

# THE INSTRUCTION OF THE SPIRIT: THE WISDOM FRAMEWORK FOR PAULINE SPIRIT DEPENDENCE

by *Scott A. Swanson*

## 1. The Fundamental Pauline Imperative

IN ROMANS 8 AND GALATIANS 5, Paul arrives at the glorious climax of his explanation of how justified sinners are also sanctified through the work of Christ and the gift of his Spirit. The passages are descriptive of the sure realities of the new eschatological age (indicatives), but also include exhortation (imperatives whether direct or implied, based on those indicative realities). Therefore we have here arguably Paul's fundamental articulation of how to live the Christian life, and as such God's people have found in these passages precious promises and resources for overcoming sin and living for God.<sup>1</sup> Our living out the Christian life, Paul says, is in relation to, and specifically in dependence on, the Holy Spirit, which is programmatically defined in both these letters as our *walking* and the Spirit's *leading*.<sup>2</sup> While Paul's argument is configured somewhat differently in each letter, commentators agree that in both places these are different ways of describing, or perhaps different components of, the same dynamic. We are called to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16) or "walk according to the

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1. So for example, "to walk by the Spirit" is, according to Vos, "a comprehensive phrase for the God-pleasing walk of the Christian," and "to walk according to the Spirit" gives us "the standard of ethical normality, both as to being and striving" (Geerhardus Vos, "Paul's Eschatological Concept of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: the Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980], 111); Gordon Fee calls this "the primary Pauline ethical imperative" (*God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* [Grand Rapids: 1994], 428); and Hans Dieter Betz proclaims that this "sums up the Apostles's parenesis, and therefore defines Paul's concept of the Christian life" (*Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], 277).

2. "Walking" is a perhaps universal metaphor for living one's life, and particularly in the biblical context, one's behavior or way of life as one is called to live in practice before God. It is "moral, not vocational" (Colin Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012], 337). "Leading" here is not the popular usage of "guidance for everyday decisions," (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 422), but the Spirit's effective work in directing and enabling that walking. Further elucidation of each of these is what is being pursued in this article.

Spirit” (Rom. 8:4),<sup>3</sup> which is to be “led by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:18; Rom. 8:14). And the contexts of the latter expression suggest that it is not necessarily a given, for it requires us to seek to be, or to yield ourselves to be, so led—precisely by walking according to the Spirit’s leading.<sup>4</sup>

Further concrete explication is provided especially in the Romans context, where “by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body” (8:13), is presented as the counterpart to being “led by the Spirit of God” (8:14).<sup>5</sup> Also, those that so walk are described as those who “set their minds on,” or “think on” (φρονέω) the things of the Spirit (as opposed to those of the flesh; 8:5), which is to have the “mind-set” or “attitude” or “thinking” (φρόνημα) of the Spirit (as opposed to that of the flesh; 8:6).<sup>6</sup> In addition it is clear from Galatians that this walking includes, or produces, loving service of our neighbor, and precludes the opposite sinful attitudes and actions (Gal. 5:13, 15, 26), which are detailed respectively in the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh (5:19-23). And such walking in love (cf. Eph. 5:2) “fulfills” “the whole law” or the “righteous requirement of the law” (Gal. 5:14; Rom. 8:4; cf. 13:10).<sup>7</sup>

3. In Galatians 5:25 the word Paul uses is *στοιχέω*, sometimes translated “keep in step with.” It could also mean “align oneself with,” or “follow.” Betz suggests possible military connotations: “to march in line following the Spirit as the leader” (*Galatians*, 293-4). Otherwise for “walk” Paul uses his normal word for conducting one’s life in a certain way, *περιπατέω*, with this metaphorical sense derived from the literal “go about,” “walk around in” (see BDAG, ad loc.)

4. As Gundry puts it with reference to Galatians 5:16-18: “‘But if you’re being led by the Spirit’ explains what it means to ‘walk around by the Spirit.’ It means to let the Spirit determine your behavior, indeed to empower you to behave in opposition to the lust of the flesh” (Robert H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010], 751).

5. Notice that in both expressions, the Spirit is the determinative agent. So for Fee, “put to death...” is the negative aspect of the positive description “being led by the Spirit” (Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 562). Similarly for Murray, the two are “complementary,” in that the former “emphasizes the activity of the believer,” while in the latter “the emphasis is placed upon the activity of the Spirit and the passivity of the subjects” (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 295).

6. Cranfield rightly identifies these as subjective genitives (C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. I [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975], 386). We conform ourselves (our thinking and attitudes) to either that which the Spirit thinks, or that which the flesh “thinks.”

7. Most interpreters agree that this fulfillment of the requirement (*δικαίωμα*) of the law in Romans 8:4 describes what is done by us in our loving service, even if effected by the Holy Spirit in us, in view of what seems to be the plain meaning later in the letter (13:10), as well as the parallel in Galatians 5:14. The alternative is to see it as the forensic accomplishment by Christ on our behalf. (See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 482-484, for the most thorough attempt to defend this interpretation.) This alternative seems to be implied by the NIV’s periphrastic rendering “... might be fully met in us.” However, it is difficult to accept that Paul would describe the righteousness of Christ for us, imputed to us apart from our own works (as emphasized earlier in Romans), as what is “fulfilled in us.” The singular “righteous requirement” could be chosen to emphasize the summing up of the law in the love command, which subsumes “all the moral norms of the law” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 407), or as Dunn puts it: “the essential requirement ... which lies behind the individual

## 2. How do we do it? The Explanatory Gap

Yet, for all the relative consensus as to the straightforward meaning of Paul's message in these passages, there remains a curious gap in practical explication of this central ethical imperative. It is clear that we are called to act in certain ways, to do good and loving deeds, but how do we enact such behavior "by means of," or "in the sphere of," the Spirit?<sup>8</sup> It is clear enough that we are to rely on, to depend on, the Holy Spirit; the indwelling Spirit is "God's empowering Spirit" (hence the apt title of Fee's seminal work on this subject). But it is an appropriate, and even urgent question, to ask, "What does this look like?"<sup>9</sup> Are there implicit assumptions or backgrounds (theological and practical) shared by Paul and his readers defining the steps, processes, or mechanism, by which they are to carry this out? For example, David Wenham concludes his study of the Christian life and whether Paul's prescription accents victory or struggle by offering this: "The Christian life can be a life of victory, if only we will recognize and appropriate the Spirit's power."<sup>10</sup> If only! Paul in Galatians 5:16 propounds perhaps the most striking guaranteed promise of our sanctification: walk by the Spirit, and (that is, if we do) we will in no way (or certainly not at all) carry out the desires of the flesh.<sup>11</sup> Ah, but we do not in fact very well manage to walk by the Spirit, and so the works of the flesh ensue, and we are back to square one. Clearly this is not just an academic exegetical question, but a practical existential matter for ordinary Christians desiring to be faithful and to know the sin-overcoming reality promised them in God's Word.<sup>12</sup>

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requirements, the character and purpose which the individual requirements are intended to bring to expression" (James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, WBC 38A [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988], 423).

8. These translate the dative *πνεύματι* as respectively, instrumental, or locative of sphere (so Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 430). He rightly affirms that we should not press the grammatical categories too rigidly here, as there could well be overlap between these two, and the ideas implied. On the other hand, he says, the use with "led by the Spirit" at least would indicate an instrumental dative.

9. As Schreiner does (Thomas Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 307).

10. David Wenham, "The Christian Life: A Life of Tension? A Consideration of the Nature of Christian Experience in Paul," in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F.F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Donald A. Hagner & Murray J. Harris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 89.

11. This is an "emphatic subjunctive clause" (οὐ μὴ τελέσητε) as noted by Schreiner, who defends the interpretation against some (including the RSV!) who mistakenly translate this second half of the sentence as an imperative matching the imperative "walk" in the first half. (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 343, and see his references, note 8.)

12. This is not to imply that either Paul or the majority of his subsequent interpreters held that consistent victory is attainable for the Christian (Gal. 6:1; cf. 1 Jn. 1:8-9) this side of glorification. Certainly it was not the case for Paul's congregations whom Paul addresses with urgent exhortations and solemn warnings (as here in Gal. 5:13-21, 26; and Rom. 8:12-14). But Christians may often wonder whether they have sufficiently grasped the divinely intended

Commentators unsurprisingly address this question differently depending on their own charismatic or more traditionally non-charismatic Reformed framework, or such a framework that they believe to be historically that of the first-century church.<sup>13</sup> Gordon Fee recognizes the problem and concludes Paul gives no direct answer to our “how” question regarding walking by the Spirit.<sup>14</sup> But, he argues, this would have posed no problem for Paul’s audience, because they shared a common presupposition, that of the experienced reality of the Holy Spirit in their midst (cf. Gal. 3:2-5, where Paul appeals to their having begun by the Spirit, being supplied by the Spirit, and witnessing miracles).<sup>15</sup> This is an appealing argument, for Paul elsewhere calls Christians to remember the Christ-pattern of behavior they learned when they first came to faith (Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-10). And Fee subsequently broadened his point in a striking call to the church to correct its marginalization of the Holy Spirit, by recovering the apostolic church’s sense of the personal and powerful eschatological Spirit in their midst, “the key player in all of Christian life.”<sup>16</sup>

Galatians 5:16 could well be translated “keep on walking by the Spirit.” But this should be understood as a call to be continually, or day by day, walking this way, rather than a call for the Galatians to continue what they’ve been doing.<sup>17</sup> Paul is certainly propounding an available supernatural reality as key to our Spirit-led walking, but it is not clear he is pointing us to the Galatians’ experience of that here, and besides, appeals to early church experience are tenuous. The Galatians were in danger of abandoning the gospel,<sup>18</sup> and in the well-known case of the Corinthian church, their “super-spirituality,” full of Spirit experiences, was not advancing their sanctification!<sup>19</sup> We all should desire a greater experiential knowledge of God the Holy Spirit, but do we attain that by looking to our perceived experience? How would I know it, and would it be genuine? So when a number of commentators attempt to

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reality for them in these verses, even if it is only a “small beginning of this obedience” (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 114).

13. Surveying scholarship since 1990 on *how* we are to walk by the Spirit according to Paul, Volker Rabens concludes that “no consensus of the details of the connection between Spirit and ethics and Paul has been reached in the more recent history of scholarship” (Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*, 2nd ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010, 2013], 304).

14. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 559, n. 254.

15. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 433.

16. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), xv. This book offered to a broader audience a condensation of much of *God’s Empowering Presence*, and sharpened the application to the church today. See vii-xv; for this assumed early church context for “walking by the Spirit,” see p. 108.

17. The nuance is based on the present imperative of the verb. So Schreiner, *Galatians*, 343; contra Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 245.

18. Cf. Rabens: “...if the presence and guidance of the Spirit was so much stronger in Paul’s day than today, one wonders why the Galatians were tempted to return to the law” (*The Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 302).

19. Fee himself clearly shows this in his 1 Corinthians commentary: their true spiritual condition (boasting) was unaffected by their Spirit experiences, particularly the sensational gifts (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 10-11).

explain the dynamic in these passages as “ecstatic” or “enthusiastic,” or “being ‘carried away’ by a spiritual force,”<sup>20</sup> or as “yielding to deeply felt inward compulsions,”<sup>21</sup> this may or may not reflect the circumstances in some of Paul’s churches, but it provides little help for us in achieving a better practical grasp of Paul’s comprehensive prescriptions here for Spirit dependence.

Rabens’ approach may seem similar, but is more helpful, especially as he is able to support his case from the immediate context in Romans 8 (paralleled in Gal. 4). He propounds a “relational” model of how the Spirit enables our right living. That is, the indwelling Spirit creates an intimate relationship with God and Christ which provides personal as well as cognitive guidance.<sup>22</sup> Certainly we can recognize the centrality of union with Christ as the ground of the Spirit’s work in Romans 6-8, and Paul appeals to believers’ experience of baptism to remind them of its implications for life in Christ (recall also Phil. 2:1-5, for Paul’s appeal to the experience of union with Christ and participation in the Spirit). In Romans 8:14 ff. Paul explicitly connects being led by the Spirit with adoption to sonship, and this Spirit of adoption bears witness within us to our intimate relationship with the Father and Christ, and thus it is *by the Spirit* that we utter the heartfelt cry, “Abba! Father!” (note in Gal. 4:6, the same cry—in our hearts—is attributed to the Spirit).<sup>23</sup> Indeed Paul’s stress on our deeply felt experience of the Spirit heightens in the rest of the chapter, as he highlights our inner groaning, as well as the intercessional groaning of “the Spirit himself” on our behalf, to the conclusion that nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ (which was “poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” Rom. 5:5). All of this is thus the appropriate and precious context for the leading of the Spirit in our lives. However, we should ask whether Paul intends (or overall scriptural teaching supports) that this internal testimony and experiential motivation ever (properly) exists independently of the external word.<sup>24</sup> Even in Romans 8, our own deep emotional response (which the Spirit creates and facilitates) is the response of faith to this externally proclaimed word from and about the Spirit (through Paul).

