religions

MDPI

Essay

Jews, Gentiles, and "in Christ" Identity: A Post-Supersessionist Reading of Philippians

Christopher Zoccali

Northeastern Seminary, Roberts Wesleyan University, Rochester, NY 14624, USA; zoccali_christopher@roberts.edu

Abstract: Interpretations of Philippians have commonly suggested that the letter seeks to demonstrate the worthlessness of Paul's own (former) Jewish identity, and thus that the Philippians should not be led astray by those who would persuade them to adopt the Jewish Law. Accordingly, it is assumed that Paul understands Judaism to have been superseded by Christianity and, moreover, that Christian identity has superseded all other identities that persons may have possessed upon entrance into the Christ community. In contrast to this long-standing interpretive tradition, this article contends that, for Paul, the ethnic distinction between Jew and gentile within the greater Christ community remains intact, along with a continued role for the Torah for both subgroups. Rather than advancing a supersessionist agenda, Paul fundamentally seeks in this letter to strengthen the Philippians' identity as members of the nations who have, alongside those in Israel, become members of God's holy, multiethnic people.

Keywords: Philippians; identity; covenant; Judaism; Israel; circumcision; mercy; righteous/ness; faithful/ness; supersession/ism

check for updates

Citation: Zoccali, Christopher. 2023. Jews, Gentiles, and "in Christ" Identity: A Post-Supersessionist Reading of Philippians. *Religions* 14: 131. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020131

Academic Editor: Ralph Korner

Received: 12 December 2022
Revised: 12 January 2023
Accepted: 12 January 2023
Published: 17 January 2023

Copyright: © 2023 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

In presenting a post-supersessionist interpretation of Paul's letter to the Philippians, this article will largely provide a condensed version of the arguments from my book, *Reading Philippians After Supersessionism: Jews, Gentiles, and Covenant Identity* (Zoccali 2017).[1] On the surface, Philippians easily lends itself to a supersessionist understanding of Paul's theology and missionary agenda. As I define it, "supersessionism" is the notion that "Christian" or "in Christ" identity is ultimately irreconcilable with Jewish identity. By extension, it can also indicate that all prior social identities are to be abandoned upon entrance into the Christ community.

So is Paul, in one way or another, indicating in Philippians that "in Christ" identity wholly supplants traditional Jewish identity[2] or, indeed, any other social identity members may possess?

Insights from contemporary social-psychological theory, including Social Identity and Self-Categorization theories (SIT and SCT, respectively) are useful in addressing the issue at hand. Simply stated, SIT is a theory that seeks to predict intergroup behavior vis-à-vis social identity. SCT is a related theory that concerns the matter of how individuals understand themselves and others in relation to groups to which they, respectively, belong (Turner 1987). "Social identity" is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [sic] knowledge of his [sic] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1978). The importance of social groups is especially significant to the study of the New Testament given the general collectivist culture of the ancient Mediterranean world (Nebreda 2011, pp. 109–10).

An aspect of SIT/SCT that is integral to my reading of Paul concerns the role of superordinate social identities. A superordinate identity is a higher aggregate identity category to which persons may belong in addition to possessing other group affiliations.

Such larger social identifications serve to create a common in-group social identity, which may, in turn, reduce intergroup bias, and thus promote greater harmony and a basis for unified action among subordinate groups. Contemporary social-scientific research demonstrates that a common in-group social identity can be most successfully established if it simultaneously allows (in some fashion) for group members' continued identification with and commitment to their respective subordinate group affiliations (Stone and Crisp 2007, pp. 493–513).[3]

It is my contention that Paul understood "in Christ" identity in precisely these terms—a superordinate identity that allowed for the continuing saliency, however transformed, of subgroup identities, particularly that of Jew and gentile. In keeping with this observation, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul seeks to intensify the saliency of the Philippians' "in Christ" identity. Yet he does so in such a fashion that their prior ethnic identities—though subordinated, relativized, and transformed—nevertheless remain salient and enduring in light of the Philippians' allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and consequent entrance into the people of God.

2. Paul's Theological Rationale for Gentile Qua Gentile Inclusion

In Phil 1:1, Paul refers to his addressees as "holy ones." This is a designation that he almost certainly understood to point to the apocalyptic vision of Dan 7:13–27, in which the holy ones of the most high receive the kingdom of God. When applied to human beings, the title exclusively refers to Israel in the LXX and extrabiblical Jewish literature of the period. However, Paul uses this title not merely in reference to Jewish Christ allegiants but to gentiles as well. For many scholars, this move on his part is indicative of his conviction that the Christ community represents a "new Israel" that serves as a replacement for the Jewish people as traditionally defined. However, I contend that the title of "holy ones" functions as a superordinate identity descriptor and is thus deliberately used to include both Jews qua Jews and gentiles qua gentiles—Israel and the nations together—in the people of God. The question remains: what is Paul's theological rationale for the entrance of gentiles, as remaining distinct from Jews, into this group who are destined for the kingdom of God?

Three interrelated premises provide Paul with precisely such a rationale: (1) the seminal basis of covenant identity; (2) covenant and creation renewal; and (3) the eschatological restoration of Israel and consequent pilgrimage of the nations.

2.1. The Seminal Basis of Covenant Identity

In Phil 3:3a, Paul asserts, "For we are the circumcision." By making such an assertion, he is clearly claiming that the multiethnic Christ community is the covenant people of God.[4] So, again, how would it be possible for Paul to locate gentile Christ allegiants in God's covenant with Israel?

In short, Paul locates Christ allegiants in the covenant on the fundamental basis of God's *ḥesed.* Though always requiring the appropriate response of faithfulness to God (see, e.g., Mic 6:8; Hos 6:6–7), God's *ḥesed*, or covenant love and faithfulness manifest in God's sovereign mercy and grace, is primary to the covenant relationship rather than in the first place one's submission to Torah, including the rite of circumcision (see esp. Rom 3:3–5; 4:4–8).[5] The term *eleos* (mercy) is the normal translation in the LXX of *ḥesed*, and petitions for divine mercy predicated on God's *ḥesed* are otherwise ubiquitous. In both Galatians and Romans, letters that especially concern the relationship of Jews and gentiles, we find Paul explicitly predicating membership among God's people on God's mercy (Gal 6:15–16; 9:11–16; 11:28–32). The parallel concept of God's grace (*charis*) functions similarly for him (see esp. Rom 11:5–6).[6] The primacy of God's *ḥesed* is reflected here in Phil 1:2–11 and 2:12–13.

