

ALLEGORY AND READING GOD'S BOOK:
PAUL AND AUGUSTINE ON THE
DESTINY OF ISRAEL

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Bibliographical Introduction

Thirteen New Testament texts—fourteen, if one includes the Epistle to the Hebrews—have traditionally been ascribed Pauline authorship; modern scholars accept as indisputable only half that number. In (possible) chronological sequence, these are 1 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. These all date from the mid-first century. A dated but still valuable introduction to this corpus is W. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. H.C. Kee (Nashville, 1975). On the historical figure of Paul, an accessible recent treatment is E.P. Sanders, *Paul* (Oxford, 1991). Any commentary will treat the passages I have highlighted here.

The fundamental question of Paul's audience has still not been settled. His letters clearly evince Gentile recipients: 1 Thes. 1:9 (his congregation had turned to God from idols); Phil. 3:2 (the Philippians are not circumcised); Gal. 4:8 (formerly you worshipped beings who are not gods); 1 Cor. 12:2 and elsewhere (they had worshipped dumb idols); Rom. 1:3 (Paul anticipates reaping a harvest among the Romans 'as well as among the rest of the Gentiles'). Most scholars still insist, however, that these communities were actually mixed groups of Jewish and Gentile Christians; against this position, see Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, 1994), esp. pp. 29–41. Were these Gentiles sympathetic to synagogue Judaism, both before and after Paul's contacts with them? This would go far in explaining why Paul can so unselfconsciously presuppose their familiarity with the Scriptures and key religious ideas of Judaism, which provide the building materials of his own message. For: see P. Fredriksen, 'Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 42 (1991), 532–64; against:

see Sanders, *Paul*, pp. 19–25. For the level of Paul's Greek education, which accounts for his facility in using certain exegetical techniques and figures, see A. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge, La., 1977), pp. 29–59.

On Christian typology and allegory in Roman antiquity, an influential early essay is Erich Auerbach, 'Figura,' orig. pub. 1938, trans. Ralph Manheim (from the text published in *Neue Dantestudien* [Istanbul, 1944]) in Auerbach's *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (1959; rpt. Gloucester, Mass., 1973), pp. 11–76, although this essay has been increasingly qualified by more recent studies. See, for example, the perspectives in Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, 1997), and K.E. Greene-McCreight, *Ad Litteram: How Augustine, Calvin, and Barth Read the 'Plain Sense' of Genesis 1–3* (New York, 1999), pp. 1–94. [For further studies, see chapters 2 (iv) and 4; 'Bibliographical Introduction.' —ed.] On patristic supersessionist theology and hermeneutics, the classic studies are L. Williams, *Adversus Judaeos* (Cambridge, 1935); M. Simon, *Verus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre Chrétiens et Juifs dans l'empire romain (135–425)* (Paris, 1948); B. Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins* (1946; rpt. Paris, 1973). On Justin in particular, see H. Chadwick's essay, 'The Vindication of Christianity,' in *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1966). On the distortions of anti-Judaism worked by the Pauline exegesis of second- and third-century theologians (and their modern avatars), see John G. Gager, *The Origins of Antisemitism* (New York, 1983).

English translations of patristic texts are available in several multi-volume series: *The Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers* (rpt. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans); *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press); and *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York: Newman Press). For facing texts with French translation, see *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf) and, especially for Augustine, with excellent notes, the *Bibliothèque augustinienne* (Paris: Études augustiniennes). For Augustine's work on Paul in the mid-390s, see P.F. Landes, *Augustine on Romans* (Chico, Calif., 1982); for the *Confessions*, two excellent English translations are by F.J. Sheed (London, 1943) and Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991); for the *City of God*, see the translation of Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth, 1972).

The premier modern biography of Augustine is by Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, 1967). On Augustine's secularization of history, see the classic essay by R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970). On the effects

of the Origenist controversy on Latin exegesis, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton, 1993), esp. pp. 194–244.

The present essay is not about Augustine's semiotic theory as such, which may be seen in his handbook of exegesis, the *De doctrina christiana*. Two valuable essays on his theory of signs may be found in the collection of essays edited by R.A. Markus, *Augustine* (Garden City, N.Y., 1972): 'Augustine on Signs,' by Markus (pp. 61–91), and B. Darrell Jackson, 'The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's *de doctrina christiana*' (pp. 92–148).

The line I pursue here coordinating Augustine's anti-apocalyptic reading of history, his interpretation of Paul and of Genesis, and his orientation toward Jews and Judaism, is the result of research done over the past several years. Fuller argumentation with more complete bibliography may be found in: 'Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy: Augustine on Paul against the Manichees and the Pelagians,' *Recherches augustinienes*, 23 (1988), 87–114, for the trajectory through the works on Paul in the mid-390s; 'Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity: From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo,' *Vigiliae Christianae*, 45 (1991), 151–83; on the theological status of Jews as witness to the Church, 'Excaecati Occulta Iustitia Dei: Augustine on Jews and Judaism,' *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 3 (1995), 299–324; on the theological import of halakhah, 'Secundum Carnem: History and Israel in the Theology of St. Augustine,' *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), pp. 26–41.

Paul was convinced that he and his generation stood poised on the cusp of a great change, when God would accomplish the definitive conquest of evil through the imminent return from heaven of his Son. Three hundred years later, Augustine was equally convinced that evil rested endemic in human experience and history, and that any resolution lay indefinitely far off. Their profound differences notwithstanding, however, the first-century Jewish apocalyptic visionary and the fifth-century Latin bishop are in some ways temperamental and theological twins. Like planets in opposition, they are brought as close as they can be by the force of their shared question: how can God's constancy and justice as expressed in his dealings with Israel be reconciled with the revelation of Christ? And both offer the same answer: by knowing how to read the Scriptures

kata pneuma / secundum spiritum, which is to say, with spiritual understanding, knowing what the text actually means as opposed to what it merely says.

In the essay that follows, I propose to investigate the ways that each writer uses spiritual interpretation to allegorize Scripture,¹ conforming it to his own passionately held religious convictions. Taking 'allegory'—*allos / other*, *agoreuein / to speak*—in the basic sense of rhetorical techniques for seeing meanings in a text other than what a simple reading would support, I will trace the cultural changes that these authors evince, indeed induce, through their 'spiritual' interpretations of the Bible. As both Paul and Augustine read Scripture in light of their respective convictions about Christ, they struggle with the meaning of Israel imbedded in Scripture—God's speech—as well as with the meaning of history as the place where God speaks. [On notions of 'old' and 'new' orders in history and tensions between them in early Christian interpretation, see chapter 2 (iv). —ed.]

