3:10-12¹⁶¹ as a unity and pay attention to the structure. I layout the structure of the periscope, based on the outline suggested by Silva.¹⁶² Silva suggested we pay attention to the thesis-ground structure throughout the pericope. What is outstanding is that just in Gal 3:6-14, there are six citations from the OT. Each OT citation is introduced as a ground to support the preceding theses as below. It is important to understand what is the thesis those citations are proving.

¹⁶¹ Though this section still a part of larger section; 10-14, or bigger, 6-14, I see a distinctive parallelism going on in the current pericope.

¹⁶² Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 220.

Galatians 3:10-12

10a [Main Thesis]	Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν·	For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse;
10b (Grounds)	γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.	for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."
11a [Sub-thesis1]	ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον,	Now it is evident that no one is justified before God in the law,
11b Hab 2:4 (Grounds)	ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται·	for "The righteous shall live from faith."
12a [Sub-thesis2]	(ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως,)	And the law is not "from faith,"
12b Lev 18:5 (Grounds)	ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.	rather "The one who does them shall live in them."

Another point we need to pay attention to is that, “δε” in v.11a and v.12a. As Silva says; “Notice that 3:11, which begins with *de* (“and, now, but”) introduces an additional piece of information...,”¹⁶³ which I think he is right, “δε” in v.11a and v.12a are there to connect the thesis to the previous thesis.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, my translation above shows, “δε” introduces supplemental information, which in a sense could be in parenthesis, subordinate to the upper thesis. V.12 supports v.11 and v.11 supports v.10. So, Gal 3:10-12 is indeed one section, and v.11 and v.12 are there not to spell out the different ideas, but they are there to support the main thesis of Gal 3:10 that “those who are ‘ἐκ + works’ are under

¹⁶³ So, Moisés Silva, “Galatians,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K.Beale and D.A.Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2007), 801.

¹⁶⁴ So, Willitts, “vv.11-12 support verses v.10 and are subordinate,” pointing out that a conjunction of δῆλον οτι in v.11 picks up the preceding idea (Willitts, 118).

cursed.”¹⁶⁵ Verse 11a is not spelling out a different thesis to v.10a, rather, v.11a is dealing with the same issue posed in v.10a from a different angle. And with a narrower focus on Gal 3:11-12, v.12 is placed to support v.11. This means, Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 are not opposing each other, rather, they are both cited to strengthen the thesis in Gal 3:11a: “No one is justified in law.”

6.2. Prepositional Significance in “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου”

As I go into greater detail of Galatian 3:10-12, with a careful observation of Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4, I would like to pay special attention to the prepositions. I have already shown in the previous chapters that they both use the similar phrase, yet in a very different sense. Lev 18:5 says ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς “live *in* them,” and Hab 2:4 says ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται “live *from* faith.” And in Gal 3:11-12, these significant prepositional phrases are carefully maintained. This is significant when we notice that Paul made a slight change from the LXX in his citation of Lev 18:5 as is shown below.

Lev 18:5 in LXX and in Galatians (ESV)

LXX ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς (which, *by* doing, a man *will live by them*)

Gal ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς (The one who does them *will live by them*)

The variations we notice include: (1) A change from relative pronoun ἃ [LXX] to an independent pronoun αὐτὰ [Gal]; (2) Omission of ἄνθρωπος [LXX] in Gal. But these

¹⁶⁵ So, Silva, “Thus it would be possible ... to view 3:11a not as a distinct thesis, but rather a corollary of the thesis in 3:10” (Silva, “Galatians,” 801).

changes are mainly because Paul changed the relative clause in Lev 18:5 into an independent clause. This change replaced a relative pronoun with an independent pronoun, and created a substantival participle, ὁ ποιήσας, to be the subject of the sentence, which made ἄνθρωπος unnecessary anymore.¹⁶⁶ What happens here is merely a stylistic change and not a substantial change.¹⁶⁷ But these slight changes, where Paul exercises freedom, makes what is not changed vivid, that is, “ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς” (will live *in* them). When Paul exercises stylistic freedom, he still carefully maintained the detail preposition as he cites Lev 18:5. In the discussion of Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 I have shown the LXX translators pay attention to the hermeneutical choice for the prepositions. In the following discussion, I would like to show how Paul carefully used the prepositions to craft his argument against his opponents.

Since Paul’s argument in Gal 3:10-12 is under an overarching thesis statement of Gal 3:10, “all who rely on works of the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) are under a curse,” Paul’s argument on Gal 3:10-12 is continuously polemical against those who are ‘*from* the works of the law,’ that is, “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.” Paul uses the phrase to denote a group of people, characterized by “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,” by saying “*All who* (ὅσοι) rely on the works of the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου).” As Longenecker rightly says, “The absolute use of ὅσοι (“all who”) coupled with ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (“rely on the works of the law”) marks out a particular group of people.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Contra Longenecker, who reads Paul’s intention behind it to be careful not to be in line with a Jewish reading of Lev 18:5, which reads “Man” for Gentiles and says even Gentiles can live when they observe the Mosaic Law (Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 121. But because the likeliness is in the stylistic reason, this reading is speculative.

¹⁶⁷ See Silva, “Galatians,” 802.

¹⁶⁸ Longenecker, 116. So Silva, “Paul evidently intends to characterize a certain group of people as individuals who identify themselves by their commitment to law observance, who therefore find in the

This categorical way of using preposition is explicit when it is contrasted to Gal 3:9, which says “So then, those who are of faith (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” Here in Gal 3:9, “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως” is also used in a categorical way to denote a faithful group. With the same syntactic structure between v.9 and v.10, “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως” (those who are *from* faith) and “Οσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου” (those who are *from* the works of the law) are clearly contrasted with categorical use of ἐκ. Paul’s opponents are those who are characterized by ἐξ ἔργων νόμου “*from* the works of the law.”

Paul repeatedly uses this prepositional phrase in the exact wording in previous verses in Galatians as below. And when the phrase is used, it is treated negatively.

- Gal 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified **from the works of the law** (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified from faith in Christ and not **from the works of the law** (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), because **from the works of the law** (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) no one will be justified.
- Gal 3:2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit **from the works of the law** (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) or from hearing with faith?
- Gal 3:5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so **from the works of the law** (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), or from hearing with faith—
- Gal 3:10 For all who are **“from the works of the law”** (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου)¹⁶⁹ are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

If Paul is using “who are *from* the works of the law” (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) in Gal 3:10 in the same wording, this phrase must be used to refer to echo back to the previous verses. Thus,

requirements of the law their source of life” [Moisés Silva, “Faith Versus Works of Law in Galatians,” *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume II-The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, and Peter O’ Brien (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 225].