The central point of disagreement between the Pauline mission and Jews outside the Christ movement would lie strictly in the matter of how God's *ḥesed* is presently being revealed, and what faithful response is now required for those in covenant relationship with God as a result of this revelation. Non-Christ-allegiant Jews would have observed

no change in either the content of God's faithfulness or that of the faithfulness required on the part of God's people. In contrast, for Paul, the Christ event signals a dramatic and culminating shift in both: as the ultimate expression of God's *ḥesed*, the coming of Jesus Christ makes possible an expression of faithfulness indicative of covenant membership that does not require full Torah submission,[7] that is, Jewish identity as traditionally defined.

But it is one thing to claim that being a Jew does not in itself secure covenant identity (which would clearly not be a point of controversy). It is quite another thing to claim that God has, in fact, expanded covenant identity such that it is no longer coextensive with normative Jewish identity, as especially signified in first-century Judaism by the rite of circumcision. Understanding how Paul is able to connect the necessity of gentile inclusion in the covenant, and thus their identity alongside Jews as holy ones, with God's *ḥesed* revealed in Jesus Christ calls for an investigation into Paul's eschatological worldview as both informed by and informative to his reading of Scripture.

2.2. Covenant and Creation Renewal

It is, in my view, overwhelmingly clear that Paul's theology rests on a promise and fulfillment schema, in which the Christ event fulfills the promises of God to his people made in the Hebrew Scriptures (see esp. 1 Cor 10:11; 15:3–4; 2 Cor 1:20; 3:14–16; Gal 3:22). Accordingly, in Phil 3:3b he continues that the Philippian Christ community "serve/worship (*latreuō*) by the Spirit of God and claim honor (*kauxaomai*) in Christ Jesus." Integral to Paul's theology and apostolic mission is the belief that, as the very basis for the fulfillment of the Abrahamic blessing and promises, the renewal of Israel's covenant[8] along with the entire created order[9] has now been inaugurated "in Christ."[10] In this eschatological renewal, the Spirit implants the Torah within God's people, giving them a new capacity for faithfulness.[11] It is this phenomenon of renewal that Scripture had prophesied would happen as a result of a fresh act of divine intervention motivated by God's *ḥesed* toward God's people.

As a derivative of the inauguration of the (re)new(ed) covenant and creation, Paul further understands the Torah's potential outcomes of "life" or "death" for God's people as being subsumed under God's final judgment, and as therefore centered on Jesus Christ (see esp. Deut 30:15–20 with Rom 6:23). In Paul's eschatological reading of Scripture, then, the experience of blessing or curse set in motion by obedience or disobedience to God's covenantal commands ultimately remained an open matter that would be settled once and for all in the *eschaton* when God would again intervene to redeem God's people. Thus, *the gospel and its acceptance have become for Paul the final substance and import of the call to obedience in the Torah, and thereby the means to life—interpreted by him in terms of resurrection or eternal life—for all people* (Rom 1:5; 8:1–4; 10:5–13). Failure to properly respond to the final expression of God's faithfulness/righteousness in Jesus Christ will ultimately mean death/destruction; an eschatological dynamic that is explicitly demonstrated in Phil 1:27–28 and 3:18–21.

2.3. The Eschatological Restoration of Israel and Consequent Pilgrimage of the Nations

The universal salvation wrought by the Christ event follows for Paul a particularly salvation-historical pattern, commonly referred to in contemporary New Testament scholarship as the "eschatological pilgrimage tradition."[12] There are a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible/LXX as well as the relevant extrabiblical Jewish literature that portray the eventual salvation of the nations as being triggered by Israel's restoration following God's judgment of exile and as inextricable from the restoration of the rest of creation. This dynamic is especially seen in the book of Isaiah.[13]

James A. Ware has importantly asserted that, as indicated by the frequency with which it is cited throughout the New Testament, the book of Isaiah was of particular importance to the early Christ movement, and not least to the Pauline mission. This is likely because of "the attention which that book devotes to the place of the nations in God's salvation. The relationship of the God of Israel to the nations is in Isaiah, to a greater degree than in any

other book of the Old Testament, a prominent and consistent theme" (Ware 2011, p. 59). Representing a programmatic oracle for the book as a literary whole is Isa 2:2–5, which envisages the nations streaming to Zion to learn Torah following Israel's final restoration.

Passages reflecting this eschatological pilgrimage concept are not only numerous and integral to the theological import of Isaiah as a whole, but they are generally associated with future expectations regarding the Davidic dynasty, which are, in turn, integral to the messianic expectations that Paul associates with Jesus Christ. Further demonstrative of this concept's import to Paul, it should be observed that the servant songs in Isaiah strongly resonate with the eschatological pilgrimage tradition and do so in a way that emphasizes the vocational dimension of God's election of Israel on behalf of the rest of creation—a vocation that is, for Paul, taken up and fulfilled by Jesus Christ and, by extension, the body of Christ allegiants. It is abundantly clear that Paul was heavily influenced by the Isaianic servant songs, particularly the fourth song in Isa 52:13—53:12 (Wagner 1998, pp. 193–222; Hofius 2004, pp. 175–83; Watson 2007). As many scholars suggest, the Christ hymn in Phil 2:6–11 is dependent upon the fourth song as its primary source, even perhaps representing "a conscious interpretation of the passage" (Ware 2011, p. 224). Moreover, Paul's exclamation in Phil 2:10–11, based on Isa 45:23, assumes the eschatological pilgrimage tradition that forms the greater context of the Isaiah passage, which he most probably knew well.

Thus, the Christ-allegiant gentiles in Philippi, as members of the nations living in the eschatological age, in embracing Paul's gospel are envisaged by him as those anticipated throughout Isaiah and elsewhere in the relevant Jewish literature. Namely, they are the recipients of God's redemptive work consequent to Israel's restoration, whereby the other nations of the earth would be brought into the "holy ones" of God, in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham of a multiethnic family (Rom 4; Gal 3).[14]

2.4. Implications of Paul's Theological Premises

There are at least four interrelated implications that stem from Paul's (1) understanding of the seminal basis of covenant identity, (2) conviction regarding covenant and creation renewal, and (3) appropriation of the eschatological pilgrimage tradition. First, because the seminal basis of covenant identity has always been God's faithfulness to God's people, it is only the content of the appropriate faithful response to God that has changed for Paul because of the climax of God's *ḥesed* in the Christ event; it is now allegiance to Jesus Christ (Phil 2:9–11; Rom 1:2–5, 16–17). Second, the Christ event is the very mechanism in which God's promises in Torah to his people are fulfilled. It is in this light that Paul can understand the identity of his gentile converts: they are participants in covenant and creation renewal and, as such, have had Torah written on their hearts via the Spirit (Rom 2:15, 29; 2 Cor 3:3). Third, contrary to common assumptions in both scholarly and lay circles, perfect obedience to God's Torah is not an obstacle Paul's gospel overcomes, but a goal that is thereby obtained and characteristic of the life that God promised to God's people (Phil 3:10–14; Rom 6:1–14). Accordingly, the term *pistis* and its cognates throughout the Pauline corpus, including here in Philippians (1:25, 27, 29; 2:17; 3:9), necessarily reflect this idea of "faithfulness," "fidelity," or "allegiance," rather than mere "faith" or "belief" (see esp. Phil 1:10–11, 27; 2:12–15; Campbell 2005, pp. 178–88). Indeed, as evident in his moral exhortations to the communities he addresses in his letters, Paul poses strict obedience to God as being part and parcel of salvation in Christ.[15]