I. Paul and Apocalyptic Transparency

Paul describes himself as a Jew learned in the Law, Pharisaic in interpretive orientation (Phil. 3:5), and enthusiastically observant (Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:6, 'blameless'). Since his experience of the Risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:8), Paul's life had taken an unexpected turn. In the time between that event and the period of the composition of his letters—from roughly 33 to 55 C.E.—Paul had devoted his considerable energies to bringing the good news of Christ's resurrection and impending return to Gentiles, who comprise at least much of the audience of the seven undisputed letters we still have from him.

This revelation convinced Paul that history was in its final act, that he lived and worked within the brief in-between of Christ's resurrection and his triumphant second coming (*Parousia*), when the Lord would descend from heaven to overthrow hostile cosmic powers² and

¹ The Septuagint alone, in Paul's case; the New Testament, including Paul's letters, as well as the Old Testament, in Augustine's.

² Then comes the End, when he delivers the Kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule (*archēn*) and every authority (*exousian*) and every power (*dunamin*); 1 Cor. 15:24. For the identification of these entities as astral forces, see *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and adapt. from the 4th ed. of Walter Bauer's German-Greek lexicon by William F. Arndt

finally death itself (1 Cor. 15:26). At that point, the dead would be raised bodily and, together with the living, would be transformed, exchanging 'lowly' bodies for glorious bodies like that of the Risen Christ (Phil. 3:21)—spiritual, imperishable, immortal (1 Cor. 15:44, 54). Until that moment—indeed, in order to achieve that moment—Paul worked strenuously to evangelize the nations, bringing in their 'full number' (*plērōma*, Rom. 11:25) so that they, through the Spirit, might be adopted into the family of God (8:14–23), and Israel itself be finally redeemed.³

On a practical level, this meant that Paul expected his Gentiles-in-Christ to conduct themselves in a particular way. They were to eschew 'the works of the flesh,' which Paul enumerates frequently, heatedly, and in detail: 'fornication (*porneia*), impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing.'⁴ Elsewhere, exhorting them, he summarizes their ideal behavior simply as 'fulfilling the Law.'⁵ To be 'in Christ' these Gentiles are not to become Jews, that is, receive circumcision and convert—Paul is adamant on this point. Yet, in insisting absolutely that they abandon idols while foreclosing with equal passion their option to convert to Judaism, Paul leads these people to a social no-man's-land: in antiquity, only Jews had the legal right to excuse themselves from the cult that normally expressed responsible participation in the life of a city.⁶ Paul has in effect removed these people from their native social map. Through his message, in Christ, they have been relocated: they now stand in the sweep of the coming redemption that God had promised Israel.

and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Cambridge and Chicago, 1957). Rom. 8:38 names, inter alia, angels and principalities; cf. the *stoicheia tou kosmou* of Gal. 4:3, 9, and the *archontōn tou aiōnos toutou* of 1 Cor. 2:8.

³ He implies that this in-gathering of the nations will trigger Israel's final salvation and thus the redemption of the cosmos; Rom. 11:25–26. We return to this point below.

⁴ Gal. 5:19–21; similarly, Rom. 1:18–31, describing Gentile culture in general; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 Thes. 4:4–6.

⁵ Gal. 5:14; 1 Cor. 7:19, 14:34; Rom 8:4; cf. Rom. 2:26, 13:8–10.

⁶ The intrinsic social instability of this arrangement is perhaps an unobtrusive measure of this new group's time frame: no one—and certainly not Paul—expected the quotidian to endure for very long. Ultimately, of course, such anomalous Gentiles were targeted for prosecution by local authorities, in part for their refusal to participate in civic and imperial cult. For a social and historical description of this aspect of the early Christian movement, see P. Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (New York, 1999), pp. 129–37.

Christ provides the vanishing point for Paul's new perspective on Scripture. He accordingly can re-read biblical narrative and deploy scriptural images in ways that would have astounded, indeed sometimes offended, Jews outside the new movement. Sometimes his allegorizing is in service of a fairly simple point. For example, exhorting his Gentiles in Corinth to seemly behavior, Paul constructs a sustained metaphor around morality and Passover preparations:

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Cor. 5:6-8)

'Leaven' as a metaphor for pride is unexceptional. What is interesting here is the image for Christ—the paschal lamb—and the use Paul makes of it. It's late—much too late for the Corinthians to persist in *porneia*. In the language of the metaphor, it's already late in the afternoon just before the Passover feast, and there's still leaven in the house.⁷ For all its Christological motivation, then, the metaphor depends on traditionally Jewish elements (leaven, Passover, matzah), understood Jewishly, to work.

Later in the letter, Paul obliquely rebukes the Corinthians for not supporting him materially in his evangelizing work. Suddenly he evokes Deuteronomy to drive home his point:

Do I say this on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses: 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain' [Dt. 25:4]. Is it for oxen that God is concerned? *Does he not speak entirely for our sake?* (1 Cor. 9:8-10)

Paul explains his invoking Torah by applying agricultural metaphors to the work of his urban apostolate. He has sown spiritual good in his community; it is only right that he should reap some of their material benefits. An apostle is entitled to support, because preaching the gospel is like treading grain, or threshing, or (he continues) serving at the Temple, where the priests get to eat as a result of their service (v. 13). Though he ultimately insists that he would decline such support (v. 15), he makes a vaguely halakhic argument

⁷ Paul's Pharisaic deep structure might be surfacing here: I doubt the Corinthians would be as agitated as he is by this image.

that he is certainly entitled to it. What is of interest here is not the details, but the conviction that mobilizes them: Moses wrote, and God legislated, for the sake of people like Paul. Biblical revelation speaks immediately to present circumstance.

How can Paul be so sure? Because, through Christ's resurrection, he knows that he stands at the end of history, and this knowledge clarifies what preceded. The Exodus narrative, accordingly, also takes on a new transparency:

I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under a cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. *For they drank from the spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ. . .* [He then synthesizes their several misadventures with idolatry, *porneia*, insolence and ingratitude, and their subsequent punishment.] Now these things happened to them as a warning, *but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come.* (1 Cor. 10:1-11)

The scope of Paul's revision here is much broader, the implications for his construction of the biblical past deeper, than in our preceding example. There, the apostolic present was the *telos* of the biblical past; here, Christ has been retrojected into the biblical past, newly revealed as an actor in Israel's formation. Further, the past event serves to model, and thus interpret, current ones: it provides a *tupos* ("type") of immediate relevance.⁸ Thus, while the biblical storyline remains intact—Moses and the tribes still travel from Egypt to Canaan—its fundamental significance has altered. The destruction of those ancient sinners who had drunk of Christ in the desert allows Paul to segue into warnings against those eating and drinking of Christ now who might feel similarly tempted by idolatry and its perennial accompaniment, fornication (vv. 14-22).