¹⁶⁹ My translation is done making the categorical sense explicit.

this categorical phrase is used to identify Paul’s opponents as those categorized by their catch phrase, “*from* the works of the law.” Yet this categorical use should not be limited only to the phrase “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.” Paul describes his opponent as “οἱ ἐκ νόμου” (those who are *from* the law) without using “ἔργων” (works) in Rom 4:14 “For if it is the adherents of the law (“οἱ ἐκ νόμου”) who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.” As is the same for “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου” (from the works of the law,) “ἐκ νόμου” (from the law) is also treated negatively. Therefore, I take “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου” and “ἐκ νόμου” as the key categorical phrases that Paul uses to negatively describe his opponents.

6.3. Negative Treatment of “ἐκ + νόμου (law)” in Pauline Epistles

What is instead consistent in those phrases is that both have the preposition “ἐκ” followed by νόμου “law,” or ἔργων “works.” Indeed, throughout the Pauline epistles, whenever we see “ἐκ + νόμου/ἔργων” it is treated negatively. Distinguished use of ἐκ and ἐν is also prominent throughout the letters written by Paul. It is interesting that while “ἐκ + νόμου/ἔργων” appears often in Pauline epistles, almost all of them are in the context of justification argument, especially in Romans and Galatians. In other words, ἐκ is seldom used with νόμου/ἔργων other than in a justification discussion. And the most important thing we should notice is that “ἐκ + νόμου/ἔργων” is always treated by Paul in a negative way in the discussion of justification. Below is the list of “ἐκ + νόμου/ἔργων” in Pauline epistles.

Justification discussion:

- Rom 3:20 from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου] no human being will be justified in his sight.
- Rom 4:2 if Abraham was justified from works [ἐξ ἔργων], he has something to boast about, but not before God.
- Rom 4:14,16 if it is those who are from the law [οἱ ἐκ νόμου] who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.... the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring--not only to those who are from the law [τῶ ἐκ νόμου] but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham.
- Rom 9:12 in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not from works [ἐξ ἔργων] but because of him who calls.
- Rom 9:32 Because they did not pursue it from faith, but as if it were from works [ἐξ ἔργων].
- Rom 10:5 Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law [ἐκ νόμου].
- Rom 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer from works [ἐξ ἔργων]
- Gal 2:16 a person is not justified from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου] but through faith in Jesus Christ, ...in order to be justified from faith in Christ and not from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου], because from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου] no one will be justified.
- Gal 3:2,5 Did you receive the Spirit from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου] or by hearing with faith?... Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου], or by hearing with faith?
- Gal 3:10 For all who are from the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου] are under a curse.
- Gal 3:18 For if the inheritance comes from the law [ἐκ νόμου], it no longer comes by promise.
- Gal 3:21 For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be from the law [ἐκ νόμου].
- Eph 2:9 it is the gift of God, not a result from works [ἐξ ἔργων], so that no one may boast.

Phil 3:9 in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law [ἐκ νόμου], but that which comes through faith in Christ.

Ti 3:5 he saved us, not from works [ἐξ ἔργων] done by us in righteousness.

Other occasions:

Rom 2:17,18 because you are instructed from the law [ἐκ τοῦ νόμου].

Throughout his letters, Paul is strongly opposed to any idea that one can be justified “from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου]” (c.f. Rom 3:20, Rom 4:2). And in many places, “ἐκ + νόμου/ἔργων” is contrasted with more positive terms, such as “promise” or “faith,” especially in relation to the matter of justification. In Gal 3:18, the idea that the inheritance that comes “from the law” (ἐκ νόμου) is contrasted with the inheritance that comes “from promise” (ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας).¹⁷⁰ Just selecting a few, in Rom 4:2-5, Paul clearly says that Abraham was not justified ἐξ ἔργων “from works” in v.2. Instead, in v.3 and v.5 he says that “faith” is what is counted as righteousness. The frequent phrase “righteousness from the law” (τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου) (Rom 10:5) is often set in opposition to “righteousness from faith” (ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη) (Rom 10:6). Silva rightly pays attention to the syntagmatic phrase οἱ ἐκ νόμου, which is contrasted with οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in Gal 3:9-10. He states, “the meaning of whole construction is to a large extent determined by its opposition to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, that is ‘the good guys.’”¹⁷¹ What Silva says is that οἱ ἐκ

¹⁷⁰ So, Rom 4:14. Silva carefully observes the contrast is not so much between law and promise as between “inheritance-by-law and inheritance-by-promise” and said that “the preposition ἐκ is critical.” (Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 192).

¹⁷¹ Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 227.

νομου is the same as “the bad guys.” What I want to show by listing these occasions without going into detailed exegesis is that these occasions of ἐκ (ἔργων) νόμου always have a negative sense. What then is the meaning of “ἐκ + νόμου” that it receives such a negative treatment? To make it simple, I use “ἐκ + νόμου” in the following discussion to denote either occurrence for “ἐκ + νόμου” or “ἔργων νόμου”.

6.3.1. Negative Reason 1: Law as the source of righteousness

First, Paul treated the phrase negatively because it is the wrong use of law in the discussion of justification. The syntax “ἐκ + νόμου” first appears in Galatians in 2:16. Since this verse brings the syntax into a context and contrast, for us to understand the meaning of “ἐκ + νόμου”, we need to observe 2:16 first.

Gal 2:16 εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.

Gal 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified from works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified from faith in Christ and **not from works of the law**, because from works of the law no one will be justified.

Because in this one verse, the syntax “ἐκ + νόμου” is used three times, it is obvious that the syntax is used as key words for Paul in his argument. And in this verse, “ἐκ + νόμου” is in the context of justification, and this “justified + ἐκ + νόμου” is contrasted to “justified + ἐκ + πίστεως [faith].” This “ἐκ + πίστεως” is further developed in Gal 3:8 (also 3:9) “those of faith (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) who are the sons of Abraham” as οἱ ἐκ πίστεως “those of faith” are

in the same categorical use as ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου “those of the works of the law” in Gal 3:10. Recognizing this parallel, to understand the meaning of “ἐκ + νόμου”, we need to understand “ἐκ + πίστεως [faith]” in a justification context. And to understand the meaning of “ἐκ + πίστεως,” we need to see how the phrase is used in Hab 2:4 since Paul uses Hab 2:4 as the proof text for “ἐκ + πίστεως” in Gal 3:11. The significance of Hab 2:4 is obvious because as Hab 2:4 hearkens back to the faith of Abraham as I discussed earlier, Paul also refers to Abraham in Gal 3:6-9.

