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Nielsen, Jesper Tang

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Jesper Tang Nielsen

The Cognitive Structures in Galatians 1:4

Among early Christian interpreters of Jesus' death and resurrection, few have had deeper impact than Paul. Notwithstanding possible relations to earlier traditions (cf. 1 Cor 15:3), his letters contain the first known explications of the Christ event. Already within the NT they formed the basis for the continuing interpretation of Christ's significance (cf. 2 Pet 3:15-16). In Christian theology they still hold a foundational position. More often than not, the core of later theological conceptions derives from Pauline ideas.

Although the importance of Paul's thoughts is an established fact, it is not much discussed how he constructed the fundamental conceptions in his letters. Tradition-historical and history-of-religions approaches have thoroughly investigated the backgrounds of the Pauline thought world. A range of possible influences has been detected, but there has been little research into the ways Paul incorporates different traditional motifs. Therefore it has not been explained how he created new and fertile ideas in his endeavor to explicate Christ's implications for the life of the believers.

Cognitive theory provides an analytical framework for describing the combination of hitherto disparate ideas. Conceptual networks depict how previously unrelated mental spaces are combined and integrated into new mental spaces with innovative concepts. The modelling of this cognitive procedure can explain how new concepts arose from traditional ideas. This procedure laid the ground for important structures in Paul's argument and dominant conceptions in the following theological tradition.

One of Paul's innovative contributions to Christian theology can be located to Gal 1:4. The verse involves a creative integration of two different ideas that let an original understanding of Christ's significance emerge. Paul draws on a common Hellenistic understanding of voluntary death but inserts it into an apocalyptic frame consisting of a radical opposition between this present world and a coming one. This combination is unseen in contemporary literature and results in the original notion of a voluntary death that causes an apocalyptic turn of ages. Having construed Jesus' death in this way, Paul bases his entire argument in Galatians on the involved dualistic structure. In Christian tradition the new idea furthermore gives rise to an important construal of Jesus' death. The conceptual integration model demonstrates the cognitive process involved

in the innovative integration of the two separate mental spaces and explains how the original idea emerges.

My analysis takes its starting point from exegetical observations on Gal 1:4 in its literary and rhetorical context. It is followed by a presentation of the proposed backgrounds for the notions in Gal 1:4. Concluding that none of the OT, Hellenistic-Jewish, or Greek traditions are able to account fully for Paul's idea, I introduce the theory of conceptual integration. For my specific purpose, however, the conceptual integration network is supplemented by narratological theory in order to explain both the structural difference as well as the connection between the notions that are involved in Gal 1:4. On that basis it is possible to present the innovative conceptual integration in Gal 1:4 and demonstrate its fundamental role in Galatians and Christian theology.

Galatians 1:4 in Its Literary and Rhetorical Context

Galatians 1:4 belongs to the letter opening (1:1-5).¹ According to ancient epistolography an introductory greeting must state the sender, the recipient, and a greeting. Paul follows these conventions when he mentions the senders, i.e., himself and those with him; the receivers, i.e., the congregations in Galatia; and finally a greeting: χάρις...καὶ εἰρήνη (*charis...kai eirēnē*, “grace...and peace” [1:1-3]). In addition to the conventional opening, Paul habitually expands his greeting with theological statements. He relates “grace and peace” to “our father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3). To the last part of this definition Paul adds another explication. He defines the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who “gave himself up for our sins” (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, *tou dontos heauton hyper tōn hamartiōn hēmōn* [1:4a]).

It is not entirely clear if this reading is original. The alternative reading *περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν* (*peri tōn hamartiōn hēmōn*, “to take away our sins”) is equally well attested.² The connotations of the two possibilities differ. *ὑπὲρ* (*hyper*) with genitive means “over,” though in NT literature this original spatial meaning is no longer in use. Instead it normally introduces the motive of a

¹ On the rhetorical structure of Galatians, see H.D. Betz, “The Literary Composition and Function of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *NTS* 21 (1975): 353-79; G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 144-52.

² *ὑπὲρ*: p⁵¹ B H; *περὶ*: p^{46vid} B* A D F G Ψ M. External evidence is thus inconclusive.

given act, which most often means its beneficiary.³ Pagan literature even knows the verb ὑπεραποθνήσκω, *hyperapothnēskō*, which means “to die for the sake of someone.”⁴ In the NT ὑπέρ (*hyper*) is often used to introduce the beneficiaries of Jesus’ death (e.g., Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-20; Rom 5:6-8; 14:15; 1 Cor 11:24; 2 Cor 5:14-15; Gal 2:20; 1 Thess 5:10;⁵ cf. 1 Cor 1:13). Only in the traditional formula in 1 Cor 15:3 and in the cultic setting in Hebrews (7:27; 10:12; cf. 9:7) is it used in connection with sin. περί (*peri*) with genitive belongs to the same semantic fields. It presents the purpose or the indirect beneficiary for an action.⁶ In the LXX it functions as a formula for sin offering (περὶ ἁμαρτίας, *peri hamartias*) (e.g., Lev 6:18, 23; cf. Heb 5:3; 10:6, 8, 18, 26).⁷ In the NT it is seldom used in connection with Jesus’ death (but see Matt 26:28; Rom 8:3; 1 Pet 3:18) and never with reference to sin unless cultic terminology is involved (1 John 2:2; 4:10).⁸ In connection with ἀποθνήσκω (*apothnēskō*), neither of the prepositions introduces the negative reason for the death but rather its positive effect on someone or something.⁹ When the prepositional clause presents “our sins” as the motive for Jesus’ voluntary death, it defines the purpose of his death as removing the consequences of the beneficiaries’ sins (cf. Rom 5, 8).¹⁰ The main difference between the two expressions is the cultic connotations attached to περί (*peri*). If περί (*peri*) is preferred in Gal 1:4, the expression should be understood as an explicit reference to cultic traditions. However, it seems more in line with tradi-

³ L&N 89.28, 90.36; C. Breytenbach, *Versöhnung: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Soteriologie* (WMANT 60; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989), 197. See now the comprehensive study by C. Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben “für” die Sünder: Die griechische Konzeption des Unheil abwendenden Sterbens und deren paulinische Aufnahme für die Deutung des Todes Jesu Christi* (2 vols.; WMANT 122; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2010). Eschner argues along the same lines that the Pauline use of ὑπέρ (*hyper*) is “primär nicht kausal-retrospektiv, sondern final-prospektiv zu verstehen” (1:15).

⁴ LSJ 1859.

⁵ With the variant reading περί (*peri*) (N* B 33).

⁶ L&N 89.36, 90.39; C. Breytenbach, “The “for us” Phrases in Pauline Soteriology: Considering Their Background and Use,” in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J. van der Watt; NovTSup 121, Leiden: Brill, 2005), 163-85 (171).

⁷ Breytenbach, *Versöhnung*, 202.

⁸ See the discussion of Rom 8:3 in Breytenbach, *Versöhnung*, 159-65. Breytenbach concludes that the expression περὶ ἁμαρτίας (*peri hamartias*) derives from the LXX cult-terminology, though he does not understand the Pauline formulation as cultic.