In Galatians, his most intemperate letter, Paul pushes this appropriation of the past yet further. Arguing bitterly against fellow apostles (themselves, like Paul, Christian Jews) who urge his Gentiles to convert fully to Judaism, Paul again retrojects Christ as a character into the biblical narrative. Here, however, this retrojection wrenches the biblical past directly into the Christian present. This audacious

⁸ *tauta de tupoi hemōn egenēthēsan* (v. 6); *tauta de tupikōs sunebainēn ekeinois, egraphē de pros nouthesian hemōn, eis hōus ta telē tōn aiōnōn katēntēken* (v. 11). On Paul's use of typology and allegory, see the brief but valuable discussion by Karlfried Froehlich, *Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York, 1993), s.v. 'Interpretation, Early Christian.'

rescripting has immediate polemical value. Paul can assert to his (confused?) audience that his Judaizing Christian competitors do not even understand the true meaning of their shared foundational myth, the calling of Abraham:

O foolish Galatians! . . . Did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? . . . Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? . . . Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed' [Gen. 12:3]. . . . Now the promises were made to Abraham and his offspring [*sperma*]. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many; but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' which is Christ. (Gal. 3:8-16)

Paul weaves antitheses of spirit versus flesh, faith versus the works of the Law, blessing versus curse, into his retelling of God's call and promise to Abraham—a promise, he now urges, that was made not to Abraham's immediate family, nor even to the nation that eventually issued from him, Israel. Redemption and blessing was promised to Abraham and Christ. Gentiles enter into this blessing through the Spirit, by faith, and *not*, urges Paul, through receiving the Law, aligned in his polemic with 'curse' and 'flesh'—precisely where the mark of circumcision would be sealed. The Spirit already enables Gentiles in Christ to cry 'Abba!' (4:6); without any imposition of Law, in freedom, they have been brought into God's household as sons and thus heirs.

To this almost 'midrashic' argument Paul appends a problematic typology (his word is 'allegory') of two wives, two sons, two covenants, and two holy mountains. His earlier terms, especially the antithesis spirit/flesh, polarize this passage, too:

Tell me, you who desire to be under the Law, do you not hear the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, and the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory. These women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery: she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written,

Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
Break forth and shout, you who are not in travail;
For the children of the desolate one are many more than the children
of her that is married [Isa. 54:1].

Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now. But what does the scripture say? 'Cast out the slave and her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son' of the free woman. So, brethren, we are children not of the slave but of the free woman. (Gal. 4:21-31)

Clearly, Paul meant to insult and demean his Christian opponents through this double allegory. Hagar, the first woman, stands both for the Sinai covenant and the earthly Jerusalem. Her children (by implication, Paul's rivals), who persecute the child of the free woman, are slaves: they shall be cast out. But the free woman (Sarah) represents not the flesh or slavery—Paul's code words for Gentile circumcision—but freedom and promise. She is Jerusalem above, the mother of Paul's community. These children, like her son Isaac, though persecuted by Hagar's children, are born of spirit and promise. They shall inherit; they, in Christ, are free (5:1).

Paul's association of circumcision with 'flesh' allows him to conflate the physical act urged by his opponents with other 'works of the flesh' which they, too, would doubtless condemn—*porneia*, idolatry, enmity, and so on (5:19-21). As the Spirit opposes these fleshly works, Paul leaves hanging in the air the implication that the Spirit, on similar moral ground, also condemns circumcision. Again, the polemical context of this letter is quite precise: Paul argues here against rival Christian missionaries, not Jews or Judaism as such. But the force of his re-reading of scriptural history, wherein God's call of Abraham to the Promised Land is a summons to the Pauline mission, seems to disenfranchise much more than his immediate competition. From such a perspective, what value can the Law and circumcision have at all? And if Abraham's blessing goes through Christ to the Gentiles, what then of Israel?

In Romans we find Paul's answer. This letter, in many ways a calmer companion piece to Galatians, is the closest thing we have to a theological position paper from Paul. Written again to a Gentile audience (but one with whom he was not yet personally acquainted),⁹ Romans reviews the question of the value of circumcision and of the Law—indeed, the value of being a Jew at all—in light of God's

⁹ See esp. Stanley Stowers' demolition of the traditional reconstruction of Paul's audience as 'mixed'—that is, comprised of both Jewish and Gentile Christians—in *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, 1994), esp. pp. 29-41.

recent revelation of his Son and his concomitant plan to establish Gentile righteousness apart from the Law. Minus the goad of active competition and vituperative polemic, Paul can affirm that Jewishness and circumcision are greatly to be valued (*polu kata panta tropon*, 3:2), that the Law and the prophets bear witness to faith in Jesus Christ (3:21), and that Christians uphold (*histanomen*) the Law through their faith (3:31). Abraham's circumcision is a sign (*sēmeion*) or seal of righteousness by faith (4:11); 'the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good' (7:13).

Nonetheless, strong tensions charge his discussion. Insisting on the Law's goodness, he still maintains that Jews are no better off than Gentiles, since all are under the power of sin (3:9–20). The Law articulates what sin is, but cannot prevent or absolve it (expiation, rather, is achieved through Christ's blood; 3:25, 5:9). The Law itself, though not sin (7:7), is linked intimately with the powers of flesh, sin, and death (chs. 7–8 *passim*). What way out of this impasse?

In ch. 6, Paul develops an elaborate conceit around death and baptism. Through baptism, the believer mimetically recapitulates the death and burial of Christ (6:3–4). The correspondences to Christ's experience continue, now linked with resurrection, one already realized, the other still to be fulfilled. The believer, consequent upon this 'dying,' already 'walks in newness of life' and thus does not sin (v. 4);¹⁰ and he or she is assured, through the union in 'death,' of being united with Christ 'in a resurrection like his' (v. 5). Baptism-as-death releases the believer from his own 'sinful body,' thereby ending his servitude to sin (6:6–8) and also to the Law as the calibrator of sin (7:1–6). This extended metaphor continues through the end of chapter 8, where Paul rises to his letter's first eschatological empyrean: the war against sin, death and decay is already won, but not yet; the believer is already an adopted son, but groans while he awaits the redemption of his body; all the hostile forces separating the believer from God have already been overcome and will be overcome in Christ. Between this now and not yet, history hovers over its ultimate caesura: it awaits the redemption of Israel.

Romans 9–11 both describes and explains how God's recent justification of the ungodly in Christ is consistent with his promises to

¹⁰ The argument continues, vv. 7–22, that being in Christ means one is (also) dead to sin; but by the end of the passage, instead of speaking of Christian 'freedom,' Paul speaks of alternative forms of servitude, to sin or to righteousness and God (vv. 18, 22).