Thus for others concerned to safeguard the revelational content by which we know how to walk before God (and avoid experiential subjectivity), the Spirit’s guiding by which we walk is circumscribed as the enabling or provision of power to do God’s will (that is, rather than any kind of communicative source for that will). For

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20. This is from Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 496. He imagines here their “ecstatic worship services.” He even describes this as “surrendering to an overpowering compulsion,” by reference to first century magical texts! (486).

21. Dunn, *Romans*, 450, though he says this is to be balanced with “moral effort.” Betz, *Galatians*, 281, also says this was an “enthusiastic” experience of the Spirit, in which the believer is “carried away,” while “the Spirit takes the lead.”

22. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 202-203, 245-246.

23. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 203-237. Note the exegetical argument from Romans 8: “by means of the Spirit-created intimate relationship to God expressed in verses 15-17 the Spirit provides the empowering for the ethical action required in verse 13” (215).

24. Rabens himself admits that the outworking of our relational transformation by the Spirit take place “according to the values set forth by Paul’s gospel” (*Holy Spirit and Ethics*, 252). Hence Paul’s stress on the necessity of the faith-creating preaching of the gospel (Rom. 10:14-17).

example, Victor Furnish rightly argues that there is nothing here to suggest “the Spirit as the means by which the Christian is led to discover for himself God’s will.” Rather, he says, what the Spirit provides is power, as shown by the contexts of Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:18, indicating the ability to put to death the deeds of the body, and the power to oppose and stop the desires of the flesh.<sup>25</sup> Schreiner takes a similar interpretation, then adds that this is accessed by faith in God for this strength through his Spirit, or faith in his promises to that effect.<sup>26</sup> He notes what Paul does *not* say, that we should “listen to the voice of the Spirit,” or “seek an internal word.”<sup>27</sup> However, we are most certainly throughout the New Testament called to heed the Spirit’s voice *through* the apostles and prophets (cf. Rev. 2-3, with the refrain, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”), which presumably these authors would not deny, and so the question is whether speaking with his word is part of his leading by which we walk (we have God’s Spirit to know the Spirit-things of God [1 Cor. 2:12], or “illumination”).<sup>28</sup> And as we saw above, our walking requires having the right thinking and attitudes. The Spirit is not just providing us with power, but conforming us, or character-forming us, into the image of Christ, thus producing his fruit in us as he conquers the flesh.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Spirit vs. Law or Spirit with Law?

A significant problem in explaining the “how” of Paul’s walking by the Spirit and being led by the Spirit is that it is inextricably bound up with Paul’s view of the law.<sup>30</sup>

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25. Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 231-232.

26. Schreiner, *Romans*, 421-422; *Galatians*, 343. Interestingly, Schreiner actually says here (*Romans*, 422) “trust in the Spirit.” While in a sense appropriate (the Apostles’ Creed!), and especially in terms of the divine word of the Spirit, it may not be accurate for the walking/leading dynamic. The Spirit creates faith in the Father and the Son, and directs us to them. So, we walk in the way of God, following Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit. On this further, see below.

27. Schreiner, *Paul*, 308; the context of the remark is how Paul responded to the confusions of the Corinthian church. His important point is that appeals to the Spirit’s supposed direction or teaching apart from the authoritative revealed word are useless.

28. Wayne Grudem, concerned to defend the *personal* guidance of the Holy Spirit for believers, argues that his leading must extend to subjective indications beyond the moral teaching of Scripture (*Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018], 159-161, 174-183). While this seems to conflate Paul’s ethical category of Spirit leading with God’s providential direction of our circumstances, it rightly recognizes something more is involved than merely the provision of power. But if the Spirit leads by instruction, as we will argue, then his inward speaking and working *with his word* is indeed deeply personal and transformative, and adequate for all of our walking in the way of the Lord.

29. Perhaps this is part of the meaning of Zechariah 4:6: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” It is not just that appropriated power from the Holy Spirit remains his and not our own, but that it is power perfectly imbued with the holy character and purposes of God.

30. By “law” (Greek, νόμος) in this discussion, scholars mean, and generally assume Paul’s meaning to be, the sum total of God’s demands or commandments contained in Scripture, but

The larger contexts of both Galatians and Romans sets out Paul's fundamental eschatological framework of the new age that has brought freedom from slavery to sin under the law, and inaugurated the new way of the Spirit. Romans 7:4-6 especially presents the stark contrast: "But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code" (v. 6). This passage sets the agenda for what follows: on the one hand the discussion of the struggle with sin under law, but without the Spirit (in the rest of ch. 7), and on the other the description of life in the Spirit in chapter 8, where Paul introduces walking/leading by the Spirit. In Galatians as well, serving one another in love by walking by the Spirit is contrasted with the yoke of slavery under the law, in which we were bound to the flesh and sin (Gal. 5:1, 13-15). And in 5:18, Paul explicitly identifies being led by the Spirit with being "not under the law." These contexts, combined with other negative statements about the law (2 Cor. 3:6-8; Eph. 2:14-15), have convinced most Pauline scholars that "law" has entirely given way to the Spirit, and that therefore "walking by the Spirit" can have nothing to do with the law (even though all recognize in both the Romans and Galatians contexts it does produce the "fulfillment" of the law!).

So for example, we frequently hear these conclusions confidently drawn: since we are led by the Spirit, the Torah is superfluous.<sup>31</sup> There is no more need for commandments.<sup>32</sup> The Spirit "replaces Torah."<sup>33</sup> Note how this then must mean that the Spirit's leading *apart from* law becomes the source for communicating the will of God and moral standards: the Spirit fulfills Torah "by leading God's people in the paths of God to live in such a way so as to express the intent of Torah in the first place."<sup>34</sup> If we ask *how* he does that, we might be surprised at Paul's answer according to Stephen Westerholm: the will of God was formerly found in the Torah, but now "Christians must discover it for themselves as their mind is 'renewed' and they grow in insight...."<sup>35</sup>

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primarily in the Law of Moses, along with its covenantal sanctions. Often though, the law or the Law of Moses can mean the 5 books of Moses, the Pentateuch, or even sometimes all of Scripture. Scholars also may use, and attribute to Paul, the word "Torah" with the same meanings. But more on Torah below.

31. Betz, *Galatians*, 289.

32. E.g., Longenecker, *Galatians*, 243, 247; John M.G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 116.

33. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 438. This is a refrain that he and many others repeat. He stresses "*Any form of Torah observance* [his italics] has come to an end" (815).

34. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 816.

35. Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 209. This radical but consistent conclusion is nevertheless drawn from a concise and tightly argued presentation (chapter 10: "The Law and Christian Behavior"). A new version with essentially the same conclusions appeared in the updated and expanded volume by Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The 'Lutheran' Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). His argument has been influential for many evangelicals in part because of his incisive critique of the New Perspective on Paul.

Many evangelicals who demure from such a conclusion, endorsing to varying degrees a continuing role for scriptural moral norms, whether from parts of the Old Testament law itself or as that is carried over into “the law of Christ,” nevertheless quite absolutely declare the end of the Mosaic law.<sup>36</sup> The point is for all of these scholars, the moral laws enshrined in the Old Testament play only a limited or minor role in Paul’s behavioral prescriptions, and so are not likely to play a role in the Spirit’s moral leading and our walking accordingly.<sup>37</sup>

What then of the traditional and Reformed view? Can it still be fairly defended in the face of so much agreement among contemporary Pauline scholars? And can it then provide a way forward for explicating Paul’s walking/leading by the Spirit? As is well known, Calvin propounded “the third use of the law” as its “principal use”: “The third and principal use, which pertains more closely to the proper purpose of the law, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns.”<sup>38</sup> But perhaps less well known is the comprehensiveness of Calvin’s discussion, including a particularly nuanced treatment of the complexity of Paul’s positive and negative references to law.<sup>39</sup> Also well known, is that this framework in Calvin and the Reformed perspective depends on a traditional distinction between moral, ceremonial, and civil law, and that the “three uses” (not the threefold distinction of kinds of law) all refer to the moral law.<sup>40</sup> If then that distinction is regarded as suspect,

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36. E.g., Thomas Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993) , 171-177; Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994); cf. Schreiner’s review in *Trinity Journal* 16, no. 1 (1995): 101-104, where he notes Thielman’s changed view that it is not just that the curse of the law has been removed (his previous position), but the Mosaic law itself has ceased, and Schreiner agrees; Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2009): “The law of Moses in its entirety has come to an end,” but some parts can still have a positive use, although (following Westerholm) “Paul does not prescribe Christian behavior with reference to the law” (283).

37. Schreiner can sometimes be quite positive about a role for law commands, even while the era of law has ended. See his treatment in *Paul*, in the chapter “Life of Love in the Spirit: Exhortations & the Law in Paul.” He says there “commands are compatible with life in the Spirit,” and “commands and exhortations chart out the pathway in which believers should walk,” 328-299. This is quite relevant for our walking according to the Spirit, but he does not make that connection directly.

38. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 2.7.12.

39. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7-9; see also footnote 1 in the McNeill-Battles edition, p. 348. As Brian Rosner correctly notes, the success or failure of explanations of Paul’s view of the law hinge on how well they can fairly account for Paul’s statements of “both negative critique and positive approval” (Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013], 24-25). For an insightful comprehensive presentation of the Reformed view of the law, see Willem A VanGemeren, “The Law is the Perfection of Righteousness in Jesus Christ: A Reformed Perspective,” in *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views*, ed. Wayne G. Strickland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 13-58. He provides an analysis of Calvin’s view on pp. 51-55.

40. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.1-2, 16-17; 4.20.15-16.



which is a commonplace in contemporary scholarship,<sup>41</sup> it can easily be concluded that the whole framework fails. This is central to the critique of Rosner and others, which holds that the only way to do justice to Paul's absolute negative statements about "the law" is to conclude that the law as a whole has been set aside, and that Paul did not distinguish between valid and invalid parts.<sup>42</sup>

We should note that scholars defending the traditional distinction have not claimed that these were established distinct categories in Paul's Jewish context—as if Paul could have readily appealed to them to clear up the confusion!—or as if merely pointing this out refutes the validity of the approach. Rather, the distinction is a retrospective reflection on what Paul appears to be doing—and for good salvation-historical reasons.<sup>43</sup> With the coming of Christ and his fulfillment of the sacrificial system and the removal of the barriers between Jew and Gentile, the cultic and civil laws of Israel have now necessarily been "abrogated," with great consequence for the new people of God (Jew together with Gentile).<sup>44</sup> Christ had already introduced distinctions (Mt. 23:23; Mk. 7:14-23)—though anticipated in the Scriptures (for e.g., Ps. 51:16-17; Mic. 6:6-8; even though the law itself clearly intermingled different kinds of law: Lev. 19), and that therefore Christ himself is now the criterion for the appropriation of the law ("the law of Christ" which is the law of God, 1 Cor. 9:21).<sup>45</sup>

Therefore Reformed interpreters of Paul have with good reason found him to be endorsing the enduring significance of the Old Testament law—as moral law—for

41. See Rosner, for the assertion that "Paul generally deals with the law as a unity" and so that should function as a hermeneutical presupposition for us. Note the scholars he lists there (*Paul and the Law*, 43).

42. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 36-39. Also, Grudem, *Christian Ethics*, 248-251.

43. Rosner (*Paul and the Law*, 37) cites Ridderbos as conceding that Paul nowhere explicitly makes the distinction, but omits the rest of his sentence, which reads "but materially Paul ... nevertheless starts from such a distinction." (Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 284). Interestingly Westerholm acknowledges that Paul patently did operate with such a distinction. He nevertheless thinks that Paul's rejection of law is absolute (Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 437-438).