Fourth, the way in which the Torah may be obeyed is not univocal, as Paul unmistakably suggests elsewhere.[16] All covenant members must submit as empowered by the Spirit to the overarching ethical vision of Torah—that is, the doing of justice and righteousness, which are inextricable to the commandment regarding love of neighbor (Lev 19:18). This Jew and gentile Torah-based praxis, which is fulfilled in the (re)new(-ed) covenant and creation, is referred to by Paul as "Christ's Torah" in his letters to the Galatians and Corinthians (Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:21; cf. Rom 3:27). The nonnegotiable commitment of the multiethnic Christ community to Christ's Torah is indicated in 1 Cor 7:19. Yet, Paul naturally expects Jewish Christ allegiants to continue in full Torah submission, which therefore includes

those specific laws that continue to distinguish Jewish from gentile identity, preeminently circumcision and also, e.g., kashrut and Sabbath observance, as he indicates in 1 Cor 7:17, 20.[17] In all, as explicitly demonstrated in several places,[18] Paul continues to differentiate between Jews and gentiles within the Christ movement, and this differentiation makes best sense in terms of the eschatological pilgrimage tradition that sees the nations qua nations joining a restored Israel in the eschaton.

3. Communal Threat Part 1: The Danger of Jewish Over-Identification

The issue of Jewish identity in relation to the Christ movement is particularly pertinent to Phil 3. Contemporary scholars have largely understood Phil 3:1–9 as representing, at least in some respect, an anti-Jewish polemic, in which Judaism is presented as the necessary foil to Paul's "Christian" claims. By contrast, there are, in my view, two interrelated groups that are likely targets for Paul's rhetoric in this section of the letter.

It is highly improbable that Paul is here warning the Philippians of individuals or groups who would not have some form of intimate contact with the Christ community. He has already pointed to those oppositional forces who clearly stand wholly outside the community (Phil 1:27–30; 2:15) and who pose an unambiguous present threat to them. It is incomprehensible that he would then assert that it is a "safeguard" to implore the community to "beware" of these same persons. This sort of warning strongly implies a certain perceived ambiguity and influence on the community that, however attractive or pragmatic for them, Paul finds to be problematic and, ultimately, inconsistent with the implications of his gospel. In short, the passage suggests a (potential) *danger from within*, which Paul finds necessary to expose.

Building especially off Mark D. Nanos's work on Galatians (Nanos 2002), it is my suggestion that one of those potential influences that he may have in mind are those who would advocate that the members of the Philippian Christ community undergo proselyte conversion to Judaism. Paul's entire discourse in Phil 3:1–9 assumes that his audience would readily accept the high value of his Jewish background. The Philippian Christ community was founded by a Jewish apostle, had given allegiance to a Jewish messiah, worshipped the God of Israel, observed Jewish ethics, provided financial aid to Jewish groups in Judea, and, in all, adopted the Jewish symbolic universe. However, they did all this while remaining members of the nations, and not by becoming Jews. This situation was an entirely unique phenomenon, with no precedent outside of the fledgling Christ movement. It differed significantly from the experience of gentile synagogue associates who, despite sympathizing in various degrees with Judaism, did not, as a rule, abandon their participation in the local *polis*, which involved pagan activities that would be irreconcilable with membership in the Christ community.[19] Although there was likely only a small Jewish population in Philippi (as most scholars conclude), there nevertheless may have existed at least a perception among some within the Christ community that there was inherent value found in possessing normative Jewish identity.

Although not uniformly observed or accepted by all first-century Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora, the ritual process of proselyte conversion to Judaism would mean departure from one's non-Jewish communal network and full immersion into the local Jewish community. Culminating this process for men was the rite of circumcision. The possibility of proselytizing to Judaism may have been potentially compelling to gentile Christ allegiants in Philippi as both a remedy for their perceived social ambiguity, possessing neither "pagan" nor Jewish identity, and for their experience of persecution and suffering as a result of their newly acquired and socially subversive praxis as members of the Christ community—abstention from certain activities of the *polis* that would have been deemed as idolatrous, especially as these activities related to the imperial cult.

While there may have been varying degrees of assimilation among Jews throughout the Diaspora, it is unquestionably the case that there were certain activities from which Jewish groups generally refrained by permission from the Empire, including participation in the imperial cult.[20] Official legislation enforcing participation in the imperial cult did

not exist, but significant social pressure likely would have been exerted on all members of the *polis*, including noncitizens, for failure to venerate the cult (a failure that would have been demonstrated through neglect of local civic cults and various other aspects of public life), which could have been perceived as endangering the greater community (Tellbe 2001, pp. 35, 59; Harland 2003, p. 243).

A connected, perhaps even primary, form of social pressure experienced by gentile Christ allegiants in Philippi may have been economic in nature, as such relationships with those outside the Christ community would have largely broken down (Oakes 2007, pp. 89–100). In light of these strained economic relations, Paul's gentile converts may have sought entrance into the Jewish communal network, which could have significantly mitigated potential difficulties that arose from their praxis and general theological/ideological commitments. Accordingly, the potential influx of migrant service workers into the Philippian Christ community, some of whom may have been Jewish sympathizers (Keener 2012, p. 2396), could have provided a partial basis for Paul's concern that such influences might spur at least a perception among some members that becoming a Jewish proselyte could open up the possibility of relief from the opposition they encountered, given that the Jewish community elsewhere did not seem to experience the same sort of difficulties, despite quite similar praxis and ideological commitments.