Israel, which are irrevocable (11:28–29; cf. 15:8). Weaving together several paradigmatic examples from Genesis and Exodus of God's control over human history and redemption together with the familiar Hellenistic image of the footrace,¹¹ Paul holds that Christ is himself the *telos* or goal of the Law with respect to the justification of those who believe (that is, the Gentiles, 10:4).¹² Ultimately, God will bring it about (in Paul's view, very soon) that Israel will acknowledge God's plan so that, with the Gentiles brought in, 'all Israel will be saved' (11:26).

But what prevents that acknowledgement now? Paul answers that God has mysteriously hardened Israel in order to create the opportunity for the Gentiles (hence Israel's 'stumbling,' though not falling, 11:11). It is to this end that he reviews God's sovereign choice of Isaac over Ishmael (9:7), Jacob over Esau (9:10–13), his hardening of Pharaoh's heart: all was done with a view toward the divine 'purpose of election' (v. 11), 'so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth' (Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17). So too God exercises his prerogative in these last days, temporarily hardening Israel as he oversees the final act in the history of redemption.

Leaving biblical history to one side, Paul conjures a prophetic image of divine control: God is (like) a potter, humans (like) clay pots. The potter has an absolute 'right' over the clay (*pēlos*), to shape out of the same lump (*phurama*) whatever sort of vessel he will: man cannot second-guess God's plan. 'Who are you, man, to answer back to God?' (9:20).¹³ All will work out in the End, as God has planned (and Paul foresees). 'For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all' (11:32).

Paul's use of extended metaphor and typology, his mobilization of biblical and even halakhic argument in parenetic exhortation, his

¹¹ See Stowers, *Romans*, pp. 304–16, and esp. his comparison with the Homeric footrace which Paul's allusion would have immediately conjured, the funeral games for Patroclus in *Iliad* XXIII.

¹² *telos gar nomou Christos eis dikaiosunēn panti tō pisteuonti*. See Stowers, *Romans*, p. 308.

¹³ Cf. Isa. 29:16 ('Shall the potter be regarded as the clay; that the thing made should say of its maker, He did not make me; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, He has no understanding?'); 45:9 ('Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it, What are you making? or, Your work has no handles?'); 64:8 ('Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.');

Jer. 18:6 ('O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done, says the Lord. Behold, like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.')

readings *kata pneuma*, crackling with anger in the heat of controversy—all these rhetorical strategies stand in service of his basic conviction, and thus basic orientation toward biblical interpretation, with which he sums up his letter to the Romans: 'For *whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope*' (15:4). His clarity on the impending future enabled and encouraged him to read the biblical past as transparent on the present, its actual matrix of meaning. And that present, itself incandescently eschatological, he construed as consistent with the traditions and convictions of his own people, his 'brothers,' his kinsmen 'according to the flesh' (9:3): 'For Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truthfulness in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy' (15:8).

But this moment passed. Paul's generation died, and scattered communities very diverse in cultural orientation were left to interpret not only the Scriptures that Paul had interpreted, but also Paul's message itself. The simple passage of time necessarily works changes in any millenarian movement.¹⁴ But given the way that this particular movement was bound up with textual interpretation, in a culture where rhetorical education marked the measure of social and intellectual achievement, we can sense such changes even by glancing at the literary productions of the developing Gentile communities that saw themselves as Paul's heirs. Seeing in Paul himself their warrant to read allegorically, these Christians constructed an evangelical hermeneutic that denied the foundation of Paul's own proclamation: the irrevocable election of Israel and the universality of divine redemption.

II. *The Apologists and Allegorical Transparency*

Allegory as typology dominated post-apostolic Christian readings of Scripture. This typology established a resonance between some event, image or personage in the LXX and a theological claim, usually about Christ. Sometimes the typology simply articulated the theological claim; sometimes it set up a comparison disparaging to the

¹⁴ See John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1975).

Septuagintal prototype. In the later writings in the NT canon, for example, the flood story becomes an inferior type of baptism (2 Pt. 3:18–22), the Jerusalem priesthood an inferior anticipation of the eternal priesthood of Christ (Heb. 9:11–28).¹⁵ The Epistle of Barnabas held that the entirety of Jewish Scripture had been misunderstood by the Jews: its intended audience had always been the Church, which understood spiritually, therefore correctly, the moral or Christological meaning of circumcision, fasting, food laws, sacrifices, Sabbaths, and so on (chs. 2–17). Melito, in his Easter homily, read the Exodus story as a prefiguration of Jesus' passion and resurrection: the narrative details of the former reveal, when understood correctly, both the events and the theological significance of the latter.

Typology, of course, does not exhaust the meaning of 'allegory,' which can also connote, for example, the figuration of some sort of philosophical truth. In the mid-second-century treatise of Justin Martyr, the *Dialogue with Trypho*, we have a rich example of both sorts of allegory, where the principles encoded in Justin's Christological reading of the LXX display his intellectual allegiance to philosophical paideia as much as his imaginative zeal when uncovering the typological footprints of Christ in Old Testament narrative.

Justin begins his dialogue by establishing the nature of God and the soul's relation to God: God is 'that which always maintains the same nature in the same manner and is the cause of all other things,' discernible not to the physical eye but to the eye of the soul, which is to say, to 'the mind alone' (iii). He moves rapidly from these assertions (which raise no objection from Trypho, his Jewish interlocutor) to criticism of the Jewish mode of interpreting Scripture. Citing Isaiah on the redemption of the nations (51:4–5, LXX) and Jeremiah on the 'new covenant' (31:31–32), Justin criticises Trypho both for not understanding that a new Law has been given and for poorly understanding the Mosaic 'old law' (xi–xii). 'You have understood all things in a carnal sense' (xiv), observing the law of Moses in a fleshly, literal way, because failing to understand that what seem to be commandments in the Pentateuch are actually disguised allusions to Christ, their true referent. Thus, purification rituals really speak of baptism into Christ (xiv); the Passover sacrifice, of the Crucifixion

¹⁵ An acutely complicated analogy, since Christ thereby serves both as perfect priest and as perfect sacrifice, performing in one sense an act of self-immolation at the heavenly altar; 9:11, 14, 24.

(xl); the meal-offerings, of the Eucharist (xli); the twelve bells on the robes of the high priest, of Christ's apostles (xlii).¹⁶ Biblical legislation that does not oblige allegory must be understood as punitive, given on account of the proverbially stoney Jewish heart (xviii, xxi, xxii, xxvii, and frequently).