⁹ C. Breytenbach, “‘Christus starb für uns’: Zur Tradition und paulinischen Rezeption der sogenannten ‚Sterbeformeln’,” *NTS* 49 (2003): 447-75 (469).

¹⁰ Breytenbach, *Versöhnung*, 126; cf. idem, “Christus starb,” 471-75; idem, “For Us,” 173; Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 1:13.

tional (1 Cor 11:24; 15:3) and Pauline (Rom 5:6-8; 1 Cor 1:13; Gal 2:20) terminology to let ὑπέρ (*hyper*) introduce the motive of Jesus' death.

A final clause introduced by ὅπως (*hopōs*, "in order that") presents the purpose of Jesus' act (1:4b). The verb ἐξαίρω (*exaireō*) simply means "to take out," but the middle voice has the meaning "to take away from someone" and may be used for "set free" or "deliver."¹¹ The LXX employs this form for rescuing from enemies in general (e.g., Gen 37:21-22; Deut 25:11) and especially for God's deliverance of the Israelites (e.g., Exod 3:8; 18:9-10; Isa 31:5; Ps 140:2).¹² In Paul's text the liberation is from the present evil aeon (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ, *ek tou aiōnos tou enestōtos ponērou*). The expression ὁ αἰὼν (*ho aiōn*) is the temporal term that corresponds to the spatial term ὁ κόσμος (*ho kosmos*).¹³ Paul uses the two words interchangeably in his reference to this present world (1 Cor 1:20; 2:6; 3:18-19). Only in Gal 1:4 does he define this aeon explicitly as evil. But just as he understands the world to be in opposition to God (1 Cor 1:21; 2:12), there is an implicit opposition between the present aeon ruled by evil powers (1 Cor 2:6; 2 Cor 4:4) and another one (cf., e.g., Mark 10:30; Matt 12:32).¹⁴ In Galatians the future good aeon is called a "new creation" (καινὴ κτίσις, *kainē ktisis*) (Gal 6:15).

To his presentation Paul attaches another prepositional phrase underlining that Jesus' voluntary act complies with the divine will (κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, *kata to thelēma tou theou kai patros hēmōn*). The paragraph ends in a doxology (1:5).

These observations indicate that v. 4 embraces two different conceptions. The first is Jesus' voluntary death "for" (ὑπέρ, *hyper*) sins. The second is the deliverance from the present evil age. Tradition-historical investigation suggests that at least the first conception is pre-Pauline.¹⁵ It is even deemed foreign to his theology because it identifies discrete sins (ἁμαρτία, *hamartiai*) as the motive

¹¹ LSJ 581.

¹² Cf. F. Bovon, "Une formule prépaulinienne dans l'Épître aux Galates (Ga 1, 4-5)," in *Paganisme, judaïsme, christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique* (ed. A. Benoit et al.; Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1978), 91-107 (98-100).

¹³ LSJ 45.

¹⁴ Cf. H. Sasse, "αἰὼν," *ThWNT* 1:204-7.

¹⁵ Bovon argues that Gal 1:4-5 is a traditional formula originating in a Jewish-Christian context ("Une formule prépaulinienne"); cf. F. Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief* (HTKNT 9; Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 50; J. Rohde, *Der Brief des Paulus and die Galater* (THKNT 9; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 34; B. Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 76; Breytenbach, "For Us," 174; Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 1:388.

for Jesus' death.¹⁶ Paul normally does not use the plural form of ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*). It happens in only one other text (1 Cor 15:3), which he explicitly quotes as a traditional formula. Usually Paul construes sin as an entity or a power (e.g., Rom 5:12; Gal 3:22) and not as singular wrongdoings. The second idea, on the other hand, is taken by several exegetes to be Paul's interpretation of the preceding traditional formula.¹⁷ Although the expression ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐνεστῶς πονηρός (*ho aiōn ho enestōs ponēros*) is not terminologically identical with other Pauline references to this aeon (i.e., ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, *ho aiōn houtos*), the expressions are semantically equivalent and the idea is well known in Paul's letters (Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:6, 8; 3:18; 2 Cor 4:4). Although no certainty can be obtained concerning these hypotheses, the literary observations highlight the fact that two separate ideas are present in Gal 1:4.

In Paul's rhetorical strategy Gal 1:4 holds an emphatic position as the theological summit of the letter opening. But it is also part of an *inclusio* in so far as "the present evil aeon" (Gal 1:4) is related to "the new creation" (Gal 6:15). The innovative idea that Jesus Christ by his voluntary death has established a transition from the present evil aeon to the new creation surrounds the entire argument in Galatians.

The Background of Galatians 1:4

Both ideas in Gal 1:4 have roots in contemporary conceptions but there is hardly one single literary background for the two combined elements. Paul probably draws on commonplace understandings of voluntary deaths and opposing aeons.

Voluntary Death

It is a matter of dispute which idea lies behind the expression διδόναι ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (*didonai heauton hyper tōn hamartiōn hēmōn*). The

¹⁶ E.g., Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 50; J.L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 90

¹⁷ E.g., K. Wengst, *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1967), 61; Martyn, *Galatians*, 90; H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 42; V.P. Furnish, "He Gave Himself [Was Given] Up...': Paul's Use of Christological Assertion," in *The Future of Christology* (ed. A.J. Malherbe and W.A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 109-21 (113).

Greek version of the Fourth Servant Song (LXX Isa 53) has often been mentioned as the direct influence.¹⁸ In this poem the servant of the Lord is wounded and slain “because of our sins” (διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, *dia tas hamartias hēmōn*) (53:5). God has “given him (παρέδωκεν, *paredōken*) for the sake of our sins (ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν, *tais hamartias hēmōn*)” (53:6). The beneficiaries of the servant’s suffering are told that they will see long-lived offspring if they give a sin offering (περὶ ἁμαρτίας, *peri hamartias*) (53:10). In the final verse the verb παραδίδωμι (*paradidōmi*) is combined with the preposition διὰ (*dia*) when it is stated that “he was given because of our sins” (διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας...παρεδόθη, *dia tas hamartias...paredothē*) (53:12). In Rom 4:25a and 8:32 Paul is probably influenced by the use of the verb παραδίδωμι (*paradidōmi*).¹⁹ Even though he uses the simple form δίδωμι (*didōmi*) in Gal 1:4, the combination of (παρα)δίδωμι (*[para]didōmi*) with a preposition introducing sins as the motive of the “giving” may derive from the Isaianic formulation. But besides the use of the preposition διὰ (*dia*) and not ὑπέρ (*hyper*), it is also worth noticing that the Fourth Servant Song does not include the idea of voluntary death²⁰ The servant does not give himself but is given by God.