44. So Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.14, 16-17. VanGemeren, "Law," 53; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 284-285; G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 871-878. Beale helpfully reinforces the point by relating it to Paul's eschatological new creation framework. However, his concession that the distinction "has no exegetical basis" is unwarranted according to his own presentation. He points out, as others have done (Calvin!) that the parallel with Eph. 2:13-18 in Col. 2:15-17, 20-22 demonstrates that one of Paul's strongest negative judgments about the law ("abolished") refers to "the external nationalistic expressions of the law" (873-874). We should also note however, that "abrogate" may be strictly inaccurate, in view of Jesus' words about his relation to the law in Mt. 5.17: John Murray argues that though "observance has been discontinued," "the ritual ordinances" have meaning as "models drawn from the heavenly exemplar" and serve as "anticipatory accomplishments of the same great redemptive facts" (Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957], 150-151).

45. Cf. Murray, *Principles*, 188-190. Note how Murray's contextual exegesis of this passage shows that this proper distinction between the ceremonial and moral aspects of the law is central to the refutation of any disjunction between "the law of Christ" and "the law of God" (manifestly equivalent to the moral law contained in the Old Testament).

both a revelation of the will of God and for Christian obedience.<sup>46</sup> Thus 1 Corinthians 7:19 (“neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God”) is readily understood, and avoids resorting to the unlikely explanation that for Paul “the commandments of God” are *not* to be found in the moral law of the Old Testament.<sup>47</sup> Then the all-important discontinuity within that *moral law* is appropriately explained in terms of whether it is approached out of faith and dependence on God’s grace, or whether it is misappropriated for self-justification in the power of the flesh.<sup>48</sup> Note that though the proper relation to the law through faith has only come into its fullest clarity with the coming of Christ and the inaugurated eschatological age, so that Israel’s experience in that old era could be characterized as failure and slavery (under the law as a pedagogue/guardian; “before faith came” Gal. 3.23-25), Paul cannot be taken to deny that that proper relation to the law through faith was grasped and witnessed to in that old age (how else could there be a godly remnant?).<sup>49</sup> Thus, the contrast in “if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Gal. 5:18) derives from the sin and death inducing effect of the law (“under law” in the sense of Rom. 6:14) when its accomplishment is attempted apart from grace through faith.<sup>50</sup> The eschatological provision of life in the Spirit now liberates us from the slavery resulting from that misperception and misuse. Silva has shown through close exegesis of key verses in context in Galatians that this is the key to Paul’s positive and negative references to the law. Galatians 3:11: “no one is justified before God by the law” plainly shows that the issue is “the law as a justifying agent.”<sup>51</sup> (Note

46. Cf. VanGemeren, “Law,” 53; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 278-288.

47. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law*, 201, n. 11; Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 37-38. Notice that on Rosner’s view, as well as that of most scholarship, 1 Cor. 7:19 has to be viewed as a singular anomaly and puzzle (33-36).

48. Here the “spheres of influence” approach of Klyne Snodgrass is helpful: because law has no power within itself, when co-opted by sin and the flesh it can only lead to death, while in the sphere of Christ and the Spirit, through faith, it can be rightly used positively (Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32 [1988]: 93-113).

49. Cf. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 154: Paul could not mean that “it was only with Christ that the possibility of faith had come;” “it is not open to contradiction or misunderstanding that the way of faith for Paul constituted the essence of the Old Testament economy of redemption as well.” So also Moisés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996, 2001), 179-180, and footnote 28. However, he makes this important point: “we must not allow the experiential realities of faith-before-Christ and law-after-Christ to neutralize the significance of this epochal distinction.”

50. Interpreters should consult the careful and classic exegesis of John Murray in which he clearly shows that “under law” does not have univocal meaning in Paul’s usage, and that it cannot be appealed to as unqualified repudiation of the moral law (Murray, *Principles*, 185-190). Rosner in effect recognizes this in his chapter on this expression (*Paul and the Law*, 45-81).

51. Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 193. This chapter, “The Function of the Law,” originally appeared as “Is the Law against the Promises? The Significance of Gal 3:21 for Covenant Continuity” in *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*, ed. W.S. Barker & W.R. Godfrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 153-167. Cf. also Silva, “Galatians,” in *Commentary on the New*

also that this is a probable allusion to Ps. 143; see below.) Galatians 3:21: “if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law” against the backdrop of the Judaizers’ claim referenced in 3:18 that “inheritance comes by the law,” demonstrates that what Paul is opposing is “the law as life-giving force.”<sup>52</sup> Obedience to the law’s moral requirements therefore requires a source of life for those that are otherwise dead in sin, and therefore “the law is not replaced by the Spirit in the eschatological age,”<sup>53</sup> but the Spirit is the very key to its proper use and the carrying out of what it requires.

Now that we can walk according to the leading of the Spirit, are we not now appropriately able to “delight in the law of God,” as Paul says in Romans 7:22 (that law which is holy and “characterized by the Spirit” [7:14], with commandments that are “holy and righteous and good [7:12])? Or would Paul intend that that is rather incongruously no longer available or desirable when the Spirit is leading? As many have put the question: would not Paul be able to affirm Psalm 1,<sup>54</sup> or with Psalm 119:97, “Oh how I love your law?”<sup>55</sup> Rosner indeed affirms discontinuity at just this point, arguing that Paul would not join the psalmist in that devotion.<sup>56</sup> Is this not a problem for our canonical reading of the Old Testament?

What Rosner and others judge to be determinative in their contention here is Paul’s language or manner of expression with regard to Christian fulfilling of the law. If the traditional view I am defending is correct, how can it be that Paul does *not* say that Christians “do” or “keep” or “observe” the law, or “walk according to” or “in the way of” the law?<sup>57</sup> This discussion typically overlooks a key linguistic factor. In Rosner’s discussion of “the meaning of law,” referring to the Greek νόμος and the underlying Hebrew תורה (torah), he neglects any mention of differences between the

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*Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 800-803, 810.

52. Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 189-192. Note that Silva clarifies that this does not mean Paul is strictly responding to “the Jewish misunderstanding of the law,” but neither is he referring to “Mosaic law pure and simple.” As rather a third way, Paul’s argument is focused “on a specific function (whether real or only supposed) of the law” (193).

53. VanGemeren, “Law,” 45.

54. Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 193-194. As he argues, though Paul was denying that the law could be “the source of life,” he “did indeed regard the law as *leading to* life, in the sense that love for and obedience to God’s commands is the way of life.”

55. Murray, *Principles*, 201; Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.12

56. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 165, and footnote 25: “The most obvious difference is the psalmist’s devotion to the law, which Paul does not echo.” Left unclarified is whether this is a matter merely of Paul’s language and rhetoric, or of theology. If Paul did not echo it, could or would he? Cf. Ridderbos regarding Romans 9:30—10:4: zeal for the law is not condemned by Paul, but “zeal for the law can alienate... when faith is no longer the departure for the fulfillment of the law” (Ridderbos, *Paul*, 139).

57. Rosner, chapter 3 in *Paul and the Law*, 83-109; cf. also Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 432-436. Rosner also demonstrates that such expressions were normal within first-century Judaism, and also that Paul uses them pejoratively regarding his Jewish opponents. However, note also that this coincides for Paul with “relying on” or “boasting in” the law.

terms.<sup>58</sup> Of course, thanks to the Septuagint (LXX) translation, νομος became the normative Greek rendering. But this is due to the LXX predilection for word-for-word correspondence rather than a consistently accurate rendering. As is well known, תורה means “instruction,” or “teaching.”<sup>59</sup> Also, it is frequently in collocation with words for “commandments” and “keeping,” and thus can be understood as equivalent to or containing “law(s).”<sup>60</sup> But the salient point here for Paul’s usage is that the Greek νομος does *not* at all mean “instruction” or “teaching.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, Paul, certainly knowing Hebrew and being aware of this, would not be able to render תורה with νομος if he wanted to accurately reflect the intended broader meaning in Old Testament usage. The LXX and corresponding Greek-speaking Jewish usage with νομος had largely foreclosed the possibility of communicating that broader sense, with consequent implications for its function and appropriation.<sup>62</sup> What then would Paul use? What he does use, and in significant ways—the words that are readily available in Greek: νουθεσία, “admonition, instruction,” διδασκαλία, “teaching, instruction,” or παιδεία, “training, instruction,” (with other synonyms, especially in 2 Tim. 3.16-17). Rosner’s discussion of Paul’s “reappropriation” of the law as wisdom sums up Paul’s widespread usage of these terms, but fails to indicate that they translate תורה and reflect the broader concept of “law” in the Old Testament.<sup>63</sup> Therefore this phenomenon quite undermines his contention that Paul replaces Old Testament “law” with Christ and the

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58. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 26-31. His discussion is mainly focused on the referents of תורה, that is, the books of Moses, or the laws contained therein, rather than the meaning of the word.

59. The literature on this is vast, and the issue is often controverted whether to translate the term as “instruction,” or “law.” However the primary meaning of the word is undisputed. It derives from the verb ירה, meaning “to teach, instruct.” For תורה, see HALOT, ad loc.

60. “*tôrâ* means ‘instruction’ or ‘teaching,’ handed down either orally or in writing. When this tradition is authoritative and binding, *tôrâ* can take on the character of a law” (García López, “תורה *tôrâ*,” *TDOT* 15:614). I would add that “law” can thus take on the character of “instruction.”

61. Note that “instruction” is not one of the options given for νομος in BDAG (ad loc.). It may mean “rule, principle, or law,” or refer to books designated as “law.” Thus the contention here is not that תורה never means “law,” or should never be translated as “law” or νομος, as some of the straw man arguments targeted by Westerholm seemed to claim. Rather, תורה is broader than νομος and carries important connotations that are masked by the latter term. Even where language of “keeping” or “doing” is used, תורה is not necessarily narrowly “law.” We can speak of “keeping” or “doing” God’s word. And as we shall see, תורה in the post-exilic period and even perhaps earlier did come to function as a programmatic key word for the whole semantic domain that included the “word” and “commandments” of God.

62. We might ponder whether something similar happens in English: “If one were to capture the essence of *tôrâ* in the OT, ‘instruction’ or ‘teaching,’ rather than ‘law’ with its particular modern connotations, may be terms that best do justice to the variety of uses. *Tôrâ* is instruction, whether cultic or civil, whether in the form of specific legal stipulations or less formal words of guidance from parent to child, whether a clearly defined corpus such as the book of Deuteronomy or *tôrôt* that are less easy to define precisely” (Peter Enns, “The Law of God,” *NIDOTTE* 4:897).

63. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 185-186.

Spirit,<sup>64</sup> and that Paul's prescriptive use of "instruction" has no reference to "commandments to be obeyed,"<sup>65</sup> for that "instruction" is precisely תורה, and contains, or as a term, frequently governs, other terms that are explicitly "commandments" or "statutes," which are to be obeyed and kept. Now we can recognize that νομος, as a term in Greek, not allowing the sense of "instruction" (with gracious and wisdom implications, as Rosner shows), can easily be construed as and confined to *mere demand*, with consequent flesh-bound and death dealing effects, so that Paul would avoid language of "keeping" or "observing" νομος. But thereby also Paul's positive propounding of תורה is not eliminated nor its demands for Christian obedience. In other words, referring to such commands in the Old Testament, Paul would indeed say, "Oh how I love your διδασκαλία!"<sup>66</sup>

#### 4. Paul's Old Testament Background: Allusions, Echoes, and Influence

Paul was saturated with the Old Testament, and scholars have become increasingly aware of the extent to which Old Testament passages, as well as larger contexts and narratives, lie behind Paul's statements and arguments: the phenomenon extends beyond explicit citations and also to "allusions" and "echoes."<sup>67</sup> Thus we should not

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64. This is the thesis of his chapter 4, "'Under the Law of Christ': Replacement of the Law" (Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 111-134).

65. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 204. Even when Paul cites particular Old Testament commandments, according to Rosner, it is not because they are binding on Christians as moral law (p. 195).

66. Note that that verse in Psalm 119 is immediately preceded and followed by a similar devotional reference to "your commandment" (מצוה, vv. 96, 98).