The Jews' inability to interpret *kata pneuma*, further, is due not only to their not being Christian, but also to their not being adequately philosophical. The busy deity talking at length with Moses, visiting Abraham at Mamre, wrestling with Jacob at Jabbok *cannot* have been the High God who according to the canons of paideia is transcendent and radically changeless. Rather, another God (*heteros theos*) had put in these appearances: the Father's Son, the pre-incarnate Christ (lvi–lxii). Not knowing the true identity of the chief biblical protagonist, the Jews inevitably misread their own Scriptures (cxxvi).

More than the identity of the biblical God shifts under this reading; so too does the identity of the community of revelation that knows him. Justin adduces Isa. 42:1–4 (LXX)—'Jacob is my servant . . . and Israel is my elect . . . In his name shall the gentiles trust'—to identify the true Israel.

Is it Jacob the patriarch in whom the Gentiles and yourselves shall trust? Is it not Christ? As, therefore, Christ is the Israel and the Jacob, *so even we, who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelite race.* (cxxxv; cf. cxxiii)

This last argument justifies allegory through an appeal to empirical verification. Gentiles, Justin suggests, are flocking to (his) church, and not to the synagogue.¹⁷ The turning of the Gentiles had long been forespoken as an end-time event; thus, Gentile interest in Christianity proves that Jesus was the Christ (cxxi). A similar argument undergirds his earlier comments on the obsolescence of Jewish carnal inter-

¹⁶ Cf. also the long middle section (lxiii–cvi), largely on Psalms, where Justin extracts every mention of 'wood' or 'tree' as a prefiguration of Christ's crucifixion.

¹⁷ In reality, of course, the situation was much more confusing, and at other places in the *Dial.* Justin alludes to the great variety of Gentile Christian churches, insisting that Trypho distinguish his group from the others (e.g., xi, a reference to Christian dualists or gnostics; xxxv, a list of 'heretical' Christian teachers and groups). He also disapprovingly mentions Gentiles who convert to Judaism, thereafter striving to live indistinguishably from 'native' Jews (xlvi), they are weak-minded; cxxiii), and law-observant Jewish Christians who even prevail upon some Gentile Christians to follow Mosaic law (xlvi).

pretation and observance of the Law. Since the wars with Rome, Jews have been driven from their native land, indeed banned from Jerusalem: they *cannot* fulfill the commandments. And yet they cling to their carnal interpretations, never realizing that the Law they glory in is essentially punitive. Nowhere does their perverse literal-mindedness manifest itself more clearly, or ironically, than in their insistence on circumcising the flesh. Precisely this custom, and it alone, singles Jews out from other people, facilitating their continuing isolation, punishment, and exile—for obduracy, for murdering the prophets, for killing Christ (xvi). Since deprived of their city and land, they, through circumcision, have ironically fulfilled Hosea, becoming a no-people and a no-nation (xviii).

The God who speaks in the Bible is God the Son; the people that is Israel is the Church. Jews who remain Jews will be trampled by a furious Christ when he returns (xxvi). The mandates of the Law were never meant to be taken literally: true circumcision is always and only of the heart (xviii, and frequently); true Sabbath, to rest in Christ (xii). The covenants are in fact discontinuous: 'the Law promulgated on Horeb is now old, and belongs to you alone' (xi). 'There is now another covenant, and another Law has gone forth from Zion' (xxiv). Jewish notions of God, election, covenant, history—all had been profoundly mistaken, the mistake both caused and compounded by the Jews' inability to understand *kata pneuma*. The bright light of Christ now shone over the Jewish past and its record, revealing them for what they actually were: signifiers of the Son and his Church.

III. Augustine and Historical Opacity

Allegory had saved Augustine for the Church. Repulsed by the Catholic fundamentalism of his family, he had been a Manichaean 'hearer' for almost a decade by the time he ventured to Italy. Latin Manichaeism in this period was a radical Paulinist sect; the dualist theology of its members reflected their strenuous effort to make Paul consistent. To this end, they polarized the tensions marking his letters, seeing in his positive statements about the Law, the Temple, or circumcision evidence of later judaizing interpolations. So consistent was their separation of the Law from the Gospel that they repudiated the Old Testament as well. Its unelevating stories of bodily theophanies,

bloody battles and sexual couplings were, literally, too carnal to be believed. If the Catholics in their confusion and hypocrisy chose to keep the Jews' book while themselves not keeping the Law, that was their business. The Manichees, harkening to the Apostle, knew that the flesh and all its works were evil, that the law brought sin and death; they knew that they had been called in the Spirit to newness of life.

Still held by the force of this critique of Scripture and this strong reading of Paul, Augustine found himself in Milan at the height of a renaissance of Platonic studies. Through reading 'some books of the Platonists' he achieved a new understanding of evil: its source was not flesh or matter but, metaphysically, the absence of good, and, anthropologically, the defective movement of the uncoerced will. And by attending the sermons of Milan's Catholic bishop, he understood further how the principles of this philosophy might be applied to a new reading of the Bible:

And it was a joy to hear Ambrose, who often repeated to his congregation as if it were a rule he was most strongly urging upon them, the text *the letter kills, but the spirit gives life* (2 Cor. 3:6). And he would go on to draw aside the veil of mystery and lay open the spiritual meaning of things which, taken literally, would have seemed to teach falsehood. (*Confessions* 6.4.6)

In his early post-conversion writings Augustine praised allegorical techniques of exegesis and applied them polemically against Manichaean interpretations of Genesis.¹⁸ Within three years, however, he again attempted to comment on Genesis, this time *ad litteram*, in order to understand the biblical account of Creation *secundum historicam proprietatem*—'according to its historical character.'¹⁹ This same period saw the staccato composition of various Pauline commentaries: the *Propositiones*, or notes on the Epistle to the Romans; the *Inchoata expositio*, another unfinished commentary, also on Romans; a commentary on Galatians; three substantial essays on questions arising from Romans chs. 7 through 9; and finally, capping this period, and again reviewing Romans 7–9, the answer to questions posed by his old

¹⁸ *De Genesi c. Manichaeos*, begun in 389 before his departure from Italy but not completed until his return to Africa shortly thereafter; in praise of allegorical exegesis, *De utilitate credendi* 2.4 – 3.10.

¹⁹ *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*, begun in 393; Augustine's characterization of this project, *Retractationes* 1.18; cf. his remarks in *De Gen. c. Man.* 2.2.3.

mentor in Milan, Simplicianus.²⁰ The Augustine who emerged from this bout of intensive work on Paul went on to develop original, even idiosyncratic, views on the nature of human freedom and divine justice, on the relation of history and revelation, on the relation of the soul to the fleshly body, and even on the relation of Jewish halakhic observance to understanding *secundum carnem* ('according to the flesh'). His interpretive approach to Scripture also, accordingly, changed. [On attitudes toward the relation between body and soul in ancient Alexandrian interpretation, see chapter 4; on some nineteenth- and twentieth-century approaches to the figure of the body, see chapter 19. —ed.]