I concluded earlier that “ἐκ” in Hab 2:4 signifies the source, origin, and empowering force. Thus “from faith” means people are declared righteous and empowered for righteous living by trusting God as the source for everything. As we remember this sense of source and origin in “ἐκ”, we can logically assume “ἐκ + νόμου” in parallel with “ἐκ + πίστεως” carries the same connotation. Thus Longenecker also rightly defined that “The phrase “ἐκ + νόμου” indicates source.”¹⁷² This means, “ἐκ + νόμου” refers to someone who uses the law as the source for being declared righteous and empowerment for righteous living. However, the law cannot or should not be thought to originate the righteous status, righteous living, or blessed life. Only God can give life. He is the only source for righteous living that leads to life. So, what Paul was troubled about “ἐκ + νόμου” was that it treated the law as the source for righteousness and life.

That Paul had trouble with elevating the law into the life *giving* source is clearly stated a few verses after Gal 3:10-12. He writes in Gal 3:21;

¹⁷² Longenecker, 144. And this agrees on what BAGD puts, that is, “origin” or “reason,” (BAGD, 234-5.) to which many traditional commentators also agree.

Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For (γὰρ) if a law had been given that could give life (ζωοποιῆσαι), then righteousness would indeed be *from* the law (ἐκ νόμου).

Here, Paul is not rejecting the law as a whole. Rather, Paul first denies that the law is contrary to the Abrahamic promise, by saying “Certainly Not!” Paul understands that the law is in accordance with the promise. Because of the promise to Abraham, God gave Israel the law, which guides them in life. However at the same time, Paul is denying two things in Gal 3:21. First, the law cannot *give life*, and the second, righteousness is not “ἐκ + νόμου” (from the law). Silva, commented rightly on Gal 3:21, when he says;

It plainly sets for the reason for Paul’s emphatic assurance that the law is not opposed to the promise. And this reason takes the form of pointing out *under what conditions* the law would have to be regarded as being opposed to the promise, namely, if it were the case that righteousness comes by the law. Paul’s point is quite clear: if the law were a source of righteousness (=if it could impart life), then it would certainly be in competition with the promise, and the fundamental antithesis would exist between the two.¹⁷³

The use of “ἐκ + νόμου” as “source” is also supported in other places of Paul. He says “Did you *receive* the Spirit from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου] or by hearing with faith? [ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως]” (Gal 3:2) and “Does he who *supplies* the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so from works of the law [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου], or by hearing with faith [ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως]” (Gal 3:5). Gal 3:18 “For if the *inheritance* comes from the law [ἐκ νόμου], it no longer comes from promise [ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας]; but God *gave it* to Abraham by a promise.” Receiving “life” (3:21), “the Spirit” (3:2, 5), or “inheritance” (3:18) is “ἐκ + νόμου.” In other words, the law cannot be “a source” of any of them.

¹⁷³ Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 188.

6.3.2. Negative Reason 2: Foreignness of “ἐκ + νόμου”

Second, it is because “ἐκ + νόμου” sounds so foreign, or even heretical to the OT. I already have shown how preposition “ἐκ + law” is never translated to “ἐκ + νόμου”. But even examining outside of “ἐκ + law”, there are no occasions where the expression “ἐκ + νόμου” is used in the OT, or even in extra biblical materials, in the context of justification. Below, I list all the occasions of “ἐκ + νόμου” from the OT and from extra biblical materials.

- Jdg 19:16 an old man was coming from his work [ἐξ ἔργων αὐτοῦ] in the field at evening.
- Psa 93:12 Blessed is the man ... whom you teach out of your law [ἐκ τοῦ νόμου].
- Psa 119:18 I may behold wondrous things out of your law [ἐκ τοῦ νόμου].
- Job 34:27 Because they turned aside from the law of God [ἐκ νόμου θεοῦ].
- Bar 4:12 because they departed from the law of God [ἐκ νόμου θεοῦ].

Above we find no occasions of “ἐκ + νόμου” in the context of justification. In all these occasions the phrase is used in a sentence like, “teach/or behold out of the law (ἐκ τοῦ νόμου).” And none of them above are connected to the key verbs, δικαιοῶ “to justify,” or ζάω “to live.” This means that when we pay attention to the preposition ἐκ in the OT, there is not a single occasion that ἐκ is used with νόμος in the same way as it is used in Paul.

Even if we try to look at similar usage of “ἐκ + νόμου” outside of the OT, our endeavor ends in vain. A few examples are sufficient:

- 2Macc 15:9 comforting them out of the law [ἐκ τοῦ νόμου] and the prophets.
- Philo.Sqe 1:159 but by rank, and dignity, and honor, which they had from the laws [ἐκ τῶν νόμων] by reason of the venerable character of the priesthood.

- Philo.Prb 1:52 perfect equality of speech on all subjects is given from the law [ἐκ νόμου].
- Jos.Anti 13:78 he began to demonstrate out of the law [ἐκ τοῦ νόμου], ... how they each ... had received that dignity, and ruled over the temple.

There are some uses such as “comfort out of the law” (2Macc 15:9) or “perfect quality of speech is from the law” (Philo.Prb 1:52); but there is no occasion where righteousness or life is connected to “ἐκ + νόμου.”

Lack of evidence of “ἐκ + νόμου” in the OT and extra biblical literature at least indicates that “ἐκ + νόμου” is not the terminology for the matter of justification in the OT or even in Second Temple Judaism. The phrase, “ἐκ + νόμου” in Paul’s letter would have sounded very foreign to general Jewish people. This does not mean the Jews in Paul’s time did not have a legalistic sense. The Pharisees (See Lk 10:25-28) apparently held legalistic understanding (as they are accused of this in various places in the gospels).¹⁷⁴ But this particular phrase, “ἐκ + νόμου” goes beyond even the framework of legalistic traditional Jewish theology. Even if the Jewish tradition might hold a legalistic view, they never crafted their theology with such a wording as “ἐκ + νόμου.” It seems at least, that “ἐκ + νόμου” was clearly stepping out of the Jewish tradition. In a sense it is a unique extreme theology that probably came up from the recent controversy among Christians between Paul and his opponents regarding a particular question on how gentiles can be saved. And

¹⁷⁴ While I say this, I cannot point out the pericope of ‘the rich young ruler’ (Matt 19:16-22, Mk 10:17-30, Lk 18:18-30; also Lk 10:25-29) as the proof text for legalism in the second temple Judaism. The fact that Jesus replied to the young scribe without condemning his statement indicates that Jesus was agreeing to the questioner on that point. See R.T.France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 732.

I wonder if some of the legalist Pharisees would still feel at odds with “ἐκ + νόμου” and hesitate to use that term in their orthodox theology.