67. The study of the "New Testament use of the Old Testament," or "inner-biblical exegesis," or "intertextuality," has become a dominant focus in biblical research in recent decades, borrowing insights from literary studies, philosophical hermeneutics, and the study of Rabbinic literature. See Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); idem, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). An important collection of articles critiquing or qualifying Hays is *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008). Important specifications in the identification of allusions and echoes are provided in Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008). Further response to critics is provided in Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 5-8, 34-36. See also G.K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012); Brian D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018). Beale and Estelle also provide the necessary integration of these issues with the more traditional and Reformed perspectives of a redemptive-historical hermeneutic and typology, including a critique of the presupposition of Hays and most mainstream scholarship that Paul's allusive and echoing use of the Old Testament is *only* retrospective (backward-looking) (Beale, *Handbook*, 13-27; Estelle, 36-57, as well as note 168 for specific critique of Hays). See too Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 37-38, on the concept of "fulfillment," where he references D.A. Carson's helpful study on Paul's integration of both "promise-fulfillment" and "hiddenness-revelation" (Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment:

be surprised, but rather expect, to find Old Testament correspondences with Paul's programmatic comprehensive exhortations in Galatians and Romans, especially as they include references to "walking," "Spirit leading," and raise the question of connection with law or תורה.<sup>68</sup> Yet commentators on these passages have been slow to acknowledge this and develop the implications, perhaps because it is a still developing field, yet also certainly because at times the claims made lack sufficient exegetical warrant, seem overly subjective, and/or remain contested. So for example, Moo refers to one of the earlier investigations of the Old Testament background here as "intriguing," yet dismisses it because of the lack of "clear lexical support in the New Testament and LXX."<sup>69</sup> Others are more open to the suggestion. Fee, reminding us that as always, the "primary place to turn" for explicating Paul's usage is the Old Testament, mentions the pervasive theme of God's leading his people, but refers only to Psalm 23:3: "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."<sup>70</sup> Schreiner and Kruse, referencing more recent studies in their commentaries on Galatians and Romans respectively, offer that God's leading his people out of Egypt and through the wilderness "may" or "may well" be alluded to here, but refrain from drawing any further implications.<sup>71</sup> It is at least common for interpreters to acknowledge the Old Testament background of walking in the way of God, or walking according to his laws. Yet the difficulty in identifying the point or relevance of this background is seen in Dunn's interpretation: Paul is deliberately refuting that "typical Jewish understanding," that is, in contrast to law—and so without law—believers are led by

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Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul's Understanding of the Old and the New," in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 393-436).

68. In line with the above discussion of תורה, I will not use the English "Torah," as is often done, because such usage frequently begs the question as to its actual meaning and referents, which may be complex. This is because of the well-known usage of תורה in both first-century and contemporary Jewish religious terminology to refer to either the five books of Moses, or to "law," often in a halachic sense of a legal system. However, this easily entails misperception, as Jewish usage itself is more complex and nuanced.

69. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 498, n. 11. The reference is to the article of de la Potterie, which anticipated more recent study, arguing that "led by the Spirit" is "in imitation of the Old Testament people of God being led into the promised land." Cf. Ignace de la Potterie, "Le chrétien conduit par l'Esprit dans son cheminement eschatologique (Rom 8,14)," in *The Law of the Spirit in Rom. 7 & 8*, ed. Lorenzo de Lorenzi (Rome: St. Paul's Abbey, 1976), 209-241.

70. He rightly underscores even from this connection, that the "leading" here for Paul is moral/ethical, for walking in God's ways ("paths of righteousness"; cf. fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law, Rom. 8:4) (Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 563). Later in the same work, addressing the theme of God's personal presence dwelling in the midst of his people by the Spirit, he references Isaiah 63 (where the Holy Spirit guiding is explicit, as well as grieving the Spirit [Eph. 4:30]), saying "God's presence has now returned to his people, to indwell them corporately and individually so that they might walk in his ways," without addressing any further the relevance of Isaiah 63 for the passages in Galatians and Romans (844-845).

71. Schreiner mentions Isaiah 63, even as having an eschatological intention (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 345); Kruse cites a long list of Old Testament passages (Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 336).

the Spirit to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).<sup>72</sup> The influence of this widespread reading, as we have seen, may be what has hindered further integration of recent intertextual insights into a fuller account of walking by the leading of the Spirit.

Many of these recent studies have focused on the influence of Isaiah on Paul (even as a “narrative substructure,” as N.T. Wright characterized it).<sup>73</sup> Sylvia Keesmat, Wright, Florian Wilk, and J. Ross Wagner have focused on Isaiah in large portions of Romans,<sup>74</sup> while G.K. Beale and Matthew Harmon have developed the Isaianic connections with Galatians.<sup>75</sup> William Wilder, though opting ultimately for Psalm 143 as the immediate background, also treated Isaiah 63.<sup>76</sup> The cumulative effect of all of this is overwhelming: Paul’s reading of Isaiah was astute, both in particular passages and larger contexts, and was determinative for the expression of his gospel in Galatians and Romans.<sup>77</sup> Regarding an Isaianic or other background for Paul’s walking by/led by the Spirit, both Harmon and Beale give an effective summary of the case for an Isaiah 63 background.<sup>78</sup> Wilder’s study also demonstrated the complex inner-textual relationships of Paul’s Old Testament intertexts in this case, as it is clear in his use of the Old Testament in general that Paul was by no means limited to Isaiah (for example, Genesis and Psalms are prominent).<sup>79</sup> But the more sustained approach by some,

72. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 330, 424; it is of course not merely a “Jewish” understanding, but a properly Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) understanding.

73. N.T. Wright, “New Exodus, New Inheritance: The Narrative Substructure of Romans 3-8,” in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 26-35.

74. Sylvia C. Keesmat, “Exodus and the Intertextual Transformation of Tradition in Romans 8:14-30,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 54 (1994): 29-56; Keesmat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition*, JSNTSup 181 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, FRLANT 179 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “In Concert” in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

75. G.K. Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Paul’s Reference to ‘Fruit of the Spirit’ in Galatians 5:22,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 15, no. 1 (2005): 1-38; Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free* (2010).

76. William Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative in the Context and Background of Galatians 5:18*, Studies in Biblical Literature 23 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

77. Cf. Moisés Silva, in his review of Wilk: “if anyone needed to be convinced that Paul in his writings acts to a large extent as an interpreter of Isaiah, Wilk’s book should leave no further doubt.” (Silva, review of Wilk and Wagner in *Westminster Theological Journal* 66, no. 2 [2004]: 435.) Silva also notes (p. 436) this conclusion of Wagner: Paul’s references to Isaiah “are the product of sustained and careful attention to the rhythms and cadences of individual passages as well as to larger themes and motifs that run throughout the prophet’s oracles” (Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 356).

78. However this is not the focus of their studies, and implications for further explication of Paul’s walking by/led by the Spirit are not explored (Beale, “Old Testament Background,” 12-14; Harmon, 221-225).

79. Cf. Moisés Silva, “Old Testament in Paul,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 630-642, and the chart on p. 631.

including Keesmat and Wilder, to integrate an exodus-new exodus background with Paul's theology at this point suggests that even the identification of legitimate correspondences does not necessarily produce entirely reliable conclusions regarding the interpretive significance of what Paul is doing. Unsurprisingly, prior conclusions about Paul's theology and hermeneutics are bound to influence our take on the how and what of Paul's interpretation.<sup>80</sup> Particularly in this case, it is the assumption of an end to Old Testament law, or any gracious purpose of God in it, allegedly creatively drawn from contexts that affirm the opposite.<sup>81</sup>

Hence is underscored the importance of reflection on method, which these and other studies have significantly advanced. Richard Hays in his original influential proposal for "echoes" of Scripture in Paul recognized the need for controls and provided seven criteria.<sup>82</sup> These were adapted and modified by others, in particular Beetham and then Harmon in terms of two "tiers." The first are the essential criteria (linguistic/literary/conceptual correspondences), while the second tier are those which are "confirmatory," but may or may not be present. The requirements of these criteria crucially depend on whether the proposed reference is an "allusion" or an "echo": the former is generally understood as a deliberate use by the later author intended as a "public marker" for his audience, and is required as an "essential interpretive link" to follow the author's point or argument; on the other hand, an echo is less explicit and may or may not be intended by the author, and its identification is not necessary for comprehension of the author's meaning.<sup>83</sup> These are thus on a spectrum, from explicit quotation to allusion to echo to merely (but still important) thematic parallels.<sup>84</sup>

But it should be understood that this is not a spectrum from relevance (and objectively obvious) to irrelevance (or complete subjectivity), as some critics have implied. While all have admitted the difficulty of identifying and distinguishing in every case between allusion and echo, and that we are dealing with interpretive probability,<sup>85</sup> Hays, Beetham, and Estelle have also effectively made the case for the

80. Interpreters often underestimate the degree to which our theological commitments color our exegesis. See Silva, "Systematic Theology and the Apostle to the Gentiles," *Trinity Journal* 15 (1994): 3-26, and particularly 19-26. The point is not to exclude our presuppositions and systematic theology, but to become self-aware of them, so they can be critically examined and more conformed to the text.

81. The pervasiveness of this theological perspective, even as a presupposition, in the discussion of Paul's intertextual use of the Old Testament, is evident already in Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 156-157: Paul's "transformation of the sense of Torah" is "drastic"; he is driven by an "impulse toward spiritual autonomy"; and he "effectively sweeps away the normative significance of the practices of Torah obedience."

82. Availability, volume, recurrence/clustering, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation, and satisfaction (Hays, *Echoes*, 29-32; he elaborates on these further in *Conversion*, 34-45).

83. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 15-35; Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 28-33.

84. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 28-30.

85. Thus Hays prefaces his introduction of criteria for echoes with the qualification that they can only be "rules of thumb" that cannot produce certainty or precision (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 29; cf. idem, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 30-31, 34). Cf. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 34-35



hermeneutical and theological importance of recognizing echo. In particular an investigation of the source text can prove valuable for insight into the meaning of the later author (or “echoing” text), and as well the presence of echo can provide insight into how the later author has understood the source text—both in terms of its ultimate meaning, and in terms of its hermeneutical function, such as an eschatological anticipation of the later time of fulfillment.<sup>86</sup> Echoes also typically for Paul evoke more than an isolated verse or phrase, but themes from the surrounding context, and these can be especially illuminating for a deeper appreciation of Paul’s meaning.<sup>87</sup> The legitimacy of what may potentially be an intricate web of intertextual associations (an “intertextual matrix of ideas,” or an appeal to an “intertextual space”<sup>88</sup>) should be affirmed particularly in the case of Paul, against those skeptical of Paul’s ability or intention to operate with such a web of associations. This is an important part because of what we should now reasonably assume about Paul’s training. That is that he had memorized large swaths of Scripture in the original Hebrew, and that therefore these Scriptures and their contexts were present and influential for his thinking, even where he does not explicitly allude to a specific text.<sup>89</sup> Thus some suggest that it is better that we use the overall category of “influence” as we attempt to identify the impact of Old Testament texts, contexts, themes, or motifs on Paul.<sup>90</sup> In this regard, Beale’s argument for the recognition of the biblical authors’ “cognitive peripheral vision” is helpful.<sup>91</sup> That is, there are tacit, implicit, or subsidiary meanings and associations that

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86. Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 27-29, 48-49; Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 22-24; Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 34-38.

87. Hays famously (or notoriously!) appropriated the literary term “metalepsis” for this (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 20). Cf. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 22. Here we may notice the overlap with the debate about whether Paul or other New Testament authors typically respect the context of the Old Testament text referred to, or even might be intentionally directing us to that context (cf. Beale, *Handbook*, effectively summarizing the case that they do so, which he shows depends on the recognition of key hermeneutical and theological presuppositions of the New Testament authors—including their view of Scripture and the consistent outworking of God’s sovereign plan in history [see his chapter 5]). One wonders whether certain opposition to Hays’ appropriation of such literary categories is at least in part connected with opposition to these theologically conservative arguments for New Testament authors’ legitimate contextual exegesis.

88. Keesmat, “Exodus and Intertextual Transformation,” 40-41, 43.

89. Cf. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 258-260. Cf. also Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 21-26, and particularly footnote 87 for scholarship on the relationship between memorization and written texts, with the latter functioning as an aid to the former; and footnote 89 for the possibility of this accounting for some of Paul’s departures from the exact wording of the texts.

90. So Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 27-28; Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 28-30.