We can trace the development of these ideas, and consequently of the changing place of allegory in Augustine's approach to Scripture, by attending to some of the details of his work on Paul. In Romans, Augustine argued, Paul had organized the history of salvation into a four-stage process: *ante legem* (before the Law), *sub lege* (under the Law), *sub gratia* (under grace), and the final eschatological stage, *in pace* (in celestial peace).²¹ These stages are at once both objective, communal and historical (the experience of humanity from the time before the giving of the Law at Sinai to the second coming of Christ), and also subjective, individual and sequential (the development of the individual toward the moment of conversion—stage 2 to stage 3—and thence ultimately to final redemption in Christ). On the macro-level, this formulation permitted Augustine to see the Law as a stage of continuing relevance for the individual believer, thus binding into one movement Jewish dispensation and Christian; on the micro-level, it placed at dead center the crucial moment of transition, from under the Law to under grace. How is such transfer effected?

Concentrating on Paul's image of the divine potter in Rom. 9, Augustine initially answered that man *sub lege* must call on God for aid, because otherwise he could not avoid sin. Is this too harsh? *O homo tu quis es*—who are you, man, to answer back to God?²² He then reiterates Paul's metaphor, with a moralizing slant. *Sub lege*,

²⁰ Abbreviations below include the following: for the *Propositiones*, *Propp.*; for the three essays, *De div. quaest.* (from *De 83 diversis quaestionibus*); and for the response to Simplicianus, *Ad Simpl.*

²¹ *Propp.* 13–18. Paul taught so specifically, Augustine says, in order to avoid seeming to condemn the Law (as the Manichees charged he did) or to deny human free will (as the Manichees did).

²² Rom. 9:20–21; *Propp.* 62.

man is a lump of clay, a *consersio* or *massa luti* out of which God can mold such vessels as he pleases. Until man ceases to live 'according to this lump' (*secundum hanc consersionem*) he is carnal or earthly. Only once he puts away his carnal self, the 'man of clay' (*homo luti*), can he understand spiritual things. Until and unless he does, piety demands that he hold his peace and not remonstrate with God.²³

Within months, Augustine returns to this passage in Romans, and his ethicizing metaphor begins to give way to a historicized image. In qu. 68.3 of *De div. quaest.* the *massa luti* becomes a *massa peccati*, the penal situation of the species after Adam, through whose sin 'our nature also sinned.' No longer a neutral substratum, the image has a negative valence; not a 'lump of clay' from which good or bad vessels might be formed, but a 'lump of sin' which provides what human material God has to work with.

By 396, this negative image has been reified into a description of a universal, objective state. Responding to Simplicianus, again on Romans 9, Augustine argues that the initiative to move from stage 2 to stage 3, the impetus of conversion, can come only from God himself. Humans cannot effectively will, because they are born in Adam, *una quaedam massa peccati*.²⁴ Sinners complain, but should not dare answer back to God, who is just and fair, though not in any way that humans can perceive or appreciate (*aequitate occultissima et ab humanis sensibus remotissima iudicat*). The historical Paul, as we have seen, used this image to illustrate how God can cast individuals (like Pharaoh or Esau) into certain historical roles as he works out his purpose of election for the ultimate redemption of all. Augustine, pondering the same image, points to God's amazing, mysterious generosity in choosing to redeem *any* from this lump of perdition. Jews, Gentiles, Pharaoh, Paul—all are from this same mass of the justly damned.²⁵ If God in his mysterious mercy gives grace to some, the only appropriate response is to praise his inscrutable decisions.

The universal *massa peccati* is the negative obverse of the Law. Once the exclusive privilege of Israel, the Law is of universal benefit, thanks to the coming of Christ. Here, against the anti-Judaism both of his dualist opponents and of Catholic tradition itself, Augustine

²³ *Propp.* 62.17–23.

²⁴ *Ad Simpl.* I.2.16.

²⁵ *Una est enim ex Adam massa peccatorum et impiorum, in qua et Iudaei et Gentes remota gratia Dei ad unam pertinent consersionem*; I.2.19.

lifts up the positive things Paul has to say about the Law, and maintains that the Law, because God-given, is and always has been the means to salvation whose *finis* is Christ (Rom. 10:4). We can see how he makes his case by following two of his exegetical strategies: typology, on the one hand, and *interpretatio ad litteram*, on the other.

Typological exegesis, as we have seen, had long been a staple of Christian exegesis of the Jewish Scriptures. It was a technique of Christianization, a way to stake a claim for the Church in the texts of the synagogue; it was also a tool of polemic, since the Old Testament *typos* was often regarded as inferior to the Christological datum it prefigured.

Augustine's typology was on the one hand similarly motivated: he argues at length, especially against the Manichees, that the entirety of the New Testament, which they claim to revere, is prefigured in the Old Testament, which they revile and repudiate. But unlike the typologies of many of his predecessors, Augustine usually forbears derogatory comparisons when aligning Old Testament images with New. His view of the Law as constant, God-given and good both before and after the coming of Christ affects the tone of his typologies: if the Old Testament is a concealed form of the New and vice versa, then they are each alike in dignity and positive religious value. [On typological structures of meaning and problems in the orientation of the Church, see chapter 2 (iv). —ed.]

For example, in his massive work against Latin Manichaeism, the *Contra Faustum*, Augustine explores in exhausting detail the myriad anticipations of Christ and his Church to be found (if one knows how to read aright) in Jewish Scripture.²⁶ He begins by quoting the Manichees' favorite Apostle against them, citing Paul's enumeration in Rom. 9 of the privileges and prerogatives of Israel, among which is the Law.²⁷ Then his review of the 'most minute details' begins: as

²⁶ 'To enumerate all the passages in the Hebrew prophets referring to our Lord and savior Jesus Christ would exceed the limits of a volume. . . . The whole contents of these scriptures are either directly or indirectly about Christ. Often the reference is allegorical, or enigmatic, perhaps in verbal allusion, or in a historical narrative, requiring diligence of the student. . . . Some passages are plain . . . and even the figurative passages, when brought together, will be found so harmonious in their testimony to Christ as to put to shame the obtuseness of the sceptic'; *C. Faust.* 12.7.

²⁷ Rom. 9:4, cited *C. Faust.* 12.3, where he also mentions Gal. 4:4 ('In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law') and Rom. 3:1-2, on whether there is any advantage to being a Jew ('Much in every way; chiefly, to them were committed the oracles of God').