This foreignness of the phrase “ἐκ + νόμου” is a reason why Paul is frustrated. The absence of “ἐκ + νόμου” in Jewish tradition suggests that though the law can be the source of comfort and knowledge, or a guide for the life of God’s people, it never can be the “source” of righteousness or life. In other words, the law cannot give the key to enter into the righteous life of God’s people. Instead, in the OT tradition it is ἐκ πίστεως (Hab 2:4) that brings people into the life of the righteous.

6.3.3. Paul’s Opponents

Who, then, are the referents of οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου? Dunn explains that ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is Israel *per se*, “people who are *defined by* the law and *marked out by* its distinctive requirements,”¹⁷⁵ but this understanding fails to grasp the stigma attached to the phrasing “ἐκ + νόμου.” If our understanding that ἐκ means “source” is correct, we should agree that Paul’s opponents are those who took an extreme meritorious approach to the law, using the law as the gate to be reckoned as the righteous and the power to pursue righteous living. This should lead us to conclude that Paul is opposed to the particular ‘legalists’ who claim, ‘justification *from* the law’ and who had become popular in Paul’s time especially among

¹⁷⁵ Dunn, *New Perspective*, 128. But the proof texts he brings up makes his argument doubtful, which is, Rom 2:12 “all who have sinned under the law [ἐν νόμῳ],” Gal 4:5 “those who are under the law [τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον]”. As it is clear, prepositions used for these passages are not ἐκ. But what is the biggest mistake in Dunn’s argument is that he disregards the prepositional differences and reads the meaning of different prepositional phrases (ἐν, ὑπο), into the meaning of ἐκ+ἔργων/νόμος, without noticing these prepositions, especially ἐκ and ἐν, may make phrases completely opposite. Moreover, we should notice that the phrase “οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου” is in contrast to “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως [from faith]” (Gal 3:9), which indicates that “οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου” are different from “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως.” If οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are Israel *per se*, it is odd to see Paul speaking of his fellow Jews, as different from those who are characterized by faith. See Silva, ‘Faith Versus Works,’ 225.

Jewish Christians. We could call them Judaizers, since “they desire to have you [Galatian Christians] circumcised” (Gal 6:13) fits well with Judaizers.¹⁷⁶ Yet what the Judaizers teach using “ἐκ + νόμου” is extreme works-righteousness theology that is outside of the traditional orthodox OT theology. These Judaizers’ claim is also different from the Second Temple Judaism. Their theology is uniquely wrong because of their “ἐκ + νόμου” phrase, and was even extreme from the contemporary Jewish theologies. Paul, who was a diligent student of Old Testament, could not permit this violence to Old Testament theology, and rebuked “ἐκ + νόμου” whole heartedly, because the law was a gift from God for his people to enjoy life in. It is the pathway and goal but not the gate. The gate is faith in Christ, the one who came according to the plan of God who promised to give us life through him.

6.4. Habakkuk 2:4 and Leviticus 18:5 Contrasted

Now, let us turn to an important question. In his polemical discourse against the wrong use of the law as the source of justification in Gal 3:10-12, why did Paul bring up Lev 18:5? Is it to condemn Lev 18:5 as the passage that supports the wrong “justification *from* the law (ἐκ + νόμου)” theology? Is Paul lumping Lev 18:5 with “ἐκ + νόμου” and critiquing them all together? But as we have studied, Lev 18:5 is not at all promoting the life or righteousness earned by law. To answer this question, I would like to show how Paul cites Lev 18:5 in explicit contrast with Hab 2:4.

¹⁷⁶ So, Silva: “In short, οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in this passage focuses on those traditionally called *Judaizers*, Christian Jews (as well as their followers) who insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised.” (Silva, “Faith Versus Works,” 226).

11a [Sub-thesis 1] ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον,
 ([Now] it is evident that no one is justified before God *in* the law,)

11b (Grounds) **Hab 2:4** ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.
 (for "The righteous shall live *from* faith.")

12a [Sub-thesis2] ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως,
 ([And] the law is not "*from* faith,")

12b (Grounds) **Lev 18:5** ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.
 (rather "The one who does them shall live *in* them.")

How is Lev 18:5 contrasted to Hab 2:4? In looking at the structure above, we should realize that what is contrasted is ἐκ πίστεως and “ἐν” (νόμῳ) αὐτοῖς. In Lev 18:5, it is not “ἐκ + νόμος,” but it is “ἐν + νόμος” which does not carry a negative sense, but simply tells where God’s people can enjoy a blessed life. In between quoting Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5, Gal 3:12a says “the law is not from faith” (ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως). This does not mean, the law has nothing to do with faith, or the law is not from faith. Reading “ἐκ + πίστεως” as categorical syntax, the passage is, instead of setting the law against faith, simply making “(ἐν) + νόμος” and “ἐκ + πίστεως” explicitly set in contrast by “οὐκ ἔστιν” in the middle. In other words, v.12a simply means “the law *is different from* ‘from faith.’”

How then is the law different? Paul brought up Lev 18:5 to clearly answer it: ἀλλ' ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς “the who does them shall live *in* them.” Lev 18:5 tells that the law is not for the source of life, but the way for life. The law does not justify you, but it tells you what is the righteous life for God’s people. It regulates the righteous living for God’s people, but it does not give power to live that life. Silva makes this point clear when he says that, “there is good reason to think that Paul would have affirmed the truth expressed in Lev 18:5. On the other hand, he vigorously denied that the law could be the

source of righteousness and life.”¹⁷⁷ So, Paul is using Lev 18:5 to correct the wrong theology about the law which his opponents held. He uses Lev 18:5 to show the right function of the law and reminded them that the law is not the source of righteous life. The law is to function as “ἐν” the law, but not “ἐκ” the law. If faith in God is the initiation, source, cause, and empowerment for a righteous life for God’s people, the law is the direction, goal, guide for a righteous life of God’s people. If faith tells us how we become God’s people and how we continue the life of God’s people, the law tells us where we are going and what is the blessed life for God’s people.

6.5. Neutral Treatment of ἐν νόμῳ

This contrast between the wrong use of the law and the proper use of the law become more plausible when we notice the rather neutral treatment of the phrase “ἐν + νόμος.”

6.5.1. Observation of the use of ἐν in Pauline epistles

First, let us observe Paul’s use of the preposition ἐν as connected to the law. Does it also give an exclusively negative force to a syntactical phrase ἐν + νόμος? One thing about the prepositional construction that is different from ἐκ + νόμος is that there are various occasions where ἐν is used with νόμος outside of a justification discussion. Jews are said to have sinned “under the law” [ἐν νόμῳ] (Rom 2:12). People *have embodiment of knowledge and truth* “in the law” [ἐν νόμῳ] (Rom 2:20). People boast “in the law” [ἐν

¹⁷⁷ Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 194.