Another proposed background is the OT concept of cultic sin offering.²¹ In the LXX the sin offering is often simply called ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) or τὰ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (*ta peri tēs hamartias*) (Lev 4:1 – 5:13; 6:17-23). But the descriptions of the offerings do not use the verb δίδωμι (*didōmi*) and is, of course, not concerned with voluntary death. This is also the case in the traditions about the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). Furthermore, it should be noted that the expression περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (*peri tēs hamartias*) describes the sacrificial animals, except in Ezekiel where ὑπέρ ἁμαρτίας (*hyper hamartias*) is used (Ezek 40:39; 43:22, 25,

18 E.g., Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 51; Rohde, *Galater*, 35; H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 51. Generally concerning the influence of Isa 53, see E. Lohse, *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht: Untersuchungen zur urchristlichen Verkündigung vom Sühntod Jesu Christi* (2nd ed.; FRLANT 64, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); H.W. Wolff, *Jesaja 53 im Urchristentum* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1950); P. Stuhlmacher, “Jes 53 in den Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte,” in *Der leidende Gottesknecht: Isaiah 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte* (ed. B. Janowski and P. Stuhlmacher; FAT 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 93-105; O. Hofius, “Das vierte Gottesknechtlied in den Briefen des Neuen Testaments,” in *Der leidende Gottesknecht: Isaiah 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte* (ed. B. Janowski and P. Stuhlmacher; FAT 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 107-27; Breytenbach, *Versöhnung*, 209-15.

19 Cf. Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 1:69, 478-83.

20 Betz, *Galatians*, 42; cf. Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 1:72.

21 J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 35; cf. idem, “Paul’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology* (ed. S.W. Sykes; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 35-56.

29; 45:22, 23, 25; 46:20). The verb δίδωμι (*didōmi*) does not occur in these contexts. Paul, on the other hand, does not use the verb for atonement (ἐξιλάσκομαι, *exilaskomai*), which is central in the cultic texts.²²

Several scholars have proposed martyrological traditions as the background for Paul's presentation of Jesus' death.²³ In 2 Maccabees the Maccabean martyrs are described as having died for God's laws (ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτοῦ νόμων, *hyper tōn autou nomōn*) (7:9) and as giving their body and soul for the laws of the fathers (καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν προδίδωμι περὶ τῶν πατρίων νόμων, *kai soma kai psychēn prodidōmi peri tōn patriōn nomōn*) (7:37). This death corresponds to the willingness of the Jewish army to die for the laws and the fatherland (ὑπὲρ τῶν νόμων καὶ τῆς πατρίδος ἀποθνήσκειν, *hyper tōn nomōn kai tēs patriδος apothnēskein*) (8:21). 4 Maccabees presents different motivations for the martyrs' death. They die for virtue (ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς, *hyper aretēs*) (1:8), for the beautiful and good (ὑπὲρ τῆς καλοκάγαθίας, *hyper tēs kalokagathias*) (1:10), for the sake of the law (διὰ τὸν νόμον, *dia ton nomon*) (6:27), for the sake of piety (διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν, *dia tēn eusebeian*) (9:6; 18:3), for the law (περὶ τοῦ νόμου, *peri tou nomou*) (13:9), for the sake of God (διὰ τὸν θεόν, *dia ton theon*) (16:25). In line with Hellenistic ideals the martyrs give up their life for the sake of the law, righteousness, or divine truth.²⁴ In contrast to a Hellenistic noble death, the martyrdom of the Jewish martyrs have a propitiatory function (2 Macc 7:37; 4 Macc 6:28; 9:24; 12:17; 17:22), but in 2 Maccabees neither sins nor humans are the motive for their deaths.²⁵ 4

²² Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 1:32.

²³ Betz, *Galatians*, 42; Dunn, *Galatians*, 35. Martyn, *Galatians*, 89-90, who only refers to 4 Maccabees, proposes that the martyrological interpretation of Jesus' death derives from Paul's opponents in Galatia. Generally concerning the influence of martyrology on the construal of Jesus' death, see, e.g., H.J. de Jonge, "The Original Setting of the ΚΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΠΕΘΑΝΕΝ ΥΠΕΡ Formula," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. R.F. Collins; BETL 86; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 229-35; M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); J.W. van Henten, "Jewish Martyrdom and Jesus' Death," in *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament* (ed. J. Frey and J. Schröter; WUNT 181, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 139-68.

²⁴ M. Hengel, *The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 16. Actually, it is not the intention of the Jewish martyrs to die for others although their death is effective for the Jewish people, *contra* H.S. Versnel, "Making Sense of Jesus' Death: The Pagan Contribution," in *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament* (ed. J. Frey and J. Schröter; WUNT 181, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 213-94 (230).

²⁵ Van Henten, "Making Sense," 152-54. In 2 Maccabees it is probably not the martyrs' deaths that is propitiatory but their intercessory prayer (S.K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* [HDR 2; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975], 82-90). 4 Maccabees' presentation of the martyrs' effective death is deeply influenced by Hellenistic traditions (Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 183-97).

Maccabees, however, uses both reconciliatory (ἀντίψυχον, *antipsychon*) (4 Macc 6:29; 17:21) and cultic (ἱλαστήριον, *hilastērion*) (4 Macc 17:22) language for the martyrs' death. Their death is the ransom (ἀντίψυχον, *antipsychon*) that is needed because of human sin (17:21). In 4 Maccabees the idea of a vicarious voluntary death is fully elaborated.²⁶

Yet another background for the Pauline expression has been suggested. Classical Greek culture provides models of a voluntary death for others.²⁷ In Greek tragedy it is a well known motif that a woman voluntarily chooses death in order to save others. One of the most famous examples is Euripides' portrayal of Alcestis. Because her husband, Admetus, is meant to die, she consents to give her own life instead of him. The motive for her act is expressed in a ὑπέρ—formula as it is stated that she dies ὑπέρ (*hyper*, “on behalf of”) her husband (*All.* 155, 284). In Greek literature and inscriptions Alcestis is prototypical for a self-denying attitude. Obedient, selfless women may be characterized as “new Alcestis.”²⁸ There are several other instances where someone voluntarily chooses death for the sake of a principle or the community.²⁹ It is, however, significant that sins are never mentioned as a motive or background for voluntary death. The idea of voluntary death because of sins or for sinners seems not to belong to pagan literature (cf. Rom 5:7).³⁰

Neither of these proposed traditions matches the Pauline formulation completely. But they may all be part of the cultural repertoire that constitutes the common background of Paul's idea. Even though the term “effective” or “beneficiary” death is usually preserved for Hellenistic traditions, it is a common feature for all the presented traditions that the deaths have some kind of positive result for someone.³¹ Likewise, although the motives are always expressed in a prepositional clause, a formulation like ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν (*hyper tōn hamartiōn*) is never found in connection with a voluntary death. When ὑπέρ (*hyper*) is used, it is always to introduce a positive reason either by mentioning

²⁶ Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 197; H.S. Versnel, “Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis? Bemerkungen über die Herkunft von Aspekten des ‘Effective Death’,” in *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie* (ed. J.W. van Henten; StPB 38; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 162-96 (192).

²⁷ Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 2:passim. Eschner calls it an “Unheil abwendendes Sterben.”

²⁸ Versnel, “Quid Athenis,” 191-92; idem, “Making Sense,” 240-41; Breytenbach, “Christus starb,” 463-64, cf. Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 2:107-45.