However, for Paul, given the fulfillment of the promises in the dispensation[21] of Christ, the rite of circumcision in accordance with the process of proselyte conversion is irreconcilable with membership in the Christ community. It should be viewed, therefore, as no more than mutilation (Phil 3:2). The gentile Philippians are to accept, rather, any consequent marginality, social death, or even persecution, as Paul himself had endured (Phil 1:13–17, 27–30; 2:17; 3:10; see also 1 Thess 1:6; 2:1–2; 14–16; 3:1–10; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14, 17; 2 Cor 4:7–12; 7:5; 11:22–25) and as demonstrated by Christ himself (Phil 2:6–8; see also 2 Cor 8:9). In this light, Phil 3:1–9 may seek, at least in part, to dissuade gentile Christ allegiants from what Paul understands as a de facto departure from the Christ movement—proselyte conversion to Judaism, which for him is no better than a reversion to paganism (Gal 4:8–11). It would be, in effect, to deny the faithfulness of God and to posit oneself outside the sphere of salvation that God has made possible (Gal 2:15–21; 3:10–14). In other words, *for gentiles to pursue proselyte conversion (or for them to be inspired to do so) is to live as though nothing had in fact happened in Christ—that Israel's restoration had not been inaugurated, and the nations qua nations are not now being brought into the people of God* (Zoccali 2015).

4. Communal Threat Part 2: The Danger of Gentile Over-Identification

As Paul suggests in 1 Thess 4:5; 1 Cor 5:1, 9–13; 6; 10; and 12:2, Christ allegiants from the nations have ceased being members of the nations estranged from the God of Israel and separated from God's covenant people—i.e., "pagans" (Gal 2:15; Eph 2:11–22). Their praxis must uncompromisingly reflect this new status, regardless of any conflict that might result—conflict that would be inevitable because, although inaugurated, the eschatological age is not yet fully consummated.

4.1. Dogs and Evil Workers

After his exhortation to "rejoice" in Phil 3:1, Paul launches into his warning to the Philippian Christ community. It should initially be observed that precise referents to the first two epithets, "dogs" (*kunas*) and "evil workers" (*kakous ergatas*), are not prima facie warranted. The language could readily apply to any individuals or groups who from Paul's perspective should properly stand outside the community (cf. esp. Rev 22:15) and may pose some element of harm for them. Nanos (2009, pp. 448–92) has demonstrated that the virtually unanimous scholarly assumption that "dogs" was a common Jewish invective toward gentiles is without merit. It is therefore highly unlikely that Paul is simply reversing this invective in condemnation of Jews. The literary evidence from the period demonstrates it to be, rather, a general slur.

It is also commonly supposed that the reference to "evil workers" points to so-called Judaizers, as *ergatai* ("workers") is a term frequently used for missionaries.[22] However, it seems to me that "evil workers" (*kakous ergatas*) simply refers to those whose actions are the antithesis of that which should characterize the Christ community—i.e., those who do evil (cf. Luke 13:27).[23] In keeping with this observation, Steven E. Fowl (2005, p. 145) has pointed out that Paul may have in mind the phrase frequently employed in the Psalter, "workers of iniquity."[24]

4.2. The Mutilation

The first two invectives, even if perhaps not strictly referring to the same group in synonymous fashion, at minimum overlap with the referent of the third epithet, "the mutilation" (*tēn katatouēn*). Given his rhetoric in Phil 1:14–17; 2:20–21; and 3:18–20, as well as his claim that the Philippian Christ community represents "the circumcision" who "worship/serve by the Spirit of God," "the mutilation," as with the other two epithets, likely represents potential entrants into the covenant community who would join under false pretenses, and/or internal influences of some sort that would likewise misrepresent or otherwise skew the implications of "in Christ" identity.

That is, while demonstrating a pretense of commitment to the gospel, they would be seeking their own interests or gain (Phil 3:7; cf. 2:3–4), as generally consistent with the social values of the greater Greco-Roman world, but in contradistinction to the implications of covenant and creation renewal. In doing so, they would invariably be placing confidence in the "flesh," attempting to manipulate circumstances according to their own power, sensibilities, and personal advantage (as indicative of the present/old order; Phil 3:19; Gal 1:4), rather than placing complete trust in and reliance upon God's act in Christ and the concomitant empowering of the Spirit (as indicative of the dawning eschatological age; Phil 3:20; 2 Cor 4:16–18), regardless of the consequences—i.e., "the sharing of [Christ's] sufferings" (Phil 3:10; see also 2 Cor 4:7–11; 1 Cor 4:8–13; cf. Mark 13:9–13). As J. B. Tyson aptly suggests, Paul makes an implicit comparison here between "two groups." They "differ in that one has confidence in the flesh, and the other expects transformation of the flesh" (Tyson 1976, p. 93).[25]

Thus, as far as Paul is concerned, "the mutilation" are (or would be) individuals who have not authentically given allegiance to Jesus Christ, and whose praxis does not ultimately accord with that which should characterize the Christ community, and therefore the first two epithets. Because they place trust in their own devices and/or relative status vis-à-vis the larger Greco-Roman world rather than in God's act in Christ, such individuals represent a distortion of the true covenant people and are therefore representatives of "the mutilation" rather than "the circumcision."

In keeping with this reading, Fowl makes the interesting observation "that in Lev 21:5 those sons of Aaron who have 'mutilated' themselves are barred from performing service in the Temple" (Fowl 2005, p. 148). I would additionally note here Deut 23:1 LXX, which forbids anyone with mutilated genitals from entering the *ekklēsia* of the Lord. Particularly in this light, Paul may not be (strictly) using "mutilation" in an ironic sense indicative of the rite of physical circumcision, as per the process of proselyte conversion to Judaism, or, for that matter, in a literal sense, as per the castration practices of local pagan cults. He may instead be employing the epithet more generally, as metaphorically representative of those who should be excluded from the (re)new(ed) covenant and creation multiethnic worshiping/serving assembly, to the extent that they remain committed to a mindset and course of action that prove to be fundamentally out of step with the teaching the community has received from Paul, and thus failing to embody the will of God (Rom 12:1–2).

It may very well be, then, that he also has in mind here those advocating a compromised disposition toward the greater civic community, including preeminently a laxer position on idolatry. Those proposing such a course of action might include individuals possessing a higher socioeconomic status than most of the Philippian Christ community, and/or were imperial slaves, *liberti*, or even Roman citizens who may have had some level

of influence to mitigate any civic or socioeconomic oppression community members were facing, though not without some alteration of community praxis.

