

mission (apostles, prophets, righteous people, young missionaries). The phrase “only because of the name of a recognized disciple” or better, “just for being nothing else but only a disciple” cannot be explanatory: it must be related to “in the name of a prophet” and “in the name of a righteous man”. Nor can one miss the fact that the *humas* (the apostles) and “one of these little (or least) ones” were necessarily people present when the logion was spoken, whereas the saying on the prophets and the righteous ones does not necessarily require that they were present.

In conclusion, it may be suggested that “these little ones” are the same people we meet in Mt 18.1–14, namely, a group of young disciples who were not held in great esteem in some circles in the church. Matthew’s aim everywhere is to establish their function and ministry in the church.

If our understanding of Matthew 18.1–14 21.15f and 10.40–42 is correct, then one would have to propose: (a) No new paragraph at 18.6, and (b) in Matthew a rendering of the terms *paidion toiouto*, *paidas*, and *hena tōn mikrōn toutōn* which will really help the reader to understand what is going on. I would propose for the first: “such a young follower”, and for the two others, “younger disciples”.

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TRANSLATING ‘SEED’ IN GALATIANS 3.16, 19

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In the Old Testament accounts of the promise made to Abraham, which is appealed to in Galatians 3.16, “seed” is used collectively of Abraham’s descendants. Moreover, in Galatians 3.29 “seed” is used collectively of Christ and his “line.” The question then arises concerning the usage of “seed” in Galatians 3.16, 19. Is the corporate interpretation to be preserved or does Paul here introduce a singular usage, limiting “seed” to Christ himself? Burton is unconvinced of either interpretation, so he suggests the possibility that Galatians 3.16b (“It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many; but to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ which is Christ.”) may originally have been a scribal comment which was only later introduced into the text.¹ Although this option may not be ruled out *a priori*, it ultimately raises more difficulties than it resolves, and one is left to decide between the other two alternatives.

Analysis of Galatians 3.1–29

It will be helpful to make a brief analysis of the entire third chapter of Galatians in order to understand its role in the overall letter. Following this, special attention will be given to the specific function of verses 16 and 19 within this chapter. Galatians 3.1–4.31 forms what Betz terms the *probatio* section of the letter.² This is the section where the apostle presents his major “proofs”

¹ Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1952), p. 502. Elsewhere Burton seems to vacillate between individual and corporate interpretation: “*to sperma* is, doubtless, to be taken in the same sense as in v. 16b, viz., Christ, if v. 16b is from Paul . . . otherwise as in v. 29, those who are Christ’s.” (p. 189).

² Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 137.

for his thesis that the gift of God's Spirit, not Torah, is the fulfillment of the solemn promise God made to Abraham.

The first of the proofs contained in chapter 3 is the irrefutable evidence of the Galatians' own experience: their life of faith was begun by the power of God's Spirit, which is still working miracles among them. A life begun by God's Spirit cannot find its realization in submission to Torah (1-5).

Paul's second proof is in the form of five arguments from Scripture (6; 10; 11; 12; 13) which demonstrate the role of Abraham in the history of salvation. Paul thereby establishes the priority of faith and of the Spirit in the divine purpose, simultaneously denying Torah as a valid way to God. Verse 14 is particularly important for this study, since in this verse the "blessing of Abraham" is identified with the "promise of the Spirit" mediated *through Christ Jesus* (not through his 'line') to those who believe.

The third in Paul's series of proofs is in the form of an illustration from "common human practice" (3.15-18): after a testament has been ratified, it may not be altered by either party. Thus the promise made to "*the seed*" (emphatic singular with the definite article) as opposed to "the seeds" of Abraham cannot be nullified by the introduction of the Torah some 430 years later. In order to prevent a possibly wrong conclusion to the argument of verses 15-18, Paul makes a digression on the function of the Torah, rounding off with what he believes should be the Christian attitude toward it (19-25). It is noteworthy that in verse 19 the articular singular ("*the seed*") again appears, whereas when the corporate interpretation is clearly intended (verse 29), Paul shifts to the anarthrous singular ("seed").

The central core of the *probatio* section is found in 3.26-28: in 3.25 Paul concludes his discussion of Jewish Christians and then turns in 3.26-28 to define the status of Gentile Christians before God. Paul frames his presentation in words which are already familiar to the Galatians, for these words were possibly addressed to them at baptism when they became members of the Christian community.³

Finally, 3.29 draws a conclusion from 3.26-28 in regard to the argument first introduced in 3.6: through belonging to Christ the Galatians receive the promise made to Abraham and at the same time become his "seed" (significantly not "*the seed*" of verses 16, 19!).

Galatians 3.16, 19

Contextually Galatians 3.16 is related both to verse 14 and to verse 29. Whether the reading in verse 14 should be "in Christ Jesus" or "in Jesus Christ," Paul's intention is obvious: the Abrahamic blessing (= promise) is realized in and mediated solely through Christ. Now in verse 16 Paul makes it even more emphatic that Christ is the *one and only* mediator. To begin with, he draws a close parallel between the realization of the Abrahamic blessing in Christ (verse 14) and of the promise to "*the seed of his*" (verse 16). As Christ is the mediator of the blessing, "*the seed*" of Abraham is mediator of the promise. Thus it is only through faith in "*the seed*" that others may become "seed" of

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-185.