91. Beale, “The Cognitive Peripheral Vision of Biblical Authors,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 76 (2014): 263-293. Beale is drawing on Michael Polanyi, Kevin Vanhoozer, Jeannine K. Brown, and Mitchell Kim. Cf. his reference (p. 273, n. 33) to Vanhoozer on the tacit awareness of biblical writers (from Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998], 259.) See too Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 108; and Kim, “Respect for Context and Authorial Intention: Setting the

are not part of the author's explicit verbal expression, and that yet correspond with it and aid in a richer and deeper explication of the author's intended meaning.<sup>92</sup>

Nevertheless, while the appreciation of broader thematic substructures and extended textual associations are all relevant at some level, they are not all equally pertinent to the matter—and the particulars of the text—at hand. Alternative explanations of Paul's textual and conceptual background can overlap and make their own contributions, but with the multiplication of such explanations, we should perhaps recall again two of Hays' original criteria. "Thematic coherence" and "satisfaction" remind us to ask how well it makes sense of, or fits, or illumines the passage of Paul, in its particulars and in its larger context, and in view of our best account of Paul's theology.<sup>93</sup> As Gundry puts it, "the success of any interpretation depends on its explanatory power, on its ability to make more complex, coherent, and natural sense of textual data than other interpretations do."<sup>94</sup> Thus, intertextual accounts of Paul's walking by and being led by the Spirit may be lacking explanatory power in two respects: if they fail to show the relevance of the background or echo to the moral/ethical/behavioral focus of the passages, or if they do that, but imply that the background of Exodus/new Exodus deliverance from slavery is appropriated by Paul as freedom from obedience to God's law.

#### 4.1. Isaiah 63:10-14

The striking fact occasioning the discussion of Old Testament intertexts for Paul here is that the specific collocation of "Spirit" and "lead" is rare in the Old Testament. It is found in only two passages, Isaiah 63:10-14 and Psalm 143:10, while in another, Nehemiah 9:19-20 they are closely paralleled. The question of potential relationship between each of these texts (also in relationship to other passages in Exodus, Isaiah, and Psalms) is complex, so the question is not just which text Paul is echoing, but to what degree he is echoing certain associations of these inner-texts.<sup>95</sup> Given the depth of Paul's engagement with the text of Isaiah, it can hardly be denied that Paul has drawn on its themes and expressions of new exodus, new creation, pouring out of the Spirit, and new fruitfulness in Galatians and Romans (from Isa. 32:1-2, 15-18; 44:3-4; 57:16-18; as well as the references to the Spirit on the new Davidic king and the

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Epistemological Bar, in *Paul and Scripture*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 115-129.

92. Note similarity here with concept of "fuller meaning" or the presence of the divine author (Beale, Estelle). Evangelicals of course have never advocated that God's meaning is being expressed other than *through* the instrumentality of the human author and this inspired text, and hence the priority of grammatical-historical exegesis and controls.

93. See Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 44. Cf. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 34; Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 33.

94. Robert H. Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 4; as quoted in Beale, "Cognitive Peripheral Vision," 290.

95. Most of this data is well known. See Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, chapters 3-4; Beale, "Old Testament Background," 12-14; and Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 221-225.

Servant).<sup>96</sup> Thus Beale, Harmon, and others argue that in the case of being led by the Spirit, Isaiah 63:10-14 also should be seen as the primary background. The passage is apt, as an appeal to the Lord for mercy based on his past mercies at the Exodus, in spite of the people's rebellion,<sup>97</sup> and bringing together the widespread tradition of the Lord's exodus-wilderness guiding/leading—and here connecting it explicitly for the first time with the Spirit.<sup>98</sup> The broader context of Isaiah certainly suggests an expectation that the Spirit in the new exodus will bring about a leading matching and surpassing that glorious provision at the Exodus. But will that Spirit come to inwardly lead us in a new obedience (which the first exodus leading certainly generally did not produce)? This passage does not say or even address that (though Isa. 48:16-17 and 57:16-18 come closer).

#### 4.2. Psalm 143:10

Thus we come to Psalm 143 and Wilder's argument that the exodus-new exodus theme (in Isa. 63 and elsewhere) has been mediated through this psalm which is then the direct background for Paul's "walk by/led by the Spirit."<sup>99</sup> He makes two points that are particularly significant for this conclusion.<sup>100</sup> The first is that Paul has cited or alluded to verse 2 of the same psalm ("for no one living is righteous before you," actually  $\pi\tau\tau\zeta\prime\ \kappa\lambda\prime$  [LXX οὐ δικαιοθήσεται], "will not be justified") in both Galatians 2:16 and Romans 3:20, which several commentators have recognized.<sup>101</sup> This is of

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96. "Therefore sufficient evidence exists that a profound engagement with the Isaianic presentation of the Spirit lies behind Paul's discussion of the Spirit in Gal 5:16-26. Given that second-exodus themes were found in Gal 4:1-7, the fact that Paul would continue to draw upon related Isaianic imagery to portray the activity of the Spirit in the lives of the redeemed should not be surprising" (Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free*, 225).

97. Isaiah 63:10 ("But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit") is the source for Ephesians 4:30.

98. It should be noted however that the Hebrew text does not explicitly refer to the Spirit leading ("He who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit," is the one who "led them through the depths" [vv. 11-13]; and verse 14 has "...the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So you led your people..."). Nevertheless the passage strongly implies the Lord led them *by* his Holy Spirit, especially given the implied agency of the theophanic glory cloud, as we shall see. Interestingly, the LXX does make the Spirit's leading explicit, for where MT of verse 14 has "The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest," the LXX has "the Spirit came down from the Lord and *guided* them." And here it has used  $\delta\delta\eta\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ , instead of  $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega$  which occurs three times in the passage (of the Lord's leading). There may be nothing more than stylistic variation in the different synonyms used for guide/lead, *although* Ps. 143.10 also has  $\delta\delta\eta\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ .

99. He acknowledges that the background is "a broad plane of influence formed by some intersection of the various OT texts..." Yet he argues that this psalm is "key to understanding the relation of Gal. 5.18 to its immediate context." We would agree, but not with his understanding of that! (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 182.)

100. There are several other arguments he makes for specific "exodus background" in Ps. 143 that are much less convincing (see Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 184-186).

101. For example, Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 137, 140; Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 173-174; and with extended discussion, Richard B. Hays, "Psalm 143 as Testimony to the Righteousness of God," in

course one of the confirmatory criteria for the presence of allusion or echo: the occurrence of other references to the same larger passage, and here in the same Pauline letters. Hays considers the possibility that Paul has in mind the larger context of the psalm, with the appeal to God's righteousness for deliverance in both verses 1 and 11.<sup>102</sup> All the more, it should seem that the Psalm's movement from an appeal for forgiveness and justification in the first part of the Psalm (vv. 1-2), to an appeal for sanctification in the latter part (vv. 8, 10), is echoed by Paul's similar movement in both Galatians and Romans. Wilder's second determinative point is that this Psalm has the requisite context, or thematic coherence, to match the Pauline context of a Spirit guidance that leads us to walk (or behave) in the way of God, resulting in the fulfilling of the law's demand.<sup>103</sup> Psalm 143:10 has "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground," and in verse 8: "Make me know the way I should go [lit. walk, הָלַךְ]." Given then the rare but here explicit linguistic connection (to be led by the Spirit, together with walking), and the ethical/moral context of living/behaving rightly and doing God's will, and that this is in the larger context of a psalm that we know was important for Paul (also in nearby soteriological contexts), it is likely that Paul was deliberately alluding to it also for "walk by/ led by the Spirit."<sup>104</sup> Even if it is only a partial background that Paul is echoing, the context of the psalm could be expected to shed light on Paul's meaning in his usage that has been influenced by it.<sup>105</sup>

However, according to Wilder, Paul's use of the Psalm subverts a major component of its intended meaning by imposing on it an artificial disjunction in its language. Wilder rightly holds that the Psalm describes "the Spirit as leading one in the path of the law ('the way I should go')." <sup>106</sup> In the Old Testament, and especially

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*Conversion of the Imagination*, 50-60. However, Hays' use of the psalm in support of a repudiation of imputation in Paul is unwarranted. Particularly in Psalms and Isaiah, our salvation, in which we are granted a status of righteousness, is a demonstration of God's own righteousness.

102. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 51-52; idem, *Conversion of the Imagination*, 58-59. Cf. Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 183-184.

103. Psalm 143 "most clearly converts the past leading of the exodus cloud into the present and *ethically-oriented* [italics his] experience of Spirit guidance" (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 183).

104. Estelle agrees with Wilder that "Paul is here building on Psalm 143" (Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 279).

105. Referring to Wilder's "coherent case," Beale acknowledges that Ps. 143 is part of the "important background for Gal. 5:18." However, he argues that it is not the primary background for two reasons: 1) the psalm uses ὁδηγέω instead of ἄγω (in Paul). But LXX Isaiah 63:14 also uses the same verb in the only place it directly describes the Spirit leading; and anyway the two verbs are close synonyms; 2) Is. 63 is part of an eschatological exodus-new exodus context, while the psalm is applying the concept to David's life. But that is surely not a limitation for Paul, for whom the Psalms indeed function eschatologically, that is, intended for the end-time people, spoken by or about the Messiah and the people in him. What is more, the Psalter's final form has been shaped to focus on the coming kingdom of God in the new Davidic Messiah, which is particularly in view in this final Davidic collection (Pss. 138-145). (Beale, "Old Testament Background," 13, n. 36.) More on this below.

106. Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 187.

in the Psalms, “doing the will of God,” must be a doing that is in conformity to, and in obedience to, his תורה instruction—including its laws and commandments—the only place where that will is revealed and made known to us. And walking in the way we should go, in the way(s) of God, can only be in obedience to that revealed will. But Paul, in Wilder’s view, has taken “doing the will of God” by walking after the Spirit as a distinctly different mode of behavior, and according to a distinctly different standard, than that by which the impossibility of justification was indicated at the beginning of the Psalm. He says Paul has signaled this by his introduction of “by works of law” in his citation of Psalm 143:2, so that the positive “doing” made possible by the Spirit later in the Psalm cannot be with reference to law or in accordance with the law.<sup>107</sup> But the Psalm does not introduce such a disjunction, because none is needed. The free justification and acceptance implied at the beginning of the Psalm in fact opens the possibility of a relationship in which we—freed from achieving the requisite righteousness to avoid judgment under the law—can pursue the transformation God yet requires, not of ourselves but in utter dependence on him, by looking to the Spirit as the only one who can inwardly teach us and indeed effect a measure of obedience to those same demands. And this, as we have argued above, is also exactly what Paul means.

#### 4.3. Nehemiah 9:19-20

Nehemiah 9:19-20 in its larger context is a particularly striking intertext with Psalm 143:10 and its context, and as such it reaffirms this interpretation of Psalm 143. It also helps clarify the relationship between the Spirit’s instruction through the law and the Spirit’s guiding in the theophany cloud pillar at the Exodus, and thus whether and in what sense Psalm 143:10 might also be evoking the Exodus guiding. As many have noted, only Nehemiah 9:20 and Psalm 143:10 have the expression “your good Spirit.” In Nehemiah, this Spirit is “to instruct,” which corresponds with “teach” in Psalm 143:10 (different words, but the close psalmic parallels to Ps. 143 have the same word). And Nehemiah 9:19 and Psalm 143:10 have the equivalent “lead” (נהג; ὁδηγέω). Moreover, the thematic coherence between the texts is indicated by the common concern for Spirit instruction in right behavior, through God’s תורה, and that is also in Nehemiah 9 explicitly associated with the cloud pillar guidance.<sup>108</sup> Nehemiah 9:6-37 is a prayer of confession led by the Levites (or Ezra if we follow the LXX at 9:6) in which is recounted God’s past mercies to Israel in spite of their rebellion, in

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107. Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 236-237. He does say that “Paul would not have understood this interpretation to contradict the psalm, but rather to express its deepest meaning” (187). However, it is difficult to imagine how the interpretation could be construed as consistent with, or in line with, the psalm’s contextual sense, and so it must in fact contradict a key part of the psalm’s originally intended meaning. Cf. also Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 177-179. Estelle demurs from the apparent completely law-free implications of Wilder and Keesmaat, but agrees that Paul has, at least rhetorically, introduced a disjunction with the law in his use of the psalm (Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 279-280, and notes 83 and 85).