5. Intensifying In-Group Saliency

Research drawing together insights from SIT/SCT has demonstrated that prototypical group members tend to demonstrate greater loyalty to the group when it is under significant threat, whereas peripheral members are far more unpredictable in their response (Jetten et al. 1997, pp. 635–57)—a social-psychological reality that Paul surely understood intuitively. While he may have been confident that the core members of the Philippian Christ community would ultimately "stand firm/in one spirit" (Phil 1:27; 4:1) amid pressures to conform their identity and praxis in ways that would contradict the implications of the gospel, he likely would have had far less certainty about new entrants, whose negative influence could then spread to the whole community, placing it at risk (Cinnirella 1998, p. 241).[26]

As Paul pointed out to the Corinthian and Galatian Christ communities, "a little yeast leavens the whole batch" (Gal 5:9; 1 Cor 5:6). Perhaps it was his own lens of suspicion regarding such peripheral members that compelled him to warn the entire community in this passage. Philippians 3:2 may not point to precise individuals who could be named by Paul, or even perhaps by the Philippians themselves. Rather, it may point more generally to a potential group (however actual in terms of the larger Christ movement; Phil 3:18) serving as the foil for Paul's rhetorical goal of inhibiting any who might ultimately fall into this category of "out-group" threat (i.e., "the mutilation") by simultaneously promoting a common in-group identity (i.e., "the circumcision") and thereby encouraging peripheral members toward the center (Phil 1:27). Throughout the letter, Paul utilizes stereotyping to draw a sharp contrast between the character of the Christ community (i.e., in-group) and that of the greater Philippian/Greco-Roman society (i.e., out-group) (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Stereotypes.

Philippians 2:14; 3:2, 17–21	
Out-Group	**In-Group**
Crooked and perverse	Blameless and innocent
Dogs	Children of God without blemish
Evil workers	Shining like stars in the world
The mutilation	The circumcision
Glory in their shame	Who worship by the Spirit of God
Enemies of the cross	Boast in Christ Jesus
God is their belly	No confidence in the flesh
Minds set on earthly things	Citizenship is in heaven
End is destruction	Will experience a transformation into glory

His rhetoric here may therefore be understood as negotiating the underlying sociocognitive processes of social categorization and social comparison. These processes serve to strengthen intergroup boundaries, and they provide for self-evaluation and self-enhancement of group members in the assumption "that people have a basic need to see themselves in a positive light in relation to relevant others (i.e., to have an evaluatively positive self-concept), and that self-enhancement can be achieved in groups by making comparisons between the in-group and relevant out-groups in ways that favor the in-group" (Hogg et al. 1995, p. 260).

Accordingly, Phil 3:2–3 would seem to function as a means of clarifying for the Christ community who genuinely represents "us" over against "them," with the purpose of instigating conformity to the implications of his gospel among group members, particularly

those on the periphery, against pressures working to distort this shared identity (Phil 2:15). The passage read purely in terms of Paul's concerns about the Philippians' sense of intragroup solidarity, and his attempt to make the Philippians' "in Christ" identity more salient over against either their prior (non-Jewish) social identities or the prospect of Jewish proselyte status, finds more immediate correspondence with several of his appeals to the community throughout the letter (1:27; 2:5; 3:15).

As is also well established in social-psychological research, affective states influence social cognition. Positive affective states have been shown to signal familiarity (Garcia-Marques et al. 2004, pp. 585–93), as well as reduce racial bias (Ito et al. 2006, pp. 256–61), indicating that collective emotional positivity is vital for improving the perception of a common social identity among group members and the attainment, then, of intragroup unity. Particularly given Paul's awareness of the community's precarious circumstances, his prohibitions against "grumblings and arguments" (Phil 2:14) and "anxiety" (Phil 4:6), his emphasis on positive thinking (Phil 4:8), and his frequent exhortations to "rejoice" in the midst of, and even (in a certain sense) as a response to, opposition and suffering (Phil 2:17–18; 3:1; 4:4; cf. Matt 5:11–12) can similarly be understood as a concerted attempt to encourage social cohesion among the Philippian Christ allegiants.

Moreover, Paul's assertions regarding the surety of God's sovereign purposes being accomplished in and through the community (Phil 1:5–6) and the provision of divine empowerment (Phil 2:13), in combination with his *koinōnia* language regarding the community's sharing in the gospel (Phil 1:5), God's grace (Phil 1:7), the activity of the Spirit (Phil 2:1), and especially (by extension) the sufferings of Christ (Phil 3:10; 1:29–30), represent no less his aim to strengthen in-group identity salience and solidarity through sheer discursive power. In all, Paul was a seeming realist who understood well the challenges inherent to intra- and intergroup dynamics and who made every effort to ensure the continued viability of the Christ community, especially in light of what was in this case a community experiencing intense external pressures, and likely internal ones as a result.

6. "In Christ" Identity and the Rhetoric of Comparison

But given that Paul has offered a resume of his past achievement in Judaism only to then declare it to be "crap" (Phil 3:8), it is important for any post-supersessionist reading to explain how Paul could maintain the importance and abiding salience of his Jewish identity while also regarding his "in Christ" identity to be exceedingly more important.

It has been proposed that Paul's self-description as an archetypal Jew serves merely as a rhetorical mechanism, in which he ascribes to himself the highest authority within Judaism to then denounce Judaism and Jewish identity in favor of a "Christian" identity—a reading that goes back at least as far as John Chrysostom.[27] Integral to this reading is the assumption that Judaism is an inherently flawed religion, which, at least as it came to be practiced by the late Second Temple period, precipitated a collective attitude among Jews of self-righteousness and presumption toward God. An immediate problem with this view is that it fundamentally mischaracterizes Judaism as a religion of "work-righteousness," rather than an ethnicity whose religious elements were predicated first upon God's merciful and gracious activity on behalf of Israel. This divine activity centrally included the giving of Torah, to which obedience was understood as the only appropriate response to God's faithfulness shown to Israel, as well as being indicative of the very deliverance God had provided them.

Since Paul's teaching to the Philippians (as well as to the other Christ communities he addresses in his extant letters) presupposes this same covenantal dynamic, which was operative in at least most strands of late Second Temple Judaism, it is difficult to believe that Paul could be suggesting that there was something problematic with Jewish identity in and of itself. Rather, Paul's contention with non-Christ-allegiant Judaism is fundamentally centered on the question of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth—whether he is the Christ, and therefore Lord and Savior.

Thus, the intra-Jewish debate in which Paul was involved had first and foremost to do with his conviction concerning Jesus—that he is the ultimate means of reconciliation and right standing with God, and, by virtue of his resurrection from the dead, that the new age has now dawned, resulting in the ingathering of gentiles qua gentiles into the people of God on the singular basis of their allegiance to Israel's Christ. In light of this conviction, I suggest that what is found in Paul's autobiographical account is not the abandoning but rather the subordination and alteration of his Pharisaic-Jewish identity to the new superordinate identity he has attained "in Christ"—and this precisely in the context of the culmination of salvation history, according to which the promises to the Jewish ancestors are now being fulfilled (Rom 11:25–28; 15:8–9). Elsewhere, Paul is quite clear that Jewish identity and praxis are of much value (Rom 3:1). What Paul is suggesting in Phil 3, then, is that *in comparison to knowing Christ even the most highly regarded things infinitely pale in significance* (Campbell 2013, p. 213).