Abraham: "If you belong to Christ, then you are *seed* of Abraham and heirs according to promise" (verse 29).⁴

The presence of the singular "seed" in the Abrahamic passage enables Paul "to exclude the traditional Jewish interpretation and to reserve the role of the heir for Christ."⁵ Moreover, this is the only interpretation of verse 16b that makes any sense: the context offers no intimation that a distinction is being drawn between the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and those through Ishmael. Paul's total concern is to point to the one universal heir, Jesus Christ, and in so doing he sets forth a contrast similar to that between the "one man Jesus Christ" and the "many" of Romans 5.15–21.⁶

Even on the assumption that in verse 16 the reading "who" is a stylistic improvement over the original "which (seed)"⁷ it is still all but impossible to see how "which (seed) is Christ" may be interpreted to mean "which (seed) is Christ's," that is, "which (seed) is Christ's line." Had this been the apostle's intent, he could easily have been explicit, as he is in verse 29, where he introduces the genitive construction "you are Christ's." Paul's intention in this verse is the exact opposite: he wishes to establish Christ as the *sole heir* to the Abrahamic promise, so that he may later argue that he is also the *sole mediator* of the promise: "in order that the promise, on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe."⁸

In verse 19 Paul argues that the Torah was valid only until the coming of "the seed" to whom the promise had been made, and in this respect it merely reiterates the thesis of verse 16.⁹

"Until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made" must be understood of an individual messianic figure; it cannot have reference to a corporate line of descent. Jewish sources never speak of "the coming line," though they frequently mention "the coming one." And there is also a parallel from the later Jewish usage of the phrase "the seed from another place." Although it may have other meanings as well, it does have the specialized meaning of the Messiah: "It does not say that we may call into being 'a son' from our father. Rather it says that we may call into being 'a seed,' that is, the seed which comes from another place. And who is this? He is the King, the Messiah."¹⁰

⁴ "In the first instance the reference is to a single descendant, Christ, through whom the promised blessing has come to all the Gentiles. In the second instance the reference is to all who receive this blessing; in verse 29 all who belong to Christ are thereby included in Abraham's offspring." F. F. Bruce, *Galatians (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*. (Eerdmans, 1982), p. 172.

⁵ Betz, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁶ Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an der Galater* (Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1971), p. 156. Schlier, p. 145, note 4, also produces another example of rabbinic exegesis in the use of the contrast between singular and plural: "... thus it is with Cain: 'The manifold blood ... of your brother cries out to me from the earth' (Gen 4.10). It does not say, 'the blood' (singular) of your brother, but the 'manifold blood' of your brother, his blood and the blood of his (eventual) descendants."

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 145, note 5.

⁸ Translation from Betz, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁰ Hermann L. Strack und Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), I, pp. 26–27.

Conclusion

The context, grammar, and theological patterns support the thesis that "the seed" in Galatians 3.16, 19 is specifically a reference to Jesus Christ and none other.¹¹ A corporate interpretation is not only impossible to establish grammatically, but it runs counter to Paul's argument throughout this entire section of the letter.

¹¹ This is made explicit by GNB ("The Scripture does not use the plural "descendants," meaning many people, but the singular "descendant," meaning one person only, namely Christ") and *Die Gute Nachricht* ("Nun gab Gott seine Zusage Abraham und seinen Nachkommen. Genau genommen hat er aber zu Abraham nicht gesagt: 'Deinen Nachkommen gilt diese Zusage,' als ob viele gemeint wären, sondern er hat gesagt: 'Deinem Nachkommen'. Er spruch nur von einem, nämlich von Christus.").

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TALKING ABOUT TRANSLATION: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON AN INTRODUCTORY TRANSLATION COURSE

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The purpose of this article is to share some results of a short introductory translation course for speakers of a vernacular language in Irian Jaya, the former Dutch New Guinea. I hope these will be helpful for others engaged in training national translators. Of course, this subject has been discussed several times already in *The Bible Translator*; but the circumstances in which the present course was held had special features, though no doubt comparable circumstances are found by other instructors working with people who became literate only recently.

The course was not aimed at making full-fledged translators of the students, but rather at providing them with more insight into the act of translation, in such a way that they would be able to transfer the portions of the Indonesian Old Testament which had not already been translated, and to use these passages in their sermons in Yali, the local vernacular. It was also expected that a better understanding of translating would help them to criticize more effectively the previous translation into Yali of the New Testament and portions of the Old.

The participants were native speakers of Yali, a non-Austronesian language of the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya. Some of them were bilingual in that they understood and used to some extent either the Mid Grand Valley or the Western dialect of Dani. Moreover, the Yali area under discussion was evangelized in the first instance by speakers of Western Dani. Although there are lexical differences between the Yali and Dani languages, the average cognation being between 60% and 70%, the morphological and syntactic structures are highly comparable. The Yali people also had contacts with Ekagi-speaking teachers who came in after the first signs of acceptance of the gospel, using low Indonesian as the means of communicating their wisdom. Although