νόμῳ] (Rom 2:23). Christians are encouraged to *be abounding* “in the works [ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ] of the Lord” (1Cor 15:58), “*bearing fruit* in every good work [ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ]” (Col 1:11). And Paul encouraged Christians to *do everything*, whether it is in word or in deed [ἐν ἔργῳ], in the name of Jesus (Col 3:17). The phrase is used in the context of the various aspects of life, which means in other words, God’s people are called to live their life in law [ἐν νόμῳ] and in (good) deed [ἐν ἔργῳ].

This frequent use of ἐν νόμῳ in people’s lives gives us an impression that ἐν νόμῳ (or ἐν ἔργῳ) would have sounded very familiar to their ears. We also must notice that while ἐκ + νόμος has a negative force, ἐν + νόμος does not necessarily have such negativity in itself. Rather, a phrase such as to “have embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law [ἐν νόμῳ]” (Rom 2:20) sounds more positive or, at least, neutral. Even verses such as Rom 2:12 “all who have sinned in the law [ἐν νόμῳ]” or Rom 2:23 “You who boast in the law [ἐν νόμῳ],” though Paul may have shown them in a negative way, Scholars agree that “those who sin and boast in the law” simply means ordinary Jews whose standard for life is shaped and judged by the law.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, it should be right to say that ἐν+ νόμος does not carry a negative sense by itself.

This non-negative, neutral character of ἐν νόμος is more prominent when we take a look at a few occasions where the phrase is used in a justification discussion, where ἐκ + νόμος is used as a prominent key phrase in a seemingly negative sense. In the midst of ἐκ + νόμος, there are four occasions where ἐν + νόμος appears in Paul’s argument on justification; Rom 3:19, Gal 3:11, 5:4, and Phil 3:6.

¹⁷⁸ So, Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 113; 134.

- Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are in the law [τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ].
- Gal 3:11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God in the law [ἐν νόμῳ].
- Gal 5:4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified in the law [ἐν νόμῳ].
- Phil 3:6 as to righteousness in the law [ἐν νόμῳ], blameless.

Gal 3:11, and 5:4 clearly denies that a person can be “justified [δικαιόω] in the law” [ἐν νόμῳ], thus giving a strong negative view. Therefore, at least we must agree that ἐν νόμος, when it is attached with the verb “to justify” [δικαιόω], can carry a strong negative sense. But what should draw our attention is that even in the justification argument, ἐν νόμος does *not* always carry the negative force, unlike ἐκ νόμου.

For example, Rom 3:19 says “Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are in the law” (τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ). This structure is similar to what we find a later chapter: “if it is those who are from the law [οἱ ἐκ νόμου] who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void” (Rom 4:14). These two occasions share the same grammatical structure: definite article, preposition, and noun. If ἐν νόμῳ and ἐκ νόμου do not have much difference, we should assume τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ refers to the same people group as οἱ ἐκ νόμου refers to, that is the Judaizers. But τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ most likely refers to normal Jews since the parallel passage from Rom 2:12 (“all who have sinned under the law [ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον] will be judged *in* the law,”) clearly refers to ethnic Jews who have the law rather than Gentiles who do not have the law.¹⁷⁹ This neutral reference of τοῖς

¹⁷⁹ So, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 168. Contra John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 106-7; Douglas J.

ἐν τῷ νόμῳ to the Jews in general makes it fundamentally different from the innate negativity we found in οἱ ἐκ νόμου. If we say those who are ἐκ νόμου are “bad guys,” we should call those who are ἐν νόμῳ as simply “guys,” if not “good guys.”

6.5.2. Neutral use of ἐν νόμῳ in the OT and extra-biblical literature

This neutral character of ἐν νόμῳ is also elsewhere in the OT and extra-biblical materials. While our effort to find occasions for ἐκ + νόμος in the OT ends in vain, we can find numerous occasions of ἐν + νόμος.¹⁸⁰ God’s commandments are “written” *in* the law (Josh 8:31, 1Ki 2:3, Ezr 3:2, Neh 10:3, etc.). God’s people are called to “walk” *in* the law (2Ki 10:31, 2Chr 6:16, Dan 9:10, etc.) and to “delight” and “meditate” *in* the law (Ps 1:2). God’s people are “delivered up” in the law (Isa 33:6 LXX). God “blesses” his people *in* their works (Deut 34:21, 24:19.) Leaders are accused of “failing others” *in* the law (Mal 2:8). The wicked are said to “be snared” *in* the work of their hands (Ps 9:16). Israel is said to “become unclean” *in* their deeds (Ps 106:39). And God’s people are warned not to “provoke God’s anger” in the works of their hands (Jer 25:6). What we learn from these various occasions of the phrase is that the phrase ἐν νόμῳ does not necessarily carry a negative sense. Rather, as Psalm 1 makes it clear, it is even a delightful thing to be in the law. Certainly people can be condemned because they are judged in the law, but it does not mean that the law is by itself negative. Rather, the law is by itself neutral, bringing either

Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 205.

¹⁸⁰ More than 50 occasions of ἐν ἔργῳ or ἐν νόμῳ can be found in OT.

blessing or cursing, and always with God's people providing the arena or sphere where the life of God's people is guided, blessed, examined, and judged.

Taking a look in Second Temple Jewish literature, there are many occasions where ἐν + νόμος is used in a neutral sense in a context outside of justification. But there are also numerous occasions as well in which ἐν + νόμος is used in the context of Justification. It is important to note that almost all of them are used to depict the blessing connected to the law. Since some of them also cite Lev 18:5, it has importance in shedding light on our understanding of the meaning of ἐν. I am listing a few examples with comments below.

Philo. On the Preliminary Studies 1:87

Therefore, real true life, above everything else, consists in the judgments and commandments of God [ἐν ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ κρίσεσι καὶ προστάξεσιν (= νομος)].

Here, Philo comments on Lev 18:1-6 to say that “true life” is *in* the law.¹⁸¹

Psalms of Solomon 14:1-3

The Lord is faithful . . . to those who walk in the righteousness of his commandments, in the law [ἐν νόμῳ], which he has commanded to us for our life [εἰς ζωὴν]. The Lord's saints will live [ζήσονται] in it [ἐν αὐτῷ] forever; his saints are the Lord's paradise, the trees of life.

Here, Lev 18:5 is also cited and elaborated on. Note that ‘life’ here envisions even eternal life.

¹⁸¹ Although Philo may have deviated view from OT about the contents of ‘good life,’ seeing law as the place to enjoy the life is right on the course. See Simon J. Gathercole, “Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament,” *From Prophecy to Testament: The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. C. A. Evans. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 128.