Eve was made from Adam's side while he slept, so the Church was made by the blood of Christ which flowed from his side after his death (12.8). Abel, the younger brother, is killed by Cain, the older brother; Christ, the head of the younger people (i.e., the Gentiles), is killed by the elder people, the Jews (12.9). Noah and his family are saved by water and wood; the family of Christ is saved by baptism into his crucifixion (12.14). All kinds of animals enter the ark; all nations, the Church. The unclean animals enter in twos, just as the wicked within the Church are in twos, meaning easily divided because of their tendency to schism (12.15). The ark's entrance is on its side, and one enters the Church by the 'sacrament of the remission of sins which flowed from Christ's opened side' (12.16). Scripture mentions the twenty-seventh day of the month; 27 is the cube of 3, hence typifying the Trinity (12.19). Entering the ark at the beginning of travail, Noah and his sons are separated from their wives; exiting, the couples are together. This prefigures the resurrection of the flesh at the end of the world, when soul and body will be reunited after death in perfect harmony, a marriage undisturbed by the passions of mortality (12.21). 'The scriptures teem with such predictions' (12.25).

Though the Old Testament prefigures the New, it has its own historical reality and integrity, and the symbolic complexity of spiritual interpretation should not obscure the simplicity of biblical narrative: this was Augustine's principle in interpreting *ad litteram*. We see this most clearly in his understanding of the Jewish people and their observance of the Law. Earlier fathers, as we have seen, saw Jewish praxis as the behavioral index of their wrong-headed carnal scriptural interpretation. If Jews had really understood what God has intended by the Law (so went the argument), the last thing they would have done was interpret it literally, thinking that the command to circumcise meant fleshly circumcision, that the food laws meant eating or not eating certain things, and so on.²⁸

Wrong, says Augustine. 'The Jews were right to practice all these things'—blood sacrifices, purity rituals, food disciplines, Sabbath; their only fault lay in not recognizing, once Christ came, that a new era—not a 'new' Law—had begun (12.9). The Law perdured, the same

²⁸ See above, pp. 136–39.

from Moses to Christ (22.6). By keeping it, the entire Jewish people 'was like a great prophet' foretelling Christ not only in word but also in deed (22.24). God, in other words, despite the plenitude of meanings available in Scripture, was no allegorist when giving his mandates to Israel. Whatever else his Torah signified, in the time before Christ, it also prescribed behavior.

Especially that most distinctive and most reviled observance, fleshly circumcision, embodied as an *actio prophetica* the central mystery of Christianity itself. What Paul had designated the 'seal of the righteousness of faith' (Rom. 4:11) marked in the organ of generation the regeneration of the flesh made possible by the coming of Christ in the flesh and his bodily resurrection (6.3). Had Jews understood God's command *secundum spiritum* without performing it *secundum carnem* (as Justin and others would have wished), they would have only imperfectly prefigured the Christological *mysterium* of Incarnation. Further, insists Augustine, Jesus himself was circumcised, kept the food laws, offered at the Temple, and observed the Sabbath; so also Peter, James, Paul, and all the other Jews of the first generation.²⁹ Once Christ came, the Law no longer had to be enacted, since it was revealed in him and in the sacraments of his Church. But the relation of Jewish observances and Christian sacrament is one of continuity, not contrast (19.17). As for the question, 'Who is Israel?' Augustine advised that the name, to avoid confusion, be left to the Jews.³⁰

This insistence on historical simplicity and realism even in prophetic typology gives Augustine's reading of Scripture an intensely dramatic dimension. The Old Testament might prefigure the New, but this is no bloodless correspondence of things signifying with things signified: the actors in the history of Israel remain firmly rooted in their own time even as their actions point ahead to Christ. Consider this rendering, in *City of God* 16.37, of the scene in Genesis 27 when Isaac

²⁹ Augustine especially works out this argument for an historically located, Torah-observant first generation in the late 390s in his work on Galatians and the quarrel Paul reports there over whether Gentiles should be made to keep Jewish practice. See Epistles 28 (c. 394/95), 40 (c. 397) and 82 (c. 405), all addressed to Jerome. For the details of this surprising (and, to Jerome's taste, unnerving) defense of Jewish halakhic observance, see P. Fredriksen, '*Secundum Carnem*: History and Israel in the Theology of St. Augustine,' *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirm and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), pp. 26-41.

³⁰ Epistle 196.8-11.

realizes that he has given Esau's blessing to Jacob.³¹ First Augustine gives the language of the blessing, Gen. 27.27 ff. 'Behold,' says Isaac,

the smell of my son is like the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord has blessed. And may God give you of the dew of heaven and of the richness of the soil, and abundance of corn and wine, and may nations serve you and princes do reverence to you. Become lord over your brother, and your father's sons will do reverence to you. Whoever curses you, let him be cursed; and whoever blesses you, let him be blessed.

Next comes the Christological decoding. Augustine continues:

Thus the blessing of Jacob is the proclamation of Christ among all nations. This is happening; this is actively going on. Isaac is the Law and the Prophets, and Christ is blessed by the Law and the Prophets, even by the lips of the Jews, as by someone who does not know what he is doing. . . . The world is filled like a field with the fragrance of the name of Christ. . . . It is Christ whom the nations serve, and to whom princes do reverence. He is lord over his brother, since his people [the Gentiles] have dominion over the Jews. . . . Our Christ, I repeat, is blessed, that is, he is truly spoken of, even by the lips of the Jews, who, although in error, still chant the Law and the Prophets. They suppose that another is being blessed, the Messiah whom they in their error still await.

Then, abruptly, we stand face-to-face with the historical patriarch:

Look at Isaac! He is horror-stricken when his elder son asks for the promised blessing, and he realizes that he has blessed another in his place. He is amazed, and asks who this other can be; and yet he does not complain that he has been deceived. Quite the contrary. The great mystery [*sacramentum*] is straightway revealed to him, in the depths of his heart, and he eschews indignation and confirms his blessing. 'Who then,' he says, 'hunted game for me and brought it in to me? And I ate all of it, before you arrived! Well, I have blessed him, so let him be blessed.' One would surely expect at this point the curse of an angry man, if this happened in the ordinary course of events, instead of by inspiration from above. Historical events, these, but events with prophetic meaning! Events on earth, but directed from heaven! The actions of men, but the operation of God!