²⁹ Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*; Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 137-202; Hengel, *Atonement*, 1-32; Versnel, “Quid Athenis,”; idem, “Making Sense”; Eschner, *Gestorben und hingegeben*, 2:1-317.

³⁰ Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*, 63.

³¹ On “effective death,” see Versnel, “Quid Athenis,” 178-93; idem, “Making Sense,” 227-87.

the beneficiary of the effective death or by stating the principle to which the dying person remains faithful. The formulation ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν (*hyper tōn hamartiōn*) may therefore be influenced by the cultic traditions in the OT.³²

Opposing Aeons

The background of the second part of the verse is easier to locate. A close terminological parallel to the expression “this present aeon” is the rabbinic opposition between “this world” (הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, *ha ‘olam hazzeh*), which is opposed to “the world to come” (הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, *ha ‘olam habba’*). But both the rabbinic and the Pauline expressions are influenced by apocalyptic traditions.³³ The opposition between two aeons corresponds to the temporal and spatial dualistic structure that is the main feature of J.J. Collins’ widespread definition of apocalyptic:

“Apocalypse” is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.³⁴

Even though this is a genre definition, it also defines a dualistic world view that corresponds to the literary genre.³⁵ As Collins’ definition indicates, the dualism involves a temporal opposition between the present life and the future salvation, and a spatial opposition between the earthly world and the heavenly world. A qualitative dualism corresponds to these temporal and spatial structures. It defines the present earthly world as evil and the heavenly and coming world as good. Furthermore, the dualisms produce a social dualism between the people who will be condemned at the eschatological judgement and those who will be saved. The privileged group includes the recipients of the revelation. In this present world they may be a denigrated and marginalized but through the

³² According to Eschner ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν (*hyper tōn hamartiōn*) “stellt ... eine alttestamentliche Einfärbung der griechischen Vorstellung vom Sterben „für“ eine Sache mit der v.a. in Lev belegten Tradition von der Beiseitigung der Sünden dar” (*Gestorben und hingegeben*, 1:118; cf. 1:388).

³³ Cf. Str-B 4:799-976; Sasse, “αἰών,” 206-7.

³⁴ J.J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1-19 (9); cf. idem, *The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1-42; Martyn, *Galatians*, 98

³⁵ Collins, *Imagination*, 13.

revelation they are confirmed as the righteous ones who will be saved at the end of this aeon and included in the future realm.³⁶

Practically all Jewish and Christian apocalypses realize both the temporal and spatial dualisms.³⁷ It suffices to demonstrate these general structures in one illustrative text. The introduction to *1 Enoch* involves all three dualisms:

The blessing of Enoch: with which he blessed the elect and righteous who would be present on the day of tribulation at (the time of) the removal of all the ungodly ones. And Enoch, the blessed and righteous man of the Lord, took up (his parable) while his eyes were open and he saw, and said, "(This is) a holy vision from the heavens which the angels showed me: and I heard from them every thing and I understood. I look not for this generation but for the distant one that is coming. I speak about the elect ones and concerning them" (1:1-2).

This text separates a present time from a coming one where the ungodly one will be removed. The change of times happens on the day of tribulation. The elect and righteous ones will be preserved on that day and have the light of God shining on them (cf. *1 En.* 1:8). At the same time the introduction separates earth from heaven. The earth is the place of ungodly people (*1 En.* 1:4) who will all be destroyed at the judgement (*1 En.* 1:7). Heaven, on the other hand, is God's place from where the revelatory visions come. God himself will descend from heaven on the day of judgement (*1 En.* 1:4). Involved in these dualisms is the third opposition between the elect and righteous people, for whom the revelation is meant, and the ungodly ones that will perish on the day of tribulation. After the judgement the elect inherit the earth and live in gladness and peace without sin (*1 En.* 5:8-10).

Although the apocalyptic writings do not include exact terminological parallels to the Pauline opposition between the present evil aeon and a new creation, the structure involved in the last part of Gal 1:4 is certainly apocalyptic. It is commonplace in the apocalypses that this world is dominated by evil and will be destroyed and substituted by another supernatural world. In some writings this final cosmic transformation is, in fact, depicted as a new creation (e.g., Rev 21).

It is important to note that there are no overlaps between the backgrounds of the two ideas. The different notions about sacrifices, be it cultic sacrifices or vol-

³⁶ J.J. Collins, "Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 687-705 (690).

³⁷ See the analyses of Jewish apocalypses in J.J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 21-59. Opposing aeons and worlds are mentioned explicitly in, e.g., *4 Ezra* 6:7-10; 7:12-13, 50, 112-13; 8:1; *1 En.* 71:15; *2 Bar.* 14:13; 15:8; 44:11-15.

untary deaths, do not involve apocalyptic structures. Apocalyptic thought, on the other hand, does not give any salvific or eschatological role to animal sacrifices or human deaths.³⁸ Notwithstanding a possible history of traditions, Gal 1:4 is the first known example of a combination of these hitherto distinct concepts.

Conceptual Integration

Because there is no precedent for the integration of voluntary deaths and apocalyptic ideas, Galatians 1:4 is not a Christianized version of a traditional motif. It may be entirely or partly a pre-Pauline formula, but notwithstanding if the innovation originated with Paul or not, it resulted in new structures that lay the ground for the letter to the Galatians and for salient ideas in Christian theology. For that reason the cognitive procedure behind the integration must be detected with a view to the emergence of innovative ideas.

Within the last decades one part of human sciences has taken a “cognitive turn.” Meaning is studied as a construct in the human mind. G. Fauconnier and M. Turner have contributed to this line of research by developing a conceptual integration network that explains a number of cognitive activities. Not least, the model is able to explain a certain kind of mental creativity as it conceptualizes how new elements and structures emerge from the integration of hitherto distinct mental areas. It furthermore accounts for the way the emerging elements lay the basis for new cognitive procedures.

According to Fauconnier and Turner, conceptual integration takes place in the course of communication and thinking. It is not an extraordinary artistic procedure but a common everyday phenomenon. The background of their model is Fauconnier’s theory of mental spaces.³⁹ Following this theory, commu-

³⁸ The *Apocalypse of Abraham* includes a section about Abraham’s sacrifice on the mountain Horeb (chs. 9-14). In the apocalypse an angel tells Abraham to make a pure animal sacrifice on a high mountain. When Abraham arrives at Horeb, he discovers that all the prescribed sacrificial animals have followed him to the mountain. On the instructions from the angel he cuts all the animals save the birds in halves and brings the sacrifice. He and the angel fly to heaven on the sacrificial birds. By this sacrifice he is consecrated for the journey to heaven where he will receive a revelation of Israel’s history (chs. 15-32). The story about Abraham’s sacrifice on Horeb is a rewriting of the biblical account of Abraham’s sacrifice (Gen 15). In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* this narrative is transformed into a divine revelation, thereby making sense of the fact that Abraham in Gen 15 does not cut the birds in halves.