The Sibylline Oracle 3:580-581

And in righteousness of the law [ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη νόμου] of the Most High, they will dwell happily in their cities and rich fields,

This passage tells more about earthly life, but this “happy” life is only in [ἐν] the law.

All of the examples above connect “life” and “law” with the preposition ἐν. Thus, ἐν νόμῳ is somehow related to life, happiness, and blessing. ἐν νόμῳ is not only a neutral character, but in relation with “life,” it has a more positive character. It is interesting to see the contrast between ἐν νόμῳ (neutral/good) and ἐκ νόμου (bad).

6.6. The Use of ἐν νόμῳ in Pauline Epistles

Let us now examine how this neutral use of ἐν νόμῳ does or does not fit in our reading of Paul. Does it make sense, or not?

6.6.1. Philippians 3

First, I would like to examine Philippians 3, because in Phil 3:6, 9, we find ἐν and ἐκ appear in exactly the same structure. Phil 3:6 says δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ (righteousness in the law,) while only three verses after, in 3:9, we see δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου (righteousness from the law.) If ἐκ νόμου and ἐν νόμῳ are used in a very different sense, this passage will be a good case study.

⁴ If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law [δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ], blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ... For his sake I have

suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law [δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου], but that which comes through faith in Christ [τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ], the righteousness from God [τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην] that depends on faith-- (Phi 3:1-9).

In Phil 3:9, by saying “*not* having a righteousness that comes from the law (ἐκ νόμου),” it is clear that he treated such righteousness as negative. But in a few verses before, Phil 3:1-6, Paul refutes against the Judaizers listing his religious prestige with apparent boasting prior to his conversion. Among this list, in Phil 3:6, Paul is boasting of δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ (righteousness *in* the law). Interestingly there is not such an explicit negative statement as is in 3:9, rather it says Paul was “blameless.” This blameless does not mean that Paul was exercising perfect sinless obedience. Silva rightly explains this when he says,

The word “faultless” does not at all reflect any illusion regarding sinlessness; rather, it must be viewed as a fairly standard way of expressing exemplary conformity to the way of life prescribed by the OT.¹⁸²

So, this means that “righteousness in the law (ἐν νόμῳ)” is in a sense “observable”¹⁸³ and not in itself wrong. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with being “of the people of Israel,” or “of the tribe of Benjamin,” etc. (Phil 3:5). That Paul lists his blamelessness about δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ alongside with these positive, at least non-negative, characteristics suggests we take δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ in v.6 in a non-negative, neutral way. This neutral sense attained to “righteousness *in* the law (ἐν νόμῳ),” is best explained from the locative meaning of ἐν. “Righteousness *in* the law (ἐν νόμῳ),” means righteous living taught and guided in the law for God’s people who are called to enjoy God’s blessing

¹⁸² Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 151.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 152.

in the sphere of the law. It is not wrong to pursue righteous character expressed in the law. It is observable at least, if not perfectly achievable.

Then, why does Paul say in Phil 3:7-8 that he counted the list of things including this “righteousness in the law” as “loss” and “rubbish”? It is because the list was used to “gain” (3:7) δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου (righteousness from the law). That is the righteousness he tried to earn by observing the law, using the law as “source.” O’Brien rightly explain this shift from 3:6 to 3:9 when he says,

Paul’s blamelessness...was in itself ‘praiseworthy’. But once that obedience to the law became the basis for making a claim upon God, even for the purpose of ‘staying within the covenant’ it had become ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην or that which is τὴν ἐκ νόμου (v.9), and was to be rejected utterly.¹⁸⁴

Paul is opposed to ἐκ νόμου, but not to ἐν νόμῳ. Here, ἐν in “locative” sense becomes completely different from ἐκ in the sense of “source.” What Paul is saying is that the Law is not the means to gain “life” from [ἐκ], rather, it is a place, sphere, or arena where life is enjoyed in [ἐν]. In Philippians 3, Paul makes this contrast between righteousness ἐκ νόμου, and ἐν νόμῳ as explicit as possible. While many scholars dismiss this important distinction, O’Brien rightly observes saying, “surprisingly, many exegetes see no difference between the righteousness τὴν ἐν νόμῳ here and that which is τὴν ἐκ νόμου at v. 9, in spite of Paul’s clear distinctions elsewhere between ἐν and ἐκ.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 381.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 379 n.70.

6.6.2. In Galatians 3:11a and 5:4

Then, what about the seemingly negative treatment of ἐν νόμῳ in Gal 3:11a (and 5:4)? Gal 3:11a is an important thesis statement for our immediate pericope. Gal 3:11-12 says “no one is justified *in* the law (ἐν νόμῳ),” which is translated in most English Bibles as “no one is justified *by* the law.” At first glance, “no one is justified *in* the law” sounds as negative as “ἐκ + νόμος”. Indeed, the content seems the same as; Gal 2:16 “we know that a person is not justified by works of the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται),” or Rom 3:20 “For by works of the law no human being will be justified (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται) in his sight.” But as I have discussed, Paul’s careful use of the prepositions, and the foreignness of “ἐκ + νόμος”, and that Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 is contrasted on the prepositions, should inform us that Paul uses “ἐν + νόμος” in a different sense than “ἐκ + νόμος.” While the phrasing and message seem the same, Gal 3:11 “no one is justified *in* the law (ἐν νόμῳ)” is different from Gal 2:16 or Rom 3:20 since it does not say “justified *from* (ἐκ) the law.”

Then, what does Gal 3:11a mean? Let’s look the passage in a context.

- 10a **For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse;**
 10b for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."
- 11a **Now** it is evident that **no one is justified in the law** before God,
 ὅτι **δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται** παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δήλον
 11b for "The righteous shall live *from* faith."
- 12a **And** the law is not *from* faith,
 12b rather "The one who does them shall live *in* them."

I earlier told that “δέ” is used to connect a verse to the previous thesis. Therefore, as we investigate the meaning of the verse, we should understand that Gal 3:11 comes after v.10, whose main point is to show that those who try to earn God’s favor using the law, are actually under a curse. The whole of Gal 3:10-12 is there to prove that no one can be justified in the law (ἐν νόμῳ).

Understanding this overarching theme, I suggest that Paul’s logic is as follows. To prove his point, in 10b, Paul cites Deut 27:26 to show that to meet God’s standard for life, we need to obey “all things.” It is not a part of the law that Paul’s opponents are proud to say that they obeyed, but indeed “the all” is what God designed for his people to obey. Making the bar properly higher than his opponents expected, now Paul tells us in v.11 that “it is evident” (δηλον) that no one has attained that goal.