Augustine's construing his typologies continuously, so that the Old Testament and the New conformed rather than contrasted, his insist-

³¹ Translations from the *City of God* are based on *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth, 1972), with some adjustments.

ence on reading Scripture *ad litteram*, 'historically,' and his positive assessment of 'carnal' Jewish praxis, correspond to one of his major theological positions, again defended with reference to Paul, if not derived from him: that the fleshly body is the native and natural home of the soul.³² Arguing this case in his mature reprise of his commentary on Genesis, Augustine urged that God had created Adam and Eve *ab initio* both body and soul together; and that the fleshly body, reunited with the soul, would participate in the final redemption.³³ He was thus necessarily driven back to Paul's unambiguous statement in 1 Cor. 15:50: 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.'

Origen, criticising millenarian Christians and others for a literalist, 'impoverished' understanding of resurrection, had pointed to precisely this verse in support of his view: the raised body would be the subtle body—Paul's *sōma pneumatikon* (1 Cor. 15:44)—by means of which rational beings are distinguished from each other and from the *asōmaton* deity.³⁴ Latin Christians, especially in the face of the Origenist controversy of the late fourth and early fifth centuries, affirmed that the fleshly body would also be saved, but even a diluted dependence on classical paideia led them to associate what was most truly human with the soul itself. Augustine, however, in part against Manichaean exegesis that held Paul to denigrate the flesh, moralized Paul's statement: *caro*, 'flesh,' actually stood in for *qualitas carnalis*, an ethics oriented toward the self rather than toward God.³⁵ Hence, for Augustine, the 'spiritual body' anticipated by Paul is the

³² As opposed to a view traditional for both non-Stoic philosophy and Alexandrian allegorists, Jewish or Christian, that the soul lived in flesh as a result of some pre-incarnate error or lapse—a position to which the young Augustine had also subscribed. Augustine most clearly enunciates this later view in his second attempt to comment on Genesis, *De Genesi ad litteram*. On the evolution of this newer position, and its polemical context, see P. Fredriksen, 'Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy: Augustine on Paul against the Manichees and the Pelagians,' *Recherches augustiniennes*, 23 (1988), 87–114, esp. 105 ff.

³³ E.g., *De Gen. ad litt.* III.21.33 and IX.3.5 – 11.19, arguing from this that God had always intended *even before the Fall* that humans procreate sexually (else why create Eve?); see the sustained polemic against those who think the fleshly body will not rise, in *De civitate Dei* XXII.

³⁴ See *Peri Archōn* II.10.3.

³⁵ *Prop.* 13 – 18.10; 46.7; *De div. quaest.*, qu. 66.6; also from this same period, in his handbook on exegesis, *De doctrina christiana* I.23.22 – 26.27, on the soul's natural love for the body; cf. *De Gen. ad litt.* X.12.20, where he explains that by 'flesh' Paul intends not 'body,' but those impulses that arise equally from both body and soul that separate man from God.

body of flesh, stripped of its sinful (that is, 'fleshly') impulses once transformed in the Kingdom. And this was as it should be, since souls and bodies were always meant to be together, and together defined what was 'human.'

So also with exegesis. The Bible must be read both for its spiritual meanings (*secundum spiritum*) and for its historical meanings (*ad litteram*).³⁶ As with exegesis, so with biblical Judaism: the Jews had been right to keep the Law *secundum carnem*, literally and not just spiritually, since such was precisely appropriate to the time before Christ. And as with exegesis and with the Law, so with anthropology: humanity was neither soul alone nor soul merely using a body, but both together. And as with all these things, so with typology: Augustine's orientation expressed his conviction that the New Testament and the Old, like soul and body, were intimately, fundamentally, essentially connected. The task of the reader was to see how.

Augustine's principles of exegesis in some ways brought him, though inadvertently, much closer to some of the historical Paul's fundamental positions than were many of the theologians standing between them. This is nowhere more true than on the status of Jews and Israel. Justin, by contrast, representing a common interpretive stance, sees Jews as permanently displaced by the Church, which is the true Israel. For the historical Paul, this would be unthinkable, and the entire second half of his letter to the Romans defends Israel's permanent position as distinguished and beloved by God (9:4-5; 11:1, 28; 15:8). For Paul, Israel's not heeding the gospel is a temporary, unnatural state of affairs brought about by direct divine intervention (11:25: this is a *mustērion*). And he knows this to be so because of his eschatological perspective: Paul sees the true meanings in Scripture because he stands in that generation 'upon whom the end of the ages has come' (1 Cor. 10:11).

Augustine's conviction that Judaism was essentially, uniquely compatible with Christianity, expressed in the typological transparency that he sees between the testaments, aligns him in some ways with Paul. Yet his historical position is intrinsically different: by his lifetime, long centuries stood between Christ's resurrection and his second coming, and indeed, between Christ's resurrection and the closing of the Christian canon. No sense of an impending ending imposes

³⁶ See, e.g., *De doct. chr.* III.10.14 - 27.38 on how to determine both literal and figurative meanings.

clarity on current circumstances; indeed, argues Augustine, the time of the end is unknowable in principle and probably indeterminably far off. The transparency he sees between the testaments, in brief, does not extend outside them. Current events do not clearly conform to a pattern of prophecy; post-biblical history, he insists, is opaque, not revealing the divine plan. [On perspectives regarding historical change in later allegorical theory and practice, see chapters 12 (ii, v-viii), 14, and 17-20. —ed.]

Yet for Augustine, as for Paul, Israel itself remains an eschatological fixed point; positioned by God as the Pole Star of history. To the Jews Augustine imputes an abidingly revelatory function, precisely because they remain doggedly loyal to their traditional observance of the Law. Under all previous foreign powers, including Rome, Jews clung to their own practices; and with the coming of the Church they have remained the same.³⁷ Augustine takes this as a great mystery, a situation caused by God's *oculto iustoque iudicio*.³⁸ And Jews will remain Jews, he avers, until the end of the age.³⁹ Left behind when history, at Christ's coming, surged to a new stage, Jews themselves retain a perpetual eschatological relevance, precisely through their 'carnal' practice, as witnesses to Christian truth.

For Augustine as for Paul, then, the limits of allegory are set by the historical fact of the Jewish people. No matter what the cosmic transformation, impending or distant, no matter what the inner meaning revealed through the spirit in the Law and the prophets, Israel itself abides. As both recipient of revelation and in this sense co-author of Scripture, Israel, for both thinkers, locates God once-for-all in human time.

³⁷ 'It is a most notable fact that all the nations subjugated by Rome adopted the ceremonies of Roman worship; whereas the Jewish nation, whether under pagan or Christian monarchs, has never lost the sign of their law, by which they are distinguished from all other nations and peoples'; *C. Faust.* XII.13.

³⁸ *De fide rerum* 6.9.

³⁹ *C. Faust.* XII.12.