³⁹ G. Fauconnier, *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Constructions in Natural Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985); G. Fauconnier and E. Sweetser, “Cognitive Links and

nication can be defined as exchange of semantic units such as words and other kinds of signs. But since no semantic unit carries a specific meaning in itself, it must be placed within a context to make sense. Therefore the mind constantly constructs mental spaces that function as local contexts for the semantic elements. Mental spaces provide the conventional frames and common structures that are necessary for attributing a specific meaning to a semantic unit. Hence it is necessary for human communication that the mind establishes mental spaces instinctively during conversation and thinking. A notion of a sacrifice will, for instance, often be placed in a cultic context where other semantic units as altar, priests, temple, and killing also belong. Within this mental space the idea of a sacrifice immediately has a specific meaning since the cultic frame establishes a context that relates the semantic units to each other. Outside this mental space the idea of a priest bringing a dove to God has no specific significance, but within the cultic mental space it obviously indicates a sacrifice.

Two mental spaces may be related through mapping.⁴⁰ This cognitive operation takes place when the semantic units of one mental space are construed in terms of semantic elements from another space. In this case, one mental space functions as input space for another mental space called the target space. Structures or semantic units from the input space are projected onto the target space in order to let a certain understanding of the elements in the target space emerge. For instance, elements from a cultic mental space can be projected onto elements of a mental space of execution. This procedure can construe the execution in terms of a sacrifice and let the executed person be understood as an innocent sacrificial animal. Consequently, the executioner is identified as a priest, the place of the execution as an altar, etc. In this way the elements of the space in target are interpreted by the elements from the input space.

Mapping interprets the structures of the target space by way of the input space but new structures do not arise. This is different when two mental spaces function as input spaces for a third space in which selective projections from both spaces are

Domains: Basic Aspects of Mental Space Theory,” in *Spaces, Worlds, and Grammars* (ed. G. Fauconnier and E. Sweetser; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1–28; G. Fauconnier, “Analogical Counterfactuals,” in *Spaces, Worlds, and Grammars* (ed. G. Fauconnier and E. Sweetser; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 57–90.

⁴⁰ G. Fauconnier, *Mappings in Thought and Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); G. Fauconnier, “Mental Spaces, Language Modalities, and Conceptual Integration,” in *The New Psychology of Language: Cognitive and Functional Approaches to Language Structure* (ed. M. Tomasello; Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998), 251–79.

blended.⁴¹ This operation integrates the input spaces into a network that allows for a new space to arise and new structures to emerge. In contrast to mapping the blending of spaces is a creative procedure that results in innovative ideas.

Conceptual blending presupposes a generic space that contains abstract structures that all input spaces have in common. It is because of the generic structures that the input spaces can be connected in a meaningful manner. A conceptual integration network relates the generic space and the input spaces to each other in such a way that a new mental space – called the blend – emerges. In the blend the abstract generic structure is furnished by a combination of elements from the input spaces. Selected semantic units from all spaces are projected into the blend. Some of the units keep their semantic value from the input space while others are blended with elements from the other input space. What comes into existence in the blend is an innovative version of the common generic structure. The blend is created by integrating the input spaces but it is independent from them and not equivalent with either one of them.

Fauconnier and Turner schematize the cognitive process in the following conceptual blending model:⁴²

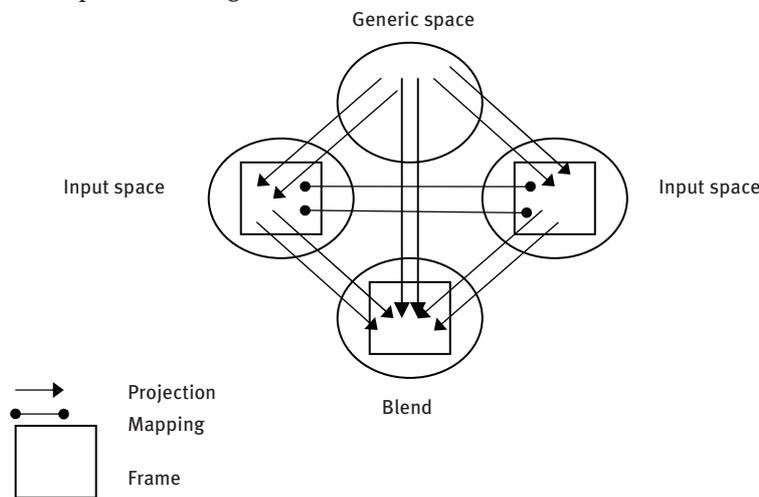


Figure 1: #####

⁴¹ G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks," *Cognitive Science* 22 (1998): 133–87; G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic, 2002); M. Turner, "The Origin of Selkies," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 11 (2004): 90–115.

⁴² The model is a slightly simplified version of the model in Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 46.

A blend of a cultic sacrifice and an execution could, for instance, result in the idea of a martyr who sacrifices his life for a political cause. The two mental spaces are connected by the common generic structure of killing. This structure is projected into the blended space. In the blend the execution of the martyr is blended with the offering of the sacrificial animal whereas the political frame is transferred from the execution input space. From the sacrificial space the idea that a death serves a larger purpose is projected into the blend.

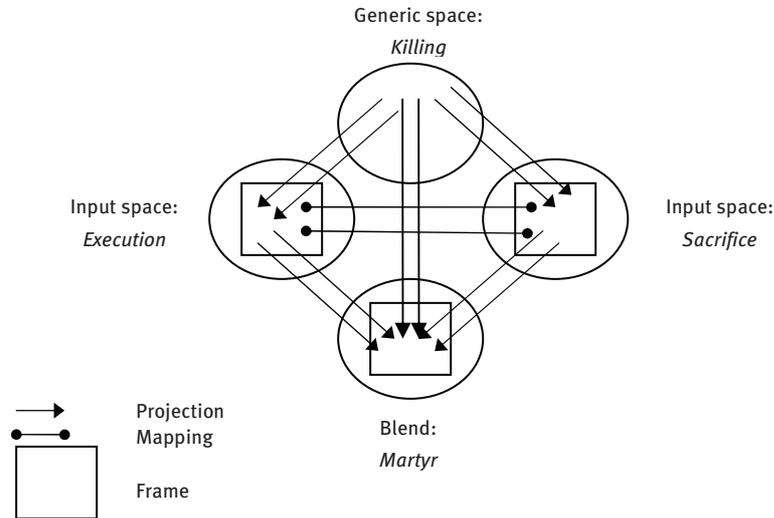


Figure 2: #####

In Gal 1:4 Paul has blended two mental spaces, one consisting of ideas of voluntary death and one involving an apocalyptic scenario. In order to understand this conceptual integration the two input spaces and their common generic structure must be defined. According to the conceptual blending theory, mental spaces are structured by frames that are common situations or conventional circumstances. Such frames organize the different elements of a mental space into a coherent whole. But the idea of a frame cannot account for the different types of actions in each space. Since any action involves a narrative structure, narratology can supplement the conceptual integration model and expose both the common structures and the unique character of the actions in the input spaces.