108. Wilder extensively discusses these correspondences (*Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 138-148).

order to invoke God to so act again in spite of the post-exilic community's sin and weakness. Several studies have highlighted the careful structure of the prayer, especially as that illumines the parallels within verses 12-21.<sup>109</sup> The point for our purposes is that "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them" (9:20) precisely parallels and elaborates on 9:13-14, which describes the Lord's coming down on Mt. Sinai to speak and give them "right rules and true laws (pl. תורות), good statutes and commandments," and all of this was made known to them by Moses. Therefore "good" attributed to the Spirit corresponds to the "good" statutes and commandments, emphasizing God's good purposes in Spirit instruction *through* the revealed word (תורה).<sup>110</sup> It is also made clear that the Spirit's instruction through that word is understood to be mediated by Moses. Many have suggested that there may be a reference here to Numbers 11 where the Spirit on Moses is shared with the seventy elders for leading the people. This is more probable because the word chosen for "instruct" (השכיל) features in the previous context for Ezra and the Levites leading the people in the study (השכיל) of the words of the law and giving them the sense (שכל) (Neh. 8:8, 13). In other words, the Spirit's work of instruction is mediated through both the text and those appointed for teaching and applying that word among God's people.<sup>111</sup>

This text also places a description of God's *leading* the people at the exodus and through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud/fire immediately preceding each parallel reference to the revealed law/ Spirit's instruction. It does this using the wording from Exodus 13 and subsequent references, specifying that this was "to lead them in the way" or "to light for them the way in which they should go." Since this is characteristic language for walking in the ways of God, and since the pillar's leading is closely associated here with the law for instruction, it seems that this text is reading the provision of the pillar's leading as an analogue or pictorial pointer to the greater and lasting provision of the law—through which the Spirit continues to lead us in the way we should walk.<sup>112</sup> This also suggests an awareness that the theophany cloud/fire of the pillar was a manifestation of the *Shekinah* (dwelling Spirit), whose identification with the leading of the Holy Spirit Isaiah 63 has made explicit—but the point being

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109. See H.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC 16 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 313-314; John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 194-197; Michael Duggan, *Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah (Neh 7:72b-10:40): An Exegetical, Literary, and Theological Study* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 157-233; Mark J. Boda, "Word and Spirit, Scribe and Prophet in Old Testament Hermeneutics," in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, ed. Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright; (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2011), 25-45; and Mark J. Boda, "The Torah and Spirit Traditions of Nehemiah 9 in Their Literary Setting," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 4, no. 4 (2015): 476-491.

110. Wilder somewhat misconstrues this parallel, and so thinks the Spirit's instruction here is somehow a reference to "the revelatory role of the cloud" mentioned in the previous verse (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 147).

111. Cf. Levison, *Spirit*, 196-197; Boda, "Word and Spirit," 33.

112. So Duggan, who implies this analogy was already evident in Exodus and Deuteronomy: "The spatial language functions as an ethical metaphor for the orientation of one's life in relationship to God" (Duggan, *Covenant Renewal*, 208).

that the same Spirit continues his leading no less gloriously in the revealed תורה.<sup>113</sup> We can then appreciate that a similar analogy is being made with the provision of manna and water from the rock. These wilderness provisions are mentioned likewise twice in Nehemiah 9, immediately following each parallel reference to revealed law/Spirit's instruction. The association is not explained in the Nehemiah text, but the specific allusions to Deuteronomy, including to Deuteronomy 8:4, should remind us of Deuteronomy 8:3, in which we are told that the point of this regimen, in which Israel was taught its absolute dependence on the Lord for its physical life-giving necessities, was that they learn "that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (famously also adduced by Jesus when he was led by the Spirit in the wilderness).<sup>114</sup>

#### 4.4. From Exodus to Joshua

It is reasonable to conclude therefore that this reading of Israel's exodus experience in the Nehemiah 9 prayer has identified an analogy and lesson that was implicit in the pentateuchal accounts themselves.<sup>115</sup> The initial description of the cloud leading is striking in its emphasis on guidance for walking in the way: "And the Lord was going (הִלְךָ) before them by day in [or, by] a pillar of cloud to lead them [on] the way (לְנַחֲתָם) and by night in [or, by] a pillar of fire to light [the way] for them (לְהַאֲרִי־לָהֶם) to walk [or, for walking] (לְלַכֹּת) by day and by night" (Ex. 13:21-22). When Jethro subsequently counsels Moses to appoint others to help him in mediating God's "statutes and laws" to the people, this is to "make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do" (Ex. 18:20). In the rest of Exodus, the Lord's

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113. Wilder's chapter "Cloud-like Guidance" sums up much of the case for the identification of the Spirit with the glory-cloud. He underscores 1 Corinthians 10:2 and 12:13 ("baptized in the cloud and in the sea," and baptism "in one Spirit") as evidence that this could be axiomatic for Paul. (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 121-174, 122.) We should also point out, as Kline has shown, Deuteronomy 32:11-12, describing the "hovering" (רָחַף) presence of the Lord that "guided" Israel in the wilderness, which stands behind the identification in Isaiah 63. For that Deuteronomy reference is effectively connecting the glory-cloud pillar with the "hovering" presence of the Spirit at creation (Gen. 1:2). (Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], 14-15, 11-12.)

114. Levison argues that "the preponderance of allusions in Neh 9:19-21 are to Deuteronomy," yet deems it puzzling why these should be associated with Spirit instruction, as the Spirit does not have a significant explicit role in Deuteronomy (Levison, *Spirit in First Century*, 196-197, n. 8). However, the life-giving word of Deuteronomy 8:3 plays the same role as the point of the analogy with physical life-giving provisions as does the Spirit instructed law as the point of the analogy with glory-cloud guidance. And we would expect that "every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" would be taken for granted in this Nehemiah context as referring to that same Spirit instructed law (through Moses).

115. Wilder effectively summarizes the analogy: "The particular 'way' in which the Israelites are to 'go' (or 'walk') is the way which Yahweh has commanded. It is his law"; and "the giving of the law is implied to be similar, metaphorically at least, to the guidance of the cloud...." However, he focuses on how the cloud guidance "could be appropriated" later, and does not seem to recognize the degree to which this is already indicated in the pentateuchal texts themselves (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 143.).

presence in the cloud is the means of his revelation to Moses, whether on the mountain (where the Lord “comes down” and speaks; Ex. 19-20; 34:50), or at the entrance to the tent of meeting (where the Lord speaks face to face with Moses; 33:7-11). In the climax of the book, the glory-cloud fills the newly constructed tabernacle, and leading by the cloud throughout all their journeys is summarized (40:34-38). In Numbers 9:15-23, the Lord’s command in that guidance is stressed: “At the command of the Lord they camped, and at the command of the Lord they set out” (v. 23). In Deuteronomy, where “walking in the way” becomes a more frequent expression for obedience to the Lord’s תורה, the first instance of it is with reference to the cloud in which the Lord went (ההלך) before them in the way, “to show you by what way you should go [that is, walk, תלכו]” (Deut. 1:30-33). Subsequently, great emphasis is placed on walking straight on the way according to God’s commands: “You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, . . .” (5:32-33). And Deuteronomy 8:1-10, as we have seen explaining God’s purpose in the wilderness provisions, begins with “the whole way the Lord your God has led you,” which was in order to see if they would keep his commandments (8:2). The rest of the book then (especially chapters 10-11, 13) frequently references walking in all the ways of the Lord, and not turning aside from the way.

In the light of all this then Moses’ commissioning of Joshua in Deuteronomy 31 is significant in how it anticipates the Lord’s commissioning in Joshua 1:5-9. Moses promises that the Lord will go before Joshua and be with him and not leave or forsake him (Deuteronomy 31:8), and then what follows (31:9ff.) is the writing of “this תורה” and the provisions for its reading. In Joshua 1, the Lord repeats those same promises of Moses with the addition that Joshua is not to “turn from [the תורה] to the right hand or to the left in order to have success [or, act wisely, be instructed; השכיל] wherever you walk (הלך)” (1:7). Then it explains how Joshua is to accomplish this: “This book of the law (תורה) shall *not depart* from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it” (1:8). The language of “not departing” with “day and night” seems intentionally to recall the “the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night” that “did *not depart* from before the people” (Ex. 13:22) (both are forms of the relatively rare verb מיש, with only 3 total uses in the Pentateuch). In other words, as the role of the guiding cloud has come to an end, the תורה of the Lord must now continue that role, but in the deeper and ultimate sense, as it was intended.

#### 4.5. Lessons of the Cloud? Psalms 77-78 and Psalm 23

Therefore it seems that the cloud guidance at the exodus and in the wilderness—eventually revealed to be that of the Spirit—was clearly meant to serve as a pictorial pointer to the guidance of God by his Spirit through his תורה.<sup>116</sup> However, though that cloud guidance continues to be recalled as a central feature of that glorious deliverance out of Egypt that pointed forward to the greater second exodus, it is not clear that it is

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116. Wilder describes the cloud functioning as “the visible token” of the Spirit’s guidance with the law. “God’s presence in the Spirit would lead them in the way of his law” (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 147.).



always specifically in view when the intended inner guidance of the Lord through his instruction is being considered.<sup>117</sup> For when the analogy is present, the point is rather the contrast with Israel's failure to get the real point: the law was not "on their heart" (Deut. 6:6), and they turned aside from the path. This is evident in Isaiah 63, where in spite of the glorious and gracious cloud leading that is recalled, the appeal is for a new and more glorious work that will lead them from the heart: "O Lord, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not" (63:17). Similarly, the glorious shepherd leading of the Lord through Moses and Aaron appealed to in Psalm 77 is then matched by Psalm 78: even while more explicitly referencing the cloud leading (vv. 14, 52) and the manna and water from the rock (vv. 15-16, 20, 24), the stress is on how they "refused to walk according to his law" (תורתו; v. 10), and repeatedly responded with unbelief and rebellion.<sup>118</sup>

The Lord's shepherding guidance is featured most famously in Psalm 23, and "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name sake" (v. 3) may be echoed in Ps. 143:10-11.<sup>119</sup> Exodus allusions for this leading are certainly suggested by the lexical correspondences of Psalm 23:2-3, 6 with Exodus 15:13, celebrating the Lord's leading (both נהגה and נהל) his people out of Egypt in his covenant love (חסד).<sup>120</sup> Further resonances can be found in the imagery used of the cloud guidance in Isaiah 63:14: "the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest," and in the contrast with the rebellious unbelief recalled in Psalm 78:19: "Can God spread a table in the wilderness?" However, these could just as well be *later* reflections recalling Psalm 23, prompted by the shepherding theme in those places.<sup>121</sup> Many commentators conclude that the language of the psalm

117. Yet clearly sometimes it can be: "In the pillar of cloud he spoke to them; they kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them" (Ps. 99.7).

118. Psalm 78:40 refers to how "they rebelled" and "grieved him in the desert," corresponding to Isaiah 63:10: "they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit." This is presented as a prophetic תורה to remind of the original תורה, for both as divine instruction are to be taught to each generation, so that their hearts would not be like their fathers (vv. 1-8). Psalm 78 concludes by affirming the response of God's grace in choosing David to shepherd and guide his people—already in this book III of the Psalter pointing to the hope for the new and greater David. A number of these Asaph psalms (78-83) feature this shepherding theme, along with the message that the ultimate shepherding provision would be blessings surpassing those of the exodus, if only "my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways!" (81:13; cf. vv. 10-16).

119. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger argue in their commentary that Wilder has not made a convincing case for a deliberate allusion to the exodus in Psalm 143, and the connections of Psalm 143 with Psalm 23 share language with a number of psalms. (*Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011], 575-576.)

120. See C. Hassell Bullock, "The Shape of the Torah as Reflected in the Psalter, Book 1," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 31-50, and on Psalm 23, 37-38. He has demonstrated in this first part of the Psalter a deliberate pattern of reflection on Pentateuchal texts by the king in his task of meditating on God's instruction. Cf. also Bullock, *Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1-72*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 169-170.