Gal 3:11a says “No one is justified in the law” (ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται). As Bruce says, this is likely an allusion to Ps 143:2 “And enter not into judgment with your servant, for before you no *man* living shall be justified (δικαιωθήσεται).” “To justify” here means God’s vindicating his people as righteous when he judges them.¹⁸⁶ This is a test. But the Psalm tells that no one has passed the test, and no one would, because God’s standard is so high and human achievement is so low. Bringing Ps 143:2 into the discussion, Paul says that no one will be justified in the standard of the law. It is not that the law is wrong. The law is good and remains high. What is wrong is humans, especially Israelites, who at the maximum extent disobeyed and welcomed impending judgement. Justify here, means vindicated as righteous by the test of the law. “It is evident” (δηλον) that Gal 3:11

¹⁸⁶ I already discussed earlier how Habakkuk uses the word “righteous” not just as forensic righteousness, but also ethical righteousness, that would be vindicated as tested righteousness in the end.

is there because Paul is appealing to a widely understood concept.¹⁸⁷ This indicates that it is undisputable truth both for Paul and his opponents that in the presence of God, no one is justified, as has been told in Ps 143:2, and has been proven by the Exile. Paul, by saying “it is evident,” expects his opponents would be reminded of Israel’s shared history of disobedience.

Thus, citing Hab 2:4 right after Gal 3:11a is the best thing to do next, because Hab 2:4 was a promise given in the context of impending judgement, after Israel failed their calling to live righteously. Now, the only hope remaining for Habakkuk was God’s promise and their faith in God. It was ἐκ + πιστεως (*from/by/out of faith*) that Israel’s life continues. The life of God’s people was never intended to be apart from the promise. Yet in the Habakkuk context, it became obvious that as it was the same for Abraham who did not have anything. Habakkuk still called them to trust when they lost everything. Now after citing Hab 2:4, Paul in Gal 3:12, reminds his opponents again that the law they are trying to gain life out of, is never meant to be the source of life. The law never had been intended to be so, or could have a power to do. It was only designed to regulate or define the sphere where God’s people enjoy life. So, Paul at last brought up Lev 18:5 to correct their wrong theology about the law. The law was the life for those who obey. But the law itself does not give power to obey it. Lev 18:5 was there to correct the wrong theology of Paul’s opponents.

¹⁸⁷ Though I disagree with David Gordon in many places, I think he is right when he says about δηλον, “Such rhetorical statements are employed to settle one dispute by appealing to an undisputed matter and building on it. If the undisputed matter were, in fact, disputed, the entire rhetorical power of the statement would vanish” [T. David Gordon, “Abraham and Sinai Contrasted in Galatians 3:6-14,” in *The Law is Not of Faith*, ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 249]. This rhetorical use can be found in 1Cor 15:27 where Paul reminded his audience that it is evident [δηλον] that the Messiah himself is excluded from things in subjection to the Messiah to support the main argument that all things are subjected to the Messiah, citing Ps 8:6.

We should notice, therefore, Paul uses “justified in the law (ἐν νόμῳ)” in the sense of a final vindication of the God’s faithful people who pursued righteous living. It is about tested righteous living which is rightly expected for ones who were declared righteous by faith. It is different from Gal 2:16 “a person is not justified (οὐ δικαιοῦται) *from* works of the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου).” Gal 2:16 speaks about how a person can enter into the life of God’s people. But Gal 3:11 is about how God’s people can be proven to have righteous living. “Justified *from* the law” (ἐκ νόμου) is about source, cause, origin, and empowerment for the blessed life in a covenant relationship with God, and thus the law is not meant for that function. But “justified *in* the law” (ἐν νόμῳ) speaks about how one can pursue righteous living in the sphere of the law, and be proven to be righteous at the final judgement, and we have been tested as failures in that test. In a correct formula, “Justified *from* faith” (ἐκ) is about promised righteousness, and “Justified *in* law” (ἐν) is proven righteousness.

This “Justified *in* law” (ἐν) as proven righteousness is also shown in Gal 5:4 “you are severed from Christ, you who would be justified *in the law* (ἐν νόμῳ).” Here, it is preceded by Gal 5:3 “I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.” The point of Gal 5:3-4 is to prove that one cannot pass the test of final vindication in the law, because no one can keep the whole law. The sentence, “justified *in the law* (ἐν νόμῳ),” here again is used to describe the tested righteousness. Paul is saying that: if you want to use the law as source, origin, and power for righteousness, see how it ends up. You will not be able to keep the law, and in the end, you will lose the game.

Both in Gal 3:11 and Gal 5:4, where the phrase “justified *in* the law (ἐν νόμῳ)” is treated negatively, he adds the apologetical explanation for such a negative assertion in the connected verses. The reason Paul gives is about why we are not able to keep the law; we are “obligated to keep the whole law” (Gal 5:3), and the Bible says, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law” (Gal 3:10). That Paul adds an explanation on how we cannot attain the righteous requirement of the whole law in Gal 5:4 and 3:11, suggests that Paul is saying that “justification *in* (ἐν) the law” is not wrong in the formula, but it is too difficult to meet the standard. In contrast, justification *by* (ἐκ) the law” is a wrong formula and the law was never meant for that purpose. What can work as source, origin for righteous status, righteous life, and final vindication in the standard of God’s law is God’s promise, and our faith in God. This is shown explicitly in Rom 9:30-32 below.

6.6.3. In Romans 9:31-32

³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? Because they did not pursue it *from* faith (ἐκ πίστεως), but as if it were *from* works (ἐξ ἔργων) (Rom 9:31-32).

Rom 9:31-32 shows the potential function of the law is to lead one to righteousness. This is in line with Lev 18:5. The law was to teach and guide God’s people into righteous living, and thereby a blessed life. There was nothing wrong with the law in and of itself. Instead, the law is described here as “the law of righteousness” (NASB). And, this righteous law is supposed to lead God’s people to righteous living. But Israel could not attain it. Is it because the law was bad? No. Paul says that it is because Israel did not pursue by faith, but they did by works. So, it was not what they pursued (righteous living *in* the

law) that was wrong, but how they pursued (*from* works) that was wrong. The righteous living *in* (ἐν) the law was never meant to be pursued *by, out of, from* (ἐκ) human effort to observe the law. It is always pursued *by, out of, from* (ἐκ) the wholehearted faith in God's promise. It was so when Abraham believed, and it always so for God's people. Rom 9:31-32 thus provides a clear example of how Paul understands what is the proper function of the law, which is to lead God's people into righteous living, and how we have to pursue that goal, not *from* works of the law, but *from* faith (ἐκ νόμου).