The Narrative Structures

Ancient as well as modern studies of narratives have shown that a change from an initial situation to something else is constitutional for a narrative. This applies to the overall narrative, which according to Aristotle evolves from beginning to middle to end (*Poet.* 1450b26), but it also applies to smaller narrative units. Each action in a narrative is an attempt – successful or unsuccessful – to affect a given situation. According to the French narratologist C. Bremond, any narrative action is completed through three steps.⁴³ First, the result of the action is “virtual,” namely, before the action; then it is “actual,” namely, during the action; and finally it is “real,” namely, after the action. This process leaves open the possibility that the action may be prevented or interrupted so that the result will never be realized. On that basis Bremond defines four different types of narrative actions: “progression,” “degression,” “protection,” and “depression.”⁴⁴ An action either turns the situation into something better (i.e., progression) or something worse (i.e., degression), or else it keeps the situation from becoming worse (i.e., protection) or becoming better (i.e., depression). This is the theoretical principle behind quite complicated and extended lines of actions. In this context the structure of protection and progression are especially important. Protection presupposes virtual or actual degression. A successful protection hinders that the virtual or actual degression will be realized. Progression, on the other hand, presupposes a defective initial situation that may be the result of a realized degression. A successful progression transforms the initial situation into something better.

The full narrative course of protection can be described as follows:⁴⁵ (1) A narrative character is the virtual beneficiary of progression but at the same time the virtual victim of degression. If the degression is actualized a second stage sets in: (2) The narrative character is the actual victim of degression but at the same time the virtual beneficiary of protection. If the protection is actualized a third stage turns up: (3) The narrative character is the actual the beneficiary of protection. If the protection is successful the narrative course ends in a fourth stage: (4) The narrative character is the beneficiary of a realized protection. Of course, this stage is in fact a return to the initial stage.

⁴³ C. Bremond, *Logique du récit* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil 1973), 131.

⁴⁴ Bremond, *Logique du récit*, 134.

⁴⁵ Bremond, *Logique du récit*, 165.

Another possible narrative course is progression that takes its starting point in a defective situation.⁴⁶ First stage: (1) The narrative character is the victim of a realized degeneration but at the same time the virtual beneficiary of progression. If the progression is actualized the second stage follows: (2) The narrative character is the actual beneficiary of progression but at the same time the virtual victim of degeneration. If the degeneration is not actualized the narrative course ends in the third stage: (3) The narrative character is the beneficiary of a realized progression. This end phase is not identical with the initial stage. The narrative person has been transferred to a new and better state.

The Narrative Structure of the Mental Spaces

In light of these narrative possibilities, the two ideas in Gal 1:4 appear to involve two different narrative courses. According to all the proposed backgrounds of the voluntary death, it involves *protection*, whereas the apocalyptic change of aeons is a *progression*. This may easily be substantiated for the apocalyptic input space. But because there is no single traditional background for the voluntary death, all the possible ideas must be analyzed in order to detect the common narrative structure.

In the Fourth Servant Song (LXX) God gives the Suffering Servant for “our sins” (κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν, *kyrios paredōken auton tais hamartiais hēmōn*) (Isa 53:6). He is given over to death because of the sins (διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη, *dia tas hamartias autōn paredothē*) of the lawless from the people (ἄνομοι τοῦ λαοῦ μου, *anomoι tou laou mou*) (53:12, 8). Apparently, the result of this innocent (53:9) and obedient death (53:7) is that he can function as a sin offering (περὶ ἁμαρτίας, *peri hamartias*) so that the beneficiaries of this offering will have a long life (53:10). Who this group is, is not evident, but they belong to the Israelite people. Through the vicarious suffering of the servant they obtain peace, health, and long life (53:5, 10). This is probably a re-establishment of a relation to God that has been damaged by their sins and lawlessness. Whether it is protection or progression depends on the interpretation of the situation of the group mentioned as “us.” Have their sins and lawlessness destroyed their relation to God, so that the vicarious act of the Servant places them in a new situation? Or does he take on the role of a sin offering that removes what endangers their relation to God? The text may be too enigmatic to

⁴⁶ Bremond, *Logique du récit*, 166.

provide clear answers, but the fact that the beneficiaries already belong to God's people points in the direction of a *protective*, and not a progressive narrative structure.

The OT sacrificial system evidently involves protection. When Moses commands that the Israelites must bring sin offerings, it is not to establish a new situation but to prevent a collapse of the situation that is already given. According to J. Milgrom, sins contaminate the temple and make the people unclean. Because of the impurities, God's presence in the temple and his relation to the people are endangered. Sin offering is a purification that prevents God's departure from the temple.⁴⁷ Because sins threaten to ruin the Israelites' relation to God, a sin offering (τὰ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, *ta peri tēs hamartias*) must intervene and protect the initial situation. In narratological terms, sins actualize a degression of the relation between humanity and God. But the degression is not realized because the sin offering sets up a *protection* by removing the sins that threaten the initial positive situation (Lev 6).⁴⁸

Structurally the same process is involved in the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). The temple has been infected by the sins of the people which must be atoned for by the offering of a bull (περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας/περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, *peri tēs hamartias/peri tōn hamartiōn*), just as the people are atoned for when the goat carries their sins into the desert. Atonement is necessary because sins have started a degression that may ruin the relation between God and the people.⁴⁹ For that reason God has instituted the Day of Atonement to remove the sins from the holy place and cleanse the holy people. By means of sin offerings the Day of

⁴⁷ J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 253-61.

⁴⁸ A conflicting interpretation of OT sin offerings does in fact describe it as a *progression*. According to H. Gese and B. Janowski, atonement delivers humans from a fundamentally forfeited existence (H. Gese, "Die Sühne," in *Zur biblischen Theologie: Alttestamentliche Vorträge* [BEvT 78; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1977], 85-107 [101]; B. Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Traditions- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien zur priesterschriftlichen Sühnetheologie* [2nd ed.; WMANT 55; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000], 255). In narratological terms, the starting point is a *realized degression* because of sin. By way of the ritual act a *realized progression* changes the situation into something else. But it does not seem convincing that the atonement rites presuppose a completely deprived situation. The Israelites are still members of the privileged people and have access to God's mercy through his cultic institutions. It would be more precise to define the Israelites' situation as an *actualized degression* because their sins threaten to destroy their relation to God. But this has not happened yet. Atonement produces a *protection* that hinders the realization of the degression. It does not introduce a new situation but saves the initial positive situation.

⁴⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1079-84.

Atonement *protects* the initial positive situation from being destroyed but it does not establish a new situation.

When the language of offering is used in martyrological literature, the martyrs are portrayed as an instrument of reconciliation. It is not always clear if it is the death of the martyrs, their vicarious trust in God, or their supplication on behalf of the people that has a positive effect on God's relation to Israel. Nevertheless, it is explicit that the deed of the Maccabean martyrs brings the wrath of God to an end. They give up their body and soul for the laws of the fathers (προδίδωμι περὶ τῶν πατρίων νόμων, *prodidōmi peri tōn patriōn nomōn*) and make a plea to God and the people in order to stop God's wrath (2 Macc 7:37). Because of (ἐν, *en*) the martyrs, God should change his mind toward the people and again show mercy on them (2 Macc 7:38). Structurally, the case is not different in 4 Maccabees although the martyrs' death functions as a ransom (ἀντίψυχον, *antipsychon*) for the people's sins (4 Macc 6:29; 17:21). Their vicarious deaths defeat Israel's enemies and provide God's benevolence (4 Macc 17:20-22). The martyrs explain their acts as an intervention in an actualized degression. The relation between God and the people is jeopardized because of the people's sins, which have provoked God's wrath. The intervention prevents the realization of this conflict, which would be a termination of the relation between the people and God. Since this has not happened yet, the martyrs are able to act as a *protection*. Their deeds establish a transition from an endangered situation back to the initial safe situation.