121. Both Wilder and Estelle are convinced by the earlier studies of D.N. Freedman and that of M.L. Barré and J.S. Kselman (Wilder, *Echoes of the Exodus Narrative*, 149-159; Estelle,

is not specific enough to identify a setting, and anyway what seems primary is the reflection of a shepherd (David) on his personal trust in the Lord on the analogy of the situation of his sheep.<sup>122</sup> The leading of verse 3 in any case expresses trust in the moral/ethical guidance of the Lord in his ways of right walking or behavior (cf. Prov. 4.11 with parallel language), according to the direction of his word, in the image of the sheep following their shepherd.<sup>123</sup>

#### 4.6. Psalm 143:10 in contexts: Walking by the Leading of the Spirit

As we then return to Psalm 143:10 as the likely direct source by Paul for walking by the leading of the Spirit, we must reckon also with the broader Old Testament background that is informing the Psalm and the affirmation of this verse. This includes the original Mosaic revelation's setting forth the life-giving instruction of the Lord as prescribing the way we are to walk, the contribution of David as the godly king and poet who models this piety for God's people (but ultimately as typological pointer to the new David), and also the work of the post-exilic returnees in compiling and shaping previous revelation, incorporating the prophetic expanded understanding of the current and coming role of the Spirit in relation to his revealed word. Psalm 143 is a Psalm "of David" (לְדָוִד), and though much Psalms scholarship dismisses the traditional view of Davidic authorship, there are reasonable and important reasons for continuing to affirm it. These include the evidence for a clear usage of the *lamed auctoris* (the use of this prefixed preposition to indicate authorship), the similar themes and language of many of the Davidic psalms in contrast to other groupings and anonymous psalms, especially later ones, and the later understanding that these psalms

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*Echoes of Exodus*, 129-131, and see references there). Those studies identified a number of suggestive intertextual associations with exilic and post-exilic literature from which they argued a thorough new exodus theme in at least the psalm's final redaction. Others see the exodus/new exodus resonance as more likely deriving from a later appropriation and application of the language of the psalm (so Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1-41)* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011], 556; Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 257).

122. Cf. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC 19 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 205, though cf. pp. 206-7. Another overlooked intertextual background for the psalm may be the life of Jacob (also a shepherd), based on a number of unique correspondences, one being that Jacob is the only biblical figure outside this psalm to call God his shepherd (Gen. 48.15) (See Alan Cooper, "Structure, Midrash and Meaning: the Case of Psalm 23," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Divison A: The Period of the Bible* [Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986], 107-114).

123. This was indeed the lesson of Israel's exodus guidance, as we have seen; but the point is not the miraculous deliverance and physical provision, but the walking according to the provision of תורה. See Rolf A. Jacobson in Nancy L. DeClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 242, for the defense of this as the "pathways" of "obedience to the will and law of God"; contra Goldingay, who sees no moral overtones at all (John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1-41*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 350).

were composed by David, confirmed by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament.<sup>124</sup> The post-exilic compilers of the Psalter, by their arrangement of specific Davidic groupings of psalms (particularly 108-110 and 138-145 in Book V), also imply a claim of Davidic origin and character for these psalms, in distinction from others not so designated. On the other hand, it is also clear that the compilers of the psalms at various stages also acted in an authorized editorial capacity, so that original Davidic material could be arranged and adapted in later settings (cf. Pss. 14 and 53; 2 Sam. 22 and Ps. 18; Ps. 144 alongside Pss. 8, 18, and 33; 1 Chron. 16 and several psalms; as well as the evidence of linking psalms in their current arrangement with key vocabulary and initial and final lines). Therefore Psalm 143 can be genuinely Davidic, and also in its current form and location intend intertextual associations with later literature, such as Nehemiah 9.<sup>125</sup>

Psalm 143 is a penitential and lament psalm (the last in the Psalter), and it links with its setting in 138-145 as a petition by the Davidic servant of the Lord for deliverance from enemies and the wicked.<sup>126</sup> It prominently features appeal to the Lord's covenant love (in accordance with this key theme of Book V) in verses 8 and 12, as also do 138:2, 8; 144:2; 145:8. But in this psalm, David especially appeals to the Lord's leading to maintain his righteous walk in the face of the pressures of the surrounding wicked enemies. So as we have seen, in verse 10, the cry "Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground," is informed by the parallelism with "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God." This also is expanding on "Make me know the way I should walk" in verse 8. Examining this in its context and alongside the close parallels in the Psalms, as well as in terms of the message of key psalms in the editorial framing of the Psalter, should help us determine what it means for us practically as Christians to walk according to the Spirit. Recall that we do this from the apostolic perspective of fulfillment in Christ, which regards these ancient Scriptures to be prophetically and typologically anticipating new covenant realities (Rom. 15:4; 16:26; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11;

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124. This case is summed up by Bruce K. Waltke, "Psalms: Theology of," *NIDOTTE* 4:1101; Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 89-92. Cf. also Ross, *Commentary on the Psalms, Vol. 1*, 42-47; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), 10-11.

125. The recognition of Davidic origin is also a check on our imposing a developmental theory of religion whereby certain theological ideas are judged not possible for an earlier period. Many scholars in fact use such a theory to confirm their late dating of certain putative Davidic psalms. However, this is not to deny the progressive character of historical revelation, so that later authors, including the post-exilic compilers, had a greater understanding or grasp of the significance of earlier revelation.

126. See Hosfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 577, for survey of the lexical parallels with the other psalms in this final Davidic collection. A few of these highlight leading and the way as frequently in other Davidic psalms: Ps. 142:3 has "When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me" (fainting spirit in 143:7; the Lord knows the way of the righteous in Ps. 1); that knowing features prominently in Psalm 139 with leading in verses 10 and 24; the final verses (139:23-24) are a prayer for ethical/religious guidance recalling the prayer at the end of Psalm 19.

2 Tim. 3:15-17).<sup>127</sup> Therefore, because of the divine author's superintendence, David and the other godly of the old dispensation can instruct us with their measure of understanding and experience, and Paul expects that their texts in context will do that, even as we know they did not stand in the time of fulfillment as we do.<sup>128</sup>

How does the Spirit lead us in the way? Note the following elements in this psalm. First we come in prayer: "Hear my prayer, O Lord" (v. 1). Secondly, confession and our status of free justification is presupposed; we disavow our own attempts at attainment of righteousness (v. 2). Thirdly we acknowledge our own inadequacy and weakness (vv. 4, 6-7). These verses also make clear that this involves the expression of our deepest longing, a thirsting for the "water" of the Spirit in a dry land (Ps. 42:1-2; 63:1; only to be matched by the eschatological outpouring, Isa. 32:2, 15; 44:3). Fourthly, we "meditate" on the scriptural word, which means reflection, study, and recitation (v. 5; cf. Ps. 1:2; 77:5-6, 11-12).<sup>129</sup> Then, fifthly, we look to the Lord himself by his Spirit's presence (now indwelling those in Christ) to personally teach us from that word (that we have studied, recited, and memorized) how to walk in the right way. This certainly involves illumination and Spirit-given wisdom, but more: the Spirit-activation of his own living word within us, so that we can cry "make us alive" (v. 11). Recall that what we need is a source of life to obey God's commands. Therefore, with all of this it depends on personal trust in his grace and covenant faithful love (חסד) towards us (v. 8). Finally, all of this is not for our own sake, but for his, and his name's sake (v. 11; cf. 23:3).

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127. This includes the New Testament perspective on the Old Testament witness to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. See the perceptive study of B.B. Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Samuel C. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1968), 127-156, in which he demonstrates the apostolic identification of the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of God in the Old Testament. This underscores the continuity with the older revelation, even as a fuller revelation is given in the new. Warfield points out a prominent aspect of continuity is in "the Old Testament idea of the inner work of the Spirit of Holiness," which brings about "a thorough ethical change." He highlights how this is developed first of all especially in Psalms and Isaiah (including Ps. 143 and Is. 63) (147-148).

128. A helpful articulation of this redemptive-historical hermeneutic can be found in Richard B. Gaffin, "'For Our Sakes Also': Christ in the Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The Hope Fulfilled: Essays in Honor of O. Palmer Robertson*, ed. Robert L. Penny (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 61-81.

129. The typical translation of הָגָה, and its synonym, used also here, שִׁיחַ, as "meditation" is singularly misleading. It is not an inner associative contemplation, but a directed reflection and study based on the reading and recitation (vocalized) of a text; it also involves repetition and memorization. See H. Ringgren & A. Negoita, "הָגָה *hagah*," in *TDOT* 3:321-324; Nahum M. Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms: Exploring the Prayers of Ancient Israel* (New York: Schocken Books, 1993), 38-39, and notes 82-85.

## 4.7. Psalm 25

It is striking how many of these same elements are also present in two other closely parallel Davidic psalms, Psalms 25 and 32 in Book I of the Psalter.<sup>130</sup> Psalm 25 is an acrostic lament with penitential elements.<sup>131</sup> It also has been categorized as a prayer of confidence, for its confident affirmations of God's goodness and sure commitment to instruct even sinners such as us.<sup>132</sup> Or as many judge what is often the point of an acrostic, it serves as an A-Z (or comprehensive summary) of prayer for mercy and instruction. It begins where we are to begin, calling on the Lord in prayer: "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul" (v. 1). Here confession of sin and pleas for forgiveness are spread throughout the Psalm. In the middle two verses of the Psalm, we can see juxtaposed its twin themes:

For your name's sake, O Lord,  
Pardon my guilt, for it is great.  
Who is the man who fears the Lord?  
Him will he instruct (ירה) in the way that he should choose.  
(vv. 11-12)

Longing for the Lord in our affliction is expressed with a threefold mention of waiting for the Lord, as "for you I wait all the day long" (v. 5), and especially the expression of loneliness, distress, and trouble in verses 16-18. Repeated in the parallelism of verse 9 is the reminder that it is "the humble" (or poor, weak, or afflicted) who are taught by the Lord. Meditation is not explicitly mentioned, but it is implied in "lead me in your truth and teach me" (v. 5), and in the reflection on the faithful ways of the Lord from of old (vv. 6, 10). Multiple synonyms are used for teach and lead, and for the path or way we should walk. Supplication for the Lord to teach or show mercy, and a didactic third person form appear in alternating sections. For example, following on the appeal to the Lord to "remember me" "for the sake of your goodness" (v. 7), is the declaration: "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs (ירה) sinners in the way" (v. 8). This can be seen to elaborate on the "good Spirit" in Psalm 143, and the "good Spirit" and "good commandments" of Nehemiah 9. Because God is good, we can be confident he will turn us from our sin to the righteous and upright way, which is his way of life and blessedness.<sup>133</sup> Thus also we can see that this instruction is not

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130. There are many other parallels throughout the Psalter to the instructional and wisdom concerns of these psalms for divine leading on the way, and walking on the right way, which all contribute to the background for Ps. 143:10. We are focusing on these two psalms because of the number of shared correspondences with Ps. 143. Other important references include Psalm 27:11; 31:3; and 86 (the only Davidic psalm in Book III), verses 11-13.

131. O. Palmer Robertson has examined the special role of the acrostic psalms in the Psalter. (O. Palmer Robertson, "The Alphabetic Acrostic in Book I of the Psalms: An Overlooked Element of Psalter Structure," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 40, no. 2 [2015]: 225-238; see 226-228 regarding Ps. 25.)

132. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 217-221.

133. Cf. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 220.

just learning about what is right, or knowing God's demands; it is effective formation onto his revealed paths of uprightness that God works within us as we look to him for it. This is what it means to be led by the Spirit, and to walk by the Spirit. And as it is not of our doing, this is all framed by personal trust in the Lord for his grace (vv. 2 and 16) and his covenant faithful love (חסד) and faithfulness (vv. 6, 7, 10). Nor is it for our sake, but for the sake of his goodness, and for his name's sake (vv. 7, 11).

#### 4.8. Psalm 32

Psalm 32 is both a penitential psalm and a hymn of thanksgiving (for accomplished deliverance). It has also been characterized as a didactic or wisdom psalm (for the "blessed is" in vv. 1-2, and for the two ways instruction in vv. 8-11). Psalm 32 is well-known for its role for Paul in establishing justification by faith (a being "reckoned" not guilty, as Abraham was "reckoned" righteous) in Romans 4. So like Psalm 143, we can expect it to inform Paul's thinking on the relationship between justification and sanctification, as it goes on to describe instruction for the way to walk. The Psalm is not a prayer, but reports a prayer of confession (v. 5) and commends prayer as key for the godly person (v. 6). The first half of the psalm deals with the problem of unconfessed sin, and our stubborn resistance to yielding to the Lord's direction (vv. 3-4), and then the blessings of forgiveness upon repentance (vv. 1-2, 5-7) (when we no longer "cover" our sin, it can be "covered" by the Lord). Here the expression of our weakness is our anguished "groaning" under the discipline of the Lord (his "heavy hand") that turns out to be a mercy (vv. 3-4). Then following upon the granting of forgiveness comes this oracle of the Lord: "I will instruct you (אשכילך) and teach you (ירה < אורך) in the way you should walk; I will counsel you with my eye upon you" (v. 8).<sup>134</sup> The instruction of the Spirit (Ps. 143:10) here is described as gracious, intimate, and effective, but also implying, given the foregoing, providing the discipline of deep inner conviction of sin.<sup>135</sup> The following verse, with its striking metaphor, could be seen to sum up the lesson of this Psalm and this leading of the Spirit: we are not to be like the horse or mule who need a bit and bridle to direct them, because they are "without understanding" (אין הבין).<sup>136</sup> The point is that without an inner capacity to hear and respond to God's leading, we are no different than animals (cf. Ps. 49:20:

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134. While some have supposed that this is the teaching of the psalmist to us (as Ps. 34:11), Goldingay points out it is addressed to the singular person (that is, the psalmist and each of us), whereas in the subsequent verses, the psalmist speaks to us in the plural. Also, the personal counsel described is most appropriate of the Lord. (Goldingay, *Psalms, Vol. 1*, 458.)