6.7. “By (*from*) faith (ἐκ πίστεως)” and Spirit -- Romans 8:1-4

I have shown how ἐν νόμῳ and ἐκ νόμου have been carefully utilized in Paul's epistles to communicate the distinctively different sense relating to the law. While ἐν νόμῳ receives neutral treatment, ἐκ νόμου receives a negative treatment, because the law cannot function as “ἐκ,” source or origin for righteous living. What can properly function with “ἐκ” is faith.

So, let's ask how then, “*from* faith (ἐκ πίστεως)” makes the difference? And in Rom 9:31-32, it was said that Israel did not attain the law because they did not pursue it “*from* faith (ἐκ πίστεως).” We have observed that “*from* faith (ἐκ πίστεως)” has a sense of source and origin. Then, how can faith help one to attain the law? Rom 8:1-4 explains this.

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life (νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς) has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom 8:1-4).

While there was a curse and death because we failed the law, Paul says in v.1 that the condemnation is now taken away. Why? It is because “the law of the Spirit of life” (νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς) sets us from the law of sin and death (v.2). Scholars are divided regarding what “the law of the Spirit of life” means whether it means the Mosaic Law or as a general principle. But because Paul elsewhere uses “the law” as the Mosaic Law, and in the previous chapter it says “for we know that the [Mosaic] law is spiritual” (7:14), I support that the law in 8:1-4 is also the Mosaic Law. Thus, Schreiner is right when he says “the idea that the Mosaic Law is intended in both uses of the word νόμος in verse 2 is more probable.”¹⁸⁸

So, the message of Rom 8:1-4 is that we are free from condemnation because God gave us the Spirit who enables us to be able to obey the law. Rom 8:3 tells that the law was weakened by the flesh, and could not do what was intended to do (i.e. to lead God’s people into righteous living which is a blessed life for them.) While no commentator suggests this, I see Hab 1:4 as the back drop of Rom 8:3, because in Rom 1:16-17, which most scholars say is the theme of the whole letter,¹⁸⁹ Paul cites Hab 2:4 as the key passage to interpret the whole of Romans. Hab 1:4 which says, “So the law is *paralyzed*, and justice never goes forth,” suggests that the law’s inability to produce righteous living among God’s people would be what Paul has in mind when he said in Rom 8:3-4, “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, *could not do* (ἀδύνατον)” (Rom 8:3). As the law is said to become paralyzed and become ineffective to produce righteous living among the believers,

¹⁸⁸ Schreiner, *Romans*, 400. Contra, Moo, 475.

¹⁸⁹ “Virtually all scholars acknowledge that these verses are decisive for the interpretation of Romans” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 58).

in Rom 8:3 Paul also says that the law “could not” do what it was supposed to do. What the law could not do was to make God’s people live out “the righteous requirement of the law” (Rom 8:4). But God, by the power of the Spirit, enabled God’s people to walk in the Spirit. As the word “walk” suggests, “the righteous requirements of the law” refers to the sanctified righteous living among the believers.

Therefore, while the law became ineffective in declaring God’s people righteousness while in rampant sin, and to produce righteous living in accordance with their identity as God’s people, now God’s Spirit is given so that God’s people are forgiven before God and empowered to walk in the righteous requirement of the law. Since in Rom 8, the Spirit is mentioned repeatedly, commentators recognize that the prophesy of Ezekiel 36-37 is the back ground for Rom 8. The Spirit in Ezekiel is the answer as the empowering source for righteous status and living. God’s law still is the sphere for the blessed life. What is now different is that by the promised Spirit, we are enabled to enjoy that life. Schreiner plainly explains the message of Rom 8:1-4 saying, “The blessing belongs to God’s people because Christ took upon himself the punishment that his people deserved, and the Spirit has been given to enable God’s people to keep the Torah.”¹⁹⁰ Israel failed to keep the law, because they pursued out of the law. But from the time God promised to Abraham, it was the Spirit that was envisioned to enable God’s people to pursue the law. The promised Spirit is the key to make God’s people live in righteous calling, obedient to the law. So, “*from* faith (ἐκ πίστεως),” we will be given the Spirit, and the Spirit empowers us to keep the law.

¹⁹⁰ Schreiner, *Romans*, 397.

This does not mean that we became able to obey the law perfectly during this life time. In Rom 8, while the effectual power of the Spirit is introduced, at the same time, Paul talks about the already but not yet of the new creation. In 8:10, while the Spirit is life, we still experience that “the body is dead because of sin.” In 8:23, in this life, although “we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for...the redemption of our bodies.” In 8:26, “in our weakness..., the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” These repeated statements about weakness, sin, and groaning show what we experience in the present time and make it explicit that for us to be able to live in perfect righteousness, we need to wait until the new creation and redemption of our body. But as we still need to wait for the future glory until we finally become one “who does the law and shall live in them,” we are still now called to have faith in God’s promise, since it says “the righteous shall live by faith.”

Chapter 7. Conclusion

Lev 18:5 “If the person shall do the law, he shall live by them” is often taken as the proof text of legalistic nature of the Mosaic Law, promoting the meritorious works-righteousness in the OT community. Yet when it is read properly, Lev 18:5 should be read “he shall live *in* them,” depicting the law not as a meritorious condition to gain life, but as a sphere and arena where God’s people embrace the blessed life. The law regulates the blessed life for God’s people. As God’s chosen people, we are called to enjoy the blessed life by following God’s law. In this sense, the law is a condition for the life, but it is not a meritorious relationship, rather it is a consecutive relationship. The blessed life now and forever is the natural consequence for God’s elect people when they walk in the blessed law.

With this positive view of the law in mind, Galatians should not be read as a polemic against the law per se as a means for works-righteousness. In Gal 3:11-12, by contrasting Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4, Paul is not criticizing the message of Lev 18:5, rather he is correcting the wrong usage of the law by presenting the proper use of the law. As Judaizers were using the law as source and origin for life to “get-in” the community of God’s people, Paul is correcting their truncated theology by pointing out that the law was not to be used as “*from* the law,” but it should be used as a guide for God’s people to enjoy life *in* the law. It helps people to embrace the life, but it does not have power to enable God’s people to achieve it. The empowerment only comes *from* faith in God, as Hab 2:4 promises. The law is not at all a works-righteousness, rather it was and is and will be the

life forever for God's people to enjoy the blessings. Lev 18:5 sets an ideal goal for God's people and Hab 2:4 teaches how to pursue the goal. In Gal 3:11-12, Paul cites both Lev 18:5 and Hab 2:4 to remind the Galatian Christians of the right use of the law, which is never meritorious, rather is consecutive and regulative.

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