The pagan concept of ὑπεραποθνήσκω (*hyperapothnēskō*) obviously concerns protection. In Euripides' prototypical tragedy about Alcestis, her husband is destined to be collected by Death when he seeks someone to take his place. As Alcestis complies, Admetus remains alive. He was exposed to a degression but Alcestis' deed prevented it from being realized, i.e., she performed a *protection*.

On the basis of this narratological interpretation of actions in the proposed traditional backgrounds of the first part of Gal 1:4 it may be concluded that the idea of giving one's life for sins belongs in a kind of sacrificial mental space that includes voluntary death but does not necessarily presuppose a cultic frame. In all cases a sacrifice or a voluntary death involves a protective narrative structure. Vicarious suffering and death, sin offering and representative faithfulness all *protect* against an ongoing destruction of the relation to God. All actions establish a transition but not from one situation to another; rather, they transform a jeopardized situation into a safe one. Some Jewish traditions do so by removing the sins that threaten to destroy the positive situation in which the beneficiaries already stand. Other traditions secure a situation by means of voluntary death, which protects against an outer enemy.

The input space of the other part of Gal 1:4 needs less discussion. The apocalyptic frame involves a transition between two opposite aeons. The present aeon is evil and will be replaced by another new and heavenly aeon when God intervenes in history at the Last Judgement. God's final intervention divides time in two: the present time before the Last Judgement and the future age after the end of this aeon. Apocalyptic writings are based on this contrast between the present aeon and the coming one. When the future age is introduced, the wicked will be condemned and the righteous will be saved. It is a salient feature of the apocalyptic worldview that there is no continuity between the aeons. God invades the present age and establishes his kingdom, which is the new age. The new aeon is a complete break with the old one. Everything is changed and made into something new (Rev 21).

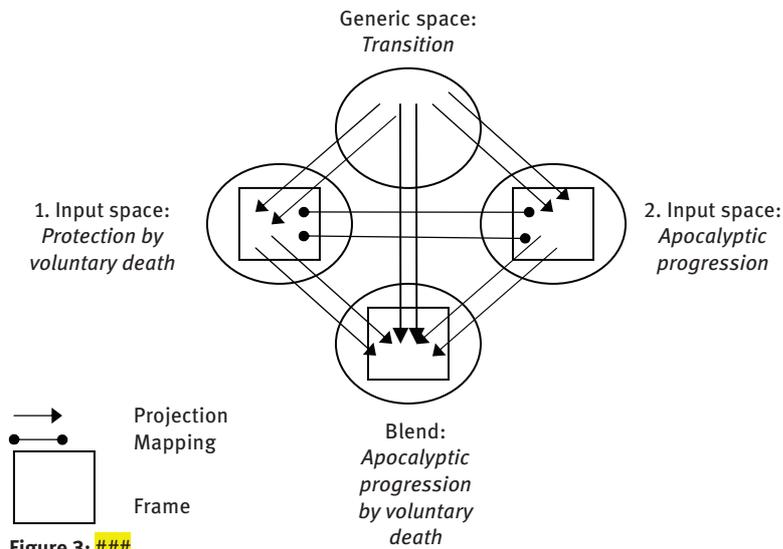
It is evident that the narrative structure of the apocalypses is *progressive*. The course takes its starting point in an unsatisfactory initial situation and establishes a realized progression. Contrary to the protective narrative course the initial situation is not re-established but replaced by a new and better one. God offers a new creation instead of the present evil age.

Blending the Spaces

According to Fauconnier and Turner, blending consists of the projection of a common generic structure and semantic units from two input spaces into an emerging new space. In this space new concepts arise.

The two input spaces of Gal 1:4 are narratologically different. One involves *protection*, the other *progression*. One removes the sins that endanger the relation to God, the other replaces a present evil age with a radically different future age. The first happens through a voluntary death, the other by God's intervention. But the two concepts have a generic structure in common as well. They both involve a narrative act insofar as they both are concerned with a transition from one situation to another. This abstract structure permits blending the two separate mental spaces.

The cognitive process is illustrated in the conceptual integration network:



The common generic structure is projected into the blend. But the transformation in the first space from a sinful and endangered state to a sinless and safe one is blended with the change from this evil aeon to a new aeon derived from the second space. The resulting blend is an idea of a change from an evil sinful aeon to an ideal sinless aeon. In the same way the different means for the transitions are blended. The voluntary death for sins is blended with God's eschatological intervention in the world. In the blend this means that Jesus' voluntary death is God's intervention that marks the turn from this age to the new creation. The result of the conceptual integration is that Jesus' death liberates from sins and at the same time snatches out of the present evil aeon.

In the blend the idea emerges that God intervenes in this evil aeon when Jesus gives himself up for human sins and thereby snatches sinners out of their sinful situation in order to insert them into a new creation. The integration of the protective structure by voluntary death and the progressive apocalyptic transformation furthermore results in a specific theological idea: Jesus' death not only removes sins but also establishes a new ideal relation to God which results in eternal life. This conception cannot be derived from either of the two traditional conceptions. Only the innovative integration of them through the cognitive blending process can explain how this central idea emerged.

The Argument in Galatians

Without going into exegetical detail, it is possible to show how Paul structures his argument in Galatians on the basis of his innovation in Gal 1:4. Having established that Jesus' voluntary death brings humans out of the present aeon, he is able to claim that believing humans are liberated from the present evil aeon in order to belong to the new creation (6:15). By introducing a dualistic structure this *inclusio* forms the rhetorical basis for Galatians. The basic structure of the letter is the dualistic opposition between a positive and a negative side. Throughout the argument Paul invests these sides differently according to the theme in question. But it is a steady feature that the Christ event has transferred the believers from the negative to the positive side of the dualism. The rhetorical idea is to argue that Christ-believers are liberated from everything Paul places on the negative side of the opposition.⁵⁰

One very important example of this technique is 2:16, which is part of Paul's response to Peter's behavior in Antioch. The theme of the context is justification and Paul places works according to the law on the negative side of the structure and faith on the positive side. He argues that he and Peter, knowing that works according to the law do not justify, came to believe in Christ and were justified because of his faith. In this pericope the Christ event is expressed as Christ's faith (πίστις χριστοῦ, *pistis christou*). His faithfulness is of benefit for humans who participate in Christ's faith by believing him.⁵¹ Works according to the law belong to the present evil aeon and faith to the new creation.