135. One thinks here of the role of the Johannine "Paraclete," as the "encourager," "comforter," or "helper," who both convicts of sin and instructs us in the truth (as the Spirit of truth) (Jn. 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-15). Note that 16:13: "he will *guide* you into all the truth" uses ὁδηγέω, as the LXX for Ps. 143:10 and many of its Old Testament intertexts.

136. Literally, "not understanding" or "not able to understand." The form is an infinitive from בן, and is used commonly with its noun derivatives as a synonym for "to be wise," and "wisdom" (Prov. 1:2, 6; 8:5, 9). Incidentally, commentators note the number of linguistic difficulties in this verse (Ps. 32:9), but conclude that the overall sense is clear enough. (Cf. for example, Tanner, in DeClaissé-Walford, Jacobsen, & Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 307, n. 8, and 309.)

“without understanding” we are “like the beasts which perish”; also Ps. 73:22). The “bit and bridle” could be likened here to God’s external word and law: as mere demand, all it can do is compel outward compliance. While true in a sense, this is to misconstrue the analogy; for God’s word and command is more than an external demand! This psalm—as the entire framework of wisdom to which it belongs<sup>137</sup>—commends hearing and putting oneself under the revealed instruction of the Lord precisely in order to receive inward “instruction,” and “wisdom” (cf. the formal summons at the beginning of Ps. 49 to hear and heed the following as the teaching of wisdom and understanding, vv. 1-3).<sup>138</sup> Finally, Ps. 32 concludes with a call for the righteous and upright (note: they are not those free from sin!) to rejoice, because as those who put their trust in the Lord, they are surrounded by his grace or covenant faithful love (σπῆ) (vv. 10-11). Note that this grace is equally the source of our justified status, as it is the source of our growth in sanctification as we walk in the way.

### 5. Wisdom and Instruction: Psalter Framing

We have thus a remarkably consistent picture of the practical meaning of walking by the leading of the Spirit in Psalm 143:10 in its immediate and parallel contexts that therefore lies behind Paul’s exhortations. But as is apparent in Psalm 32, and with key concepts in the others as well, these contexts also clearly point us to the larger linguistic and theological framework of wisdom as integral for grasping the instruction of the Spirit. Paul tells us that the Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:17),<sup>139</sup> that it is by Spirit-wisdom (*not* “spiritual” wisdom!) that we gain understanding of God’s will in order to walk in the way and bear fruit (Col. 1:9-10), and that this is to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures, where we can be made wise for salvation in Christ, and thus be instructed and equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Therefore we should expect that understanding this wisdom framework of Psalm 143 and its parallels would be essential for our walking according to the leading of the Spirit. In 1986, James Luther Mays delivered a programmatic and incisive address in which he laid out how the three unique “Torah” wisdom psalms (1, 19, 119) along with key instruction and wisdom expressions and concepts throughout

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137. The extensive connections of this psalm with recognized wisdom texts and concepts is explored in Philippus J. Botha, “Psalm 32 as a Wisdom Intertext,” *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 70, no. 1 (2014): Art. #2710, 9 pages.

138. William P. Brown identifies the dynamic in Psalm 32 as a movement from “forgiveness to counsel” as a “divine intrusion,” “words of counsel *follow* forgiveness.” This “identifies the role of instruction as the outcome and goal of the repentant life” (Brown, “Come, O Children...I Will Teach You the Fear of the Lord” [Psalm 34:12]: Comparing Psalms and Proverbs,” in *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Ronald L. Troxel, Kelvin G. Friebel, and Dennis R. Magary [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005], 92.).

139. Notice that in Ephesians 1:17 this is not “a spirit of wisdom” which would not be characteristic usage of Paul, nor clear at all what he would have meant. Rather it is the Spirit of wisdom (=Is. 11:2), and therefore the “revelation” is not what we ourselves receive directly, but what we can understand because we ourselves possess the very same Spirit that gave the revelation through the apostles and prophets (so Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 2:6-16).

the Psalter, were intended by the compilers of the Psalms to orient us as to how to view and read the whole.<sup>140</sup> From a wisdom-informed perspective on the need for divine instruction for godly walking in the way, the Psalter was shaped in such a way that we would receive its content pedagogically—as just such instruction.<sup>141</sup> This approach to understanding the Psalms as a book (or a five book whole), spearheaded by Brevard Childs and Gerald Wilson, along with Mays, developed into the burgeoning field of “editorial criticism,” illuminating the purpose in placement of the psalms and the context that creates for individual psalms.<sup>142</sup> While subject also to critique and skeptical counter-views, which have beneficially served to check more speculative proposals and to refine the more textually grounded insights, arguably the main conclusions of the approach regarding a wisdom and instruction framing of the Psalter have found continued confirmation.<sup>143</sup>

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140. James Luther Mays, “the Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no.1 (1987): 3-12.

141. Cf. the later clarification of Mays in “The Question of Context in Psalm Interpretation,” in *Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. J. Clinton McCann (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 14-20. See also J. Clinton McCann, “The Psalms as Instruction,” *Interpretation* 46 (1992): 117-128; and McCann, “Psalms” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 4:650.

142. See the other articles in *Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, including Gerald H. Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” 72-82. Jamie A. Grant provides thorough analysis of the linkage between torah and kingship psalms in *The King as Exemplar: the Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004). The various contributions to *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005) reveal the diversity of views and contested issues that continue. However, see Jamie A. Grant, “Editorial Criticism,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 149-156, for a survey of the field to that date highlighting widely agreed conclusions, and bibliography there.

143. Representing the skeptical approach to the idea of a wisdom redaction orienting the whole Psalter is Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). Yet much of his detailed survey of wisdom language and concepts in the Psalms undermine his overly negative conclusions. And he concedes “the existence of the phenomenon of wisdom and Torah influence on the Psalter cannot be doubted” (83-84), and he admits the key placement of certain psalms (such as 19, 73, and 119) serve as “guides along the way” (85). More recently, the work of Michael K. Searly, *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016) includes a fair and effective response to prominent critics (see chapters 2-3). For the radical skeptical view of David Willgren, *The Formation of the ‘Book’ of Psalms: Reconsidering the Transmission and Canonization of Psalmody in Light of Material Culture and the Poetics of Anthologies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), see the review of Michael G. McKelvey in *Westminster Theological Journal* 79 (2017): 161-163.



## 5.1. Psalter and Proverbs

Psalm 1 opens the Psalter<sup>144</sup> introducing the two ways, the way of the wicked that is to be avoided because it leads to death, and the way of the righteous in which there is blessing and life and fruitfulness. The key to walking the right path is a whole heart commitment and devotion to the Lord's instruction (תורה). This message for the whole Psalter is reinforced with Psalm 19 in the structural center of Book I, and then Psalm 119 in the structural center of the final book of the Psalter, Book V. When we turn to the wisdom book of Proverbs, we find the same perspective. It begins as Psalm 1 warning against being enticed by the counsel of the wicked (1:10-19). It introduces wisdom as the source of life and refreshment, and frequently extols its value, to be prized above all else. Psalm 19 uses some of this same language to describe the instruction of the Lord. In Proverbs 4:11-14, we find this:

I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness. When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble. Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil.

Here the instruction (תורה) is life-giving as wisdom itself, but it comes in the form of the instruction of parents, and their commandments, precepts, words, and teaching (4:1-5), whereas in Psalms we have the instruction of the Lord, and it is he that gives life through his teaching and commandments.<sup>145</sup> However, on closer look it is apparent that the parents' instruction is in fact mediating the Lord's instruction. "Keep my commandments and live" (4:4), and "do not turn away from the words of my mouth," are only the vehicle for the instruction that is from the Lord himself: "the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (2:6, cf. 7-8). It thus presents this wisdom and instruction as only attainable in relationship with him, in the fear of the Lord, in dependence on him and his gift of wisdom. In that relationship of trust and knowing him, and therefore not wise in our own eyes, *he* is the one who will make our paths straight (that is, in the straight way of righteousness) (3:5-6).<sup>146</sup> Also

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144. It forms a twofold introduction with Psalm 2. Psalm 1 tells us what the Psalter is or how to read it, as formative instruction in the way; Psalm 2 introduces the content of the Psalter or what it is about, that is, the kingdom of the Lord and his Anointed, with thus a Davidic, royal, and eschatological focus. The two psalms are also linked structurally, semantically, and thematically (cf. Grant, "Editorial Criticism," 150-152).

145. See Brown, "Come, O Children...I Will Teach You the Fear of the Lord," gives a helpful comparison of the different genre features and language between Proverbs and Psalms, and gives helpful suggestions for their complementarity. However, in the end he assumes points of fundamental disjunction, and posits unnecessary polemic between the two.

146. From our perspective this is exactly what the Spirit does. As we walk in that relationship of trusting him in all our ways, we "will not carry out the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16), that is, the Spirit keeps us from straying from the straight path. Probably also Prov. 1:23 can be viewed as anticipating this: "If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my s/Spirit to you; I will make my words known to you." Personified wisdom speaks as the oracles of the

the discipline and correction from this instruction is from the Lord for our good, because he is the ultimate father that cares for us as his children (2:11-12; Heb. 12:5-6).<sup>147</sup>

## 5.2. Whence Wisdom and Divine Instruction?

This wisdom concern for walking in the right path by keeping the instructions *and* commandments of the Lord has often been regarded as a late and especially post-exilic development.<sup>148</sup> Particularly in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, where the focus is on rebuilding the covenant community on the basis of the תורה of Moses, the idea is that law is now identified with wisdom or as the source of wisdom (so the law of God is explicitly identified as the wisdom of God in Ezra 7:10-11, 25). As the final compilation of the Psalter takes place in this post-exilic period, such a merging of wisdom and “Torah piety” is seen to account for the wisdom and torah redactional framework created for the Psalter.<sup>149</sup> However, scholars have long noted the wisdom components of the earlier literature, particularly Deuteronomy. Jamie Grant points out that Deuteronomy provides a “dictionary definition” of the fear of the Lord (the first principle of wisdom, Prov. 1:7, 9:10): “what does the Lord require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in his ways,” and it goes on to identify this with loving and serving him, and keeping “the commandments and statutes of the Lord” (Deut. 10:12-13).<sup>150</sup> Moses makes the connection even more explicit in Deuteronomy 4:6-8:

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prophets, and promises an inward knowing and enabling to heed her words, which are the words of the Lord.

147. Cf. Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 186. Cf. also Waltke, “The Authority of Proverbs: An Exposition of Proverbs 1:2-6,” *Presbyterion* 13 (1987): 65-78, especially p. 75, where he notes Proverbs 29:18. Pace M.A. Shields, “Wisdom and Prophecy,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 878. See too James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 290-293.

148. Manfred Oeming argued even that wisdom is functioning as a hermeneutical key to the Psalter (“Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Key to the Book of Psalms” in *Scribes, Sages, & Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, ed. Leo G. Perdue [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008], 154-162). However, he reflects the typical view that this is a late “sapientializing of Torah piety” (161).

149. For example, Leo G. Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), chapter 4: “Wisdom during the Persian Empire: Wisdom Psalms,” and especially 161, 184. Anthony R. Ceresko also contends for this late merging, when “Torah spirituality” is inserted into the framework of the Psalter (“The Sage in the Psalms,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 220, 227-228). Note again that we do not deny the fact of