Where I believe a great deal of scholarship has gone wrong on this issue is confusing the salvation-historical contrast that Paul presupposes between the dispensations before and after Christ, particularly in terms of the implications for gentiles, and how the Torah itself may continue to function in the dispensation of Christ. Understanding Paul's underlying convictions regarding the relationship of Christ and Torah provides the proper context for interpreting Paul's autobiography in Phil 3:4–9.

It should initially be observed that although Israel's failure to abide by the covenant is portrayed as fully anticipated by God (Deut 30:1; 31:16–22), there is no hint anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures that God's standard of obedience is an impossible one. Rather, obedience to God is consistently portrayed as humanly achievable,[28] and this perception is generally presupposed in the relevant extrabiblical Jewish literature of the period. Thus, when Paul reflects upon his life in Judaism here and claims to have been "blameless" under the Torah (v. 6), he is claiming that he was faithful to the stipulations of God's merciful and gracious election of Israel, including his appropriate participation in the temple cult and active repentance from sin, according to which his covenant standing was sustained (Pss 32; 51). But what could he be indicating in Phil 3:9: "and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own—the one from Torah"?

Paul came to believe that righteous status under the terms of the former dispensation of Torah[29] was always intended by God to be merely provisional and requiring all along confirmation through a fresh act of divine intervention in fulfillment of the promises (2 Cor 3:7–11). In Phil 3:4–9, Paul is making clear that in the eschatological age one's covenant membership and right standing with God cannot be secured by any other means than Christ and the Spirit. Any such attempt has become merely a "righteous status" of one's own estimation (i.e., of the "flesh," or old order of things), rather than the single means to righteousness that God has *now* made possible (Rom 3:20–26; 9:30—10:4; see also esp. Isa 45:22–25 LXX). *It is therefore ineffectual.*

Verses 4–9 are decidedly not a denunciation of human achievement and desire to merit favor with God. Indeed, Paul instructs the Philippians (as he does every Christ community he addresses in his letters) to strive for greater faithfulness to God, as manifest in their obedient actions (Phil 1:6–11; 2:12–13), and he appeals to his own striving for resurrection life in the present time as an example to be emulated by the community (Phil 3:10–14; see also 1 Cor 9:24–27). Nor is Paul likely expressing here a rejection of "automatic national privilege," as suggested by N. T. Wright (Wright 1993, pp. 239–41) and Markus Bockmuehl (Bockmuehl 1998, p. 203). Rather, these verses are exactly an affirmation of God's faithfulness in once and for all redeeming Israel and all creation—that is, the (apocalyptic) culmination of salvation history in God's act in Christ (Phil 3:12b).

God's faithfulness in bringing about the fulfillment of the promises, securing redemption for both Israel and the nations, is to be answered by the Philippians' continued faithfulness to God vis-à-vis the gospel of the Jesus Christ. This eschatological and covenantal dynamic is fully summarized in the phrase appearing in Phil 3:9, *pisteōs christou*, which I translate: "faithfulness realized in Christ"—that is, the culmination of God's faithfulness in

the Christ event that calls for and enables the faithfulness of God's people (Phil 2:12–13; 3:12; see also Rom 1:17; 3:27).[30]

The phenomenon of faithfulness, both human and divine, is central to and ultimately inseparable from the question of identity for the Philippians. To illustrate the point, Paul uses the interrelated examples of himself and Jesus Christ. They each voluntarily subordinated this respective identity to another, which resulted in their original identity having undergone a (radical) transformation, but not, in any way, a negation. That is, neither Jesus Christ nor the apostle Paul fundamentally ceased being what they once were. However, both Jesus and Paul placed God's purposes above the rights, privileges, and immediate self-interests that were properly their own (2 Cor 8:9; Rom 15:3; 1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 4:8–12; 11:23—12:10). Having become a Jewish peasant ultimately crucified by the Empire, Jesus chose not to exploit his identity as being "equal with God" (Phil 2:6–8). For Paul, the subordination of his Pharisaic-Jewish identity to that which he now possessed in Christ meant that, not only as a Christ allegiant but also an apostle, he was now suffering in prison as a result.[31] But, like Christ's wrongful execution on the cross, even this was interpreted by Paul as ultimately serving God's good purposes on behalf of all creation, including both Israel and the other nations (Phil 1:12–14).

Paul's autobiography, shaped here by the story of Jesus Christ, provides, in turn, precedence, pattern, and motivation for the Philippian Christ allegiants to live true to the identity that they now possess as members of the Christ community, no matter what the cost. As gentiles who have turned to the God of Israel through the risen Christ (i.e., as righteous gentiles), they must refrain from any praxis that conflicts with the full implications of the gospel. They are no longer pagan idolaters but have been brought into God's covenant people alongside Israel, and they must live and act accordingly, even if this means further marginalization, social death, economic loss, civic persecution, and/or suffering of any sort. Such is the immensely difficult challenge posed by Paul to the Philippian Christ community, though he hopes that his own willingness to sacrifice everything for the cause of the gospel, along with that of the other exemplars to which he points (Timothy, Epaphroditus), will encourage the whole community to stand firm in their allegiance to Jesus Christ, the chief exemplar of a cruciform life in service to the other.

7. Conclusions

I have argued that Paul's letter to the Philippians is best understood through a post-supersessionist lens, in which Paul's gospel of Jesus Christ in no way represents the supersession of Jewish identity, Torah-shaped praxis, or, further still, any ethnic identity upon entrance into the Christ community. Although Phil 3 has been commonly read as an invective against Judaism, which has now been replaced by "Christianity," it has been suggested here that the passage is best understood as an exhortation to the Philippians to remain as they are, that is, members of the nations who have given allegiance to Jesus Christ. This phenomenon was understood by Paul to be in fulfillment of the prophetic hope of the inclusion of the nations among God's people following Israel's restoration, in accordance with God's faithfulness to the promises of covenant and creation renewal. Thus, together with the faithful among Israel, they are the "holy ones" who will receive the kingdom as foreseen in the book of Daniel, and, as such, they have become part of a decidedly Jewish movement embedded within the spectrum of views contained within first-century Judaism.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 The ensuing content in its revised form is used with permission (www.wipfandstock.com accessed on 2 December 2022).

2 Judaism in the first century represented not foremost a "religion" (especially not one in competition with a religion called "Christianity"), but what perhaps can best be described (however in etic fashion) as an ethnicity defined by various cultural

indicia, including a shared myth of ancestry, geographic origins, history, beliefs, customs, etc., which thus functioned to demarcate Jews from other social groups of the period. Despite the ambiguities it presented for women, the primary marker of Jewish identity by this time was circumcision, either on the eighth day for native-born Jews, or, for those communities who accepted the legitimacy of it, as the culmination of the course of proselyte conversion to Judaism.

3 As a Diaspora Jew at home in both the Jewish and non-Jewish world, and a seasoned missionary who had already founded a number of ethnically mixed communities, it would not be surprising for Paul to have recognized and appreciated this social dynamic that seems to be constitutive of the human condition.

4 It might be suggested that the first-person plural "we" is a reference not to the community but to Paul and the Jewish members of the Pauline mission. However, in my view, such an understanding fails in light of the presence of the first-person plural in Phil 3:16, 20–21, where it unambiguously refers to the whole community and not the Pauline mission in particular.

5 See (Routledge 1995). God's *ḥesed* is inextricable from the notion of God's own righteousness and is what ultimately secures one's righteous status among God's people (e.g., Pss 33:4–5; 36:5–10; 40:4–13; 85:4–13; 89:14–37; 98:1–3; 103; 1 Kgs 8:23; Jer 9:23–24; Hos 10:12; see also the LXX's translation of *ḥesed* as *dikaiosunē* in Gen 24:27; 32:11; Exod 15:13; 34:7) (Routledge 1995, pp. 188–95). It is, accordingly, the basis for redemption and reconciliation (Rom 5:10–11; 2 Cor 5:18–19; 2 Tim 2:13; Exod 15:13; 34:6–7; Num 14:18–19; Pss 25:7–10; 89; 107; 136; 143; Isa 54:8–10; Jer 31:3; 33:11; Lam 3:22–32; Dan 9:4–19; Hos 2:19–23; Joel 2:12–13; Mic 7:18–20; Jonah 4:2).

6 For a discussion on the close connection of *ḥesed* with *raḥamim* (mercy) and *ḥen* (grace) in the MT, see (Routledge 1995, pp. 190–93).

7 Note that "full Torah submission" does not mean "perfect obedience." Rather, in view is the full body of ordinances contained in the Torah, thereby including those laws that, for Paul, continue to distinguish Jewish identity from gentile identity, including preeminently circumcision.

8 E.g., Deut 30:1–6; Isa 59:21; Jer 31:31–40; Ezek 36:22–32; Bar 2:30–35; Jub 1:21–24; CD 3.10–20; 1QS 1.16—2.25.

9 E.g., Isa 65:17–25; Zech 9:10; Sir 44:19–21; 1 QH 13.15–18; 17.15; 1 En. 5.6–7.

10 Rom 11:27; 1 Cor 11:23–26; 2 Cor 3:3–18; Gal 4:24–28; Phil 3:3; Col 2:11; Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 3:21–23; 6:2; 15:20–28; Col 1:15–20; Eph 1:7–14; for the inextricability of covenant and creation renewal in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, see similarly Jub. 1:23–29; 4:26; 19:21–25; 22.

11 Rom 2:14–16, 25–29; 7:6; 8:1–11; Gal 3:2–5; 4:6; 5:5; 1 Cor 2:12; 2 Cor 3:6.

12 I am aware that some scholars, such as Terence L. Donaldson, question the import of this tradition for Paul. Please see my full defense of this tradition as being integral to Paul's worldview in (Zoccali 2017).

13 E.g., Isa 2:2–5; 11:1–10; 19:18–25; 25:6–10; 42:1–9; 45:22–23; 49:6; 51:4–6; 56:6–8; 66:18–21; see also Jer 3:17; 16:19–21; Amos 9:11–12 LXX; Mic 4:1–3.

14 See (Korner 2017) for a substantive argument regarding Paul's understanding that the *ekklēsiai* represent the sacred site to which the people of God are being gathered in the eschaton, now inaugurated by virtue of the Christ event.

15 Paul holds that Christ allegiants attain to moral perfection at the general resurrection; Phil 1:6; 3:20–21; 1 Cor 15:50–58.

16 E.g., Rom 2:25–29; 4:11–12, 16; 14:1–15:4; 1 Cor 7:17–20. Paul advocates what I have called "variegated covenantal expression," in that Christ allegiants can express their faithfulness to God in a diversity of ways within the broader boundaries of the appropriate communal ethos and praxis that Paul articulates throughout his letters. On the general call to Torah obedience as well as the variegated nature of such obedience, in addition to the more expansive discussion in (Zoccali 2017). See further here (Zoccali 2010, pp. 55–170; 2015; 2020, pp. 257–91).

17 Despite the popularity of the claim, Paul knows nothing of a "Law-free" gospel in any sort of absolute sense of that phrase. Being in Christ means that Jews and gentiles are no longer under the dispensation of Torah (Gal 3:23–29; 5:18; Rom 6:14; 7:6; 1 Cor 9:20; see also 2 Cor 3:3–18), but that does not mean that the Torah ceases altogether to play an important role for Jews in particular, and the Christ community collectively. Paul is otherwise unambiguous that his gospel confirms the Torah and does not overthrow it (Rom 3:31).

18 E.g., Rom 1:16; 2:25; 3:30; 4:12, 16; 9:24; 11:11–32; 15:7–13; 1 Cor 1:23–24; and 7:17–20.

19 Although I do not follow all her conclusions, on this point see (Fredriksen 2017, pp. 49–130).

20 It should be noted that there was not a single imperial cult; distinctions in orientation and practice existed in different regions of the Empire.

21 Note that my use of the term "dispensation" is *not* intended to invoke the system of theology known as "Dispensationalism".

22 Matt 9:37–38; Luke 10:2, 7; 2 Cor 11:13; 1 Tim 5:18; 2 Tim 2:15; Did. 13:2.

23 Cf. Paul's reference to the *good* work of God and the Christ community (Phil 1:6; 2:12–13).

24 E.g., LXX Pss 5:5; 6:8; 13:4; 35:12; 52:4; 58:2, 5; 91:7, 9; 93:4, 16; 118:3; 124:5; 140:4, 9.

25 Paul warns the Roman Christ community of these same sorts of persons in Rom 16:17–18; also compare Acts 20:29–32 with Phil 3:2, 18.

[26] This concern is even more understandable given the possible turnover within the Philippian Christ community due to the probably significant numbers of migrant workers engaged in specialized service occupations (Damico and Chavez 2015, p. 267; Oakes 2007, p. 35).

[27] John Chrysostom, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, homily 10. For an excellent discussion on Chrysostom's treatment of this passage (see Jacob 2006, pp. 267–86).

[28] E.g., Deut 12:12–21; 30:11–14; Mic 6:8; Isa 1:10–20; 5:7; 56:1; Jer 7:3–7, 21–26; Amos 5:14–15, 21–27; Hos 6:6–7; see also Gen 6:9; Job 1:1; Tob 1:3.

[29] These are what Paul elsewhere refers to as the *ergōn nomou* ("works of Torah"), a phrase that functions as a synecdoche for Jewish identity and thus covenant identity in the dispensation before Christ (Rom 3:20; 3:27; 4:2; 9:12; 11:5; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10). As noted above, with the coming of Christ, the markers of covenant identity have been transformed to allegiance to Jesus Christ and reception of the Spirit, i.e., *pistis* (Rom 1:16–17; 3:21–26; Gal 3:21–29).

[30] I translate *pisteōs [Iēsou] christou* (e.g., Gal 2:16; 3:22; Rom 3:26) such that it is essentially synonymous with the gospel, that is, God's faithful eschatological act of redemption/reconciliation/restoration through Jesus Christ, which calls for and enables the human response of fidelity to God (cf. Gal 3:13; 4:4–5; see similarly Martyn 1997, p. 314). For a recent analysis of *pistis christou* as an "eschatological event" (a so-called third view that moves beyond the subjective or objective genitive debate), see (Schliesser 2016, pp. 277–300). For a similar interpretation here (cf. also Bockmuehl 1998, p. 211; Fowl 2005, p. 154). See additionally on this matter in (Zoccali 2017).

[31] In this respect, Paul would be conducting here a *qal wahomer* style of argumentation, in which his willingness to relativize his own prized ethnic identity and status in favor of "in Christ" identity, and suffer greatly in the process, is all the more reason for the Philippian Christ allegiants to do likewise.

References

Bockmuehl, Marcus. 1998. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. Black's New Testament Commentary 11. Peabody: Hendrickson.

Campbell, Douglas A. 2005. *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*. London: T. & T. Clark.

Campbell, William S. 2013. *Unity & Diversity in Christ: Interpreting Paul in Context*. Eugene, OR: Cascade.

Cinnirella, Marco. 1998. Exploring Temporal Aspects of Social Identity: The Concept of Possible Social Identities. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 28: 228–48. [CrossRef]

Damico, Noelle, and Gerardo Reyes Chavez. 2015. Determining What Is Best: The Campaign for Fair Food and the Nascent Assembly in Philippi. In *The People Besides Paul: The Philippian Assembly and History from Below*. Edited by Joseph A. Marchal. Atlanta: SBL, pp. 247–84.

Fowl, Steven E. 2005. *Philippians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Fredriksen, Paula. 2017. *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Garcia-Marques, Teresa, Diane M. Mackie, Heather M. Claypool, and Leonel Garcia-Marques. 2004. Positivity Can Cue Familiarity. *Perspectives on Social Psychology Bulletin* 30: 585–93. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Harland, Philip A. 2003. *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Hofius, Otfried. 2004. The Fourth Servant Song in the New Testament Letters. In *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*. Edited by Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 175–83.

Hogg, Michael A., Deborah J. Terry, and Katherine M. White. 1995. A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58: 255–69. [CrossRef]

Ito, Tiffany A., Krystal W. Chiao, Patricia G. Devine, Tyler S. Lorig, and John T. Cacioppo. 2006. The Influence of Facial Feedback on Race Bias. *Psychological Science* 17: 256–61. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Jacob, Andrew S. 2006. A Jew's Jew: Paul and the Early Christian Problem of Jewish Origins. *The Journal of Religion* 86: 258–86. [CrossRef]

Jetten, Jolanda, Russel Spears, and Antony S. R. Manstead. 1997. Distinctiveness Threat and Prototypicality: Combined Effects on Intergroup Discrimination and Collective Self-esteem. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 27: 635–57. [CrossRef]

Keener, Craig S. 2012. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1–2:47*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Korner, Ralph J. 2017. *The Origin and Meaning of Ekklēsia in the Early Jesus Movement*. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 98. Leiden: Brill.

Martyn, J. Louis. 1997. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 33A. New York: Doubleday.

Nanos, Mark D. 2002. *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First Century Context*. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Nanos, Mark D. 2009. Paul's Reversal of Jews Calling Gentiles 'Dogs' (Philippians 3.2): 1600 Years of an Ideological Tale Wagging an Exegetical Dog? *Biblical Interpretation* 17: 448–92. [CrossRef]

Nebreda, Sergio Rosell. 2011. *Christ Identity: A Social-Scientific Reading Philippians of 2:5–11*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Oakville: Vandemhoeck & Ruprecht.

Oakes, Peter. 2007. *Philippians: From People to Letter*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Routledge, Robin. 1995. Ḥesed as Obligation: A Re-Examination. *Tyndale Bulletin* 46: 179–96. [CrossRef]

Schliesser, Benjamin. 2016. 'Christ-Faith' as an Eschatological Event (Galatians 3.23–26): A 'Third View' on Πίστις Χριστοῦ. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38: 277–300. [CrossRef]

Stone, Catriona H., and Richard J. Crisp. 2007. Superordinate and Subgroup Identification as Predictors of Intergroup Evaluation in Common Ingroup Contexts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 10: 493–513.

Tajfel, Henri. 1978. Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison. In *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Edited by Henri Tajfel. New York: Academic, pp. 61–76.

Tellbe, Mikael. 2001. *Paul between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians*. Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 34. Stockholm: Almquiest & Wiksell International.

Turner, John C. 1987. A Self-categorization Theory. In *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*. Edited by John C. Turner. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 42–67.

Tyson, J. B. 1976. Paul's Opponents at Philippi. *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 3: 83–96.

Wagner, J. Ross. 1998. The Heralds of Isaiah and the Mission of Paul: An Investigation of Paul's Use of Isaiah 51–55 in Romans. In *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*. Edited by William H. Bellinger and William Farmer. Harrisburg: Trinity, pp. 193–222.

Ware, James A. 2011. *Paul and the Mission of the Church: Philippians in Ancient Jewish Context*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Watson, Francis. 2007. The Hermeneutics of Salvation: Paul, Isaiah, and the Servant. Paper presented at the Pauline Soteriology Group at the SBL Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, USA, November 17–20.

Wright, N. T. 1993. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Zoccali, Christopher. 2010. *Whom God Has Called: The Relationship of Church and Israel in Pauline Interpretation, 1920 to the Present*. Eugene: Pickwick.

Zoccali, Christopher. 2015. What's the Problem with the Law? Jews, Gentiles, and Covenant Identity in Galatians 3:10–12. *Neotestamentica* 49: 377–415. [CrossRef]

Zoccali, Christopher. 2017. *Reading Philippians after Supersessionism: Jews, Gentiles, and Covenant Identity*. New Testament After Supersessionism. Eugene: Cascade.

Zoccali, Christopher. 2020. Romans. In *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*. Edited by J. Brian Tucker and Aaron Kuecker. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.