Further in the same rhetorical context, Paul turns the opposition between faith and works into a more general opposition between God and the law (2:19). He places living for the law in opposition to living for God. Consequently, he insists that he is dead to the law in order to live for God. The reason is that he has been crucified with Christ (2:19). Because he participates in Christ's crucifixion, he is dead to the law and lives for God. Again, the transfer between the two

⁵⁰ The dualistic rhetorical structure of Galatians is, of course, commonplace in exegetical studies. However, the foundational role of Gal 1:4 is seldom explicated. Cf., e.g., J.L. Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 111-23; Breytenbach, "For Us," 182; F. Tolmie, "Salvation as Redemption: The Use of 'Redemption' Metaphors in Pauline Literature," in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J. van der Watt; NovTSup 121; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 247-69 (265-66); G. Hallbäck, "Galaterbrevet som helhed," in *Læsninger i Galaterbrevet* (ed. L. Fatum; København: Forlaget Fremad, 2001), 25-42.

⁵¹ S.K. Williams, *Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 69-70; cf. M.D. Hooker, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," *NTS* 35 (1989): 321-42.

opposites is made possible by the Christ event, which is of benefit for the believers when they take part in it through faith.⁵² Paul says this about himself in the following verse. He participates in the Christ event through his faith in the son of God so that he no longer lives himself but Christ lives in him (2:20).

Throughout the letter there are several other configurations of the underlying structure, e.g., flesh versus spirit (3:1-5), the law versus the promise (3:15-18), and the slave versus the heir (4:1-7). In the end of the theological part of the letter (chs. 3-4), Paul enacts the fundamental dualism in the opposition between Hagar and Sarah, which equals the opposition between the covenant from Sinai and the one with Abraham, which again refers to the present Jerusalem and Jerusalem from above. All these oppositions have the opposition between slavery and freedom in common (4:21 – 5:1). Paul's intention with this allegory is, of course, to affirm the Galatians' identity as belonging to the line of freedom. They are children of the promise just like Isaac (4:28). In the end of the pericope, which is also a bridge to the following admonition, Paul again points out that Christ has established the transition from slavery to freedom (5:1). To start obeying the law is to go back to slavery, which would be to return to the present evil aeon and neglect Christ. This is the consequence Paul draws in the next paragraph.

Having established the range of oppositions and presented Christ as the means of being transferred from the negative to the positive side in the opposition, Paul's argument culminates in yet another opposition: Christ versus circumcision. If the Galatians choose to be circumcised, Christ is of no benefit (5:2). Putting faith in anything but Christ means to return to the negative side of the structure (5:4). Old identity markers belong to the negative side and have no significance for those in Christ (5:6).

After the culminating admonition, Paul transforms the opposition between spirit and flesh into an ethical discourse (5:13–6:10). Although this paraenetical part of the letter consists of general exhortations about the Galatians' ethos, it builds on the structure that establishes the argument of the entire letter.⁵³ He claims that Christ has conquered the realm of flesh in his crucifixion and thereby established a realm of the spirit for the believers (6:24). For that reason Paul exhorts the Galatians to follow the spiritual way of life that corresponds to their inclusion in the spirit (6:25). This underlying idea is that Christ has brought the believers from one identity to another. On that ground, Paul's paraenesis consists in an appeal to realize the identity that the believers already have.⁵⁴

⁵² Williams, *Galatians*, 75.

⁵³ J.M.G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethic in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 205.

⁵⁴ Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 215.

The concrete versions of the underlying structure of Galatians change according to topics of the letter. At times the opposition is between Christ-faith and law-works or God and the law, at other times it is between spirit and flesh, and again at other times it is between freedom and slavery. But just as the fundamental structure is steady, it is an invariable element that the Christ event marks the transition from one side to another. At this point it is very important that Paul has constructed this transition as a *progression*. The Galatians have been inserted into a new identity, not just re-established in their initial situation. For that reason Paul can argue emphatically against returning to anything in the old identity. Even though the Galatians have never been under the law, it would in fact be a return to their old idols if they started obeying the law (4:9). And if they did, they would neglect Jesus Christ who has liberated them from the present evil aeon by giving himself up.

Paul's way of arguing testifies to his rhetorical genius. Once he has installed the basic dualistic structure in Gal 1:4, he can organize his arguments in pairs of opposition. If the readers think of themselves as being liberated from the present evil aeon by way of Christ's voluntary death, they will be led to agree with Paul's argument. Paul's opponents, however, hardly accepted his oppositions.⁵⁵ They did not construe the law and works according to the law in terms of an apocalyptic dualism; hence, they did not see a contradiction between Christ and circumcision or between God and the law. On the contrary, they understood the two as being in continuity. To them, obeying the law is an intrinsic part of belonging to Christ. Paul undercuts their argument by inserting Christ's death in an apocalyptic frame and construing its effect as a radical progression. If the opponents should reply Paul efficiently, they would have to challenge this interpretation of the Christ event.

Conclusion

In order to establish Paul's interpretation of the Christ event, traditional models of voluntary death or apocalyptic change did not suffice. Paul had to integrate these two separate conceptions. This took place in Gal 1:4, where it laid the ground for Paul's impressive argument in Galatians. Once the dualistic structure had emerged in the blend, he could invest the opposing sides according to the topic of his argument. In this way he was able to construct a contradiction be-

⁵⁵ Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 120-26.

tween the past and the present. On that basis he was able to argue that it would be a regression and a denial of Christ to adhere to anything that he placed on the negative side of the fundamental opposition.

Paul's interpretation of Jesus' death as the means for being included in the new creation liberated from the world of sin also formed the basis of a dominant trend in Christian theology. To mention one prominent example, when Luther explains what it means that Jesus is Lord, he says that he is the Lord,

de my vorlaren und vordoemededen mynschen vorloeset hefft, erworwen, ghewunnen, unde van allen sunden, vam dode unnd van der gewalt des Duevels, nicht myt golde edder sulver, sonderen myt synem hylligen dueren blode und myt synem unschuldtyghen lyden und sterven, up dat ick syn eyghen sy unde yn sinem ryke under em leve und em deene yn ewyger gerechticheyt, unschult und salicheit, gelyck wo hee ys up gestan vam dode, levet unnd regeret yn ewycheyt.⁵⁶

[who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.]

This quotation from *The Small Catechism* significantly construes Jesus' deed as establishing a transition from one situation to another – from being damned under the power of death, the devil, and sins to being saved in the kingdom of Christ. This happens through his innocent suffering and death. According to Luther's interpretation, Jesus' death exonerates all sin and therefore defeats death and the devil and establishes his own kingdom. Believing humans are included in the kingdom and serve him in righteousness, innocence, and salvation. The fundamental act of deliverance in Luther's theology is the cross, when Jesus establishes a transition from a sinful and damned situation to a righteous situation in God's kingdom.

When Luther and other Christian theologians understand Jesus' death as a means of being liberated from a negative situation and inserted into its positive counterpart, they follow Paul's interpretation. They invest the fundamental dualistic structure with notions from their own contexts but stay with the Pauline structure. In this way, their presentation of the significance of Jesus' voluntary death is an elaboration of the idea that first emerged when Paul blended two different mental spaces in Gal 1:4.

⁵⁶ *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (60 vols.; Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-1980), 30I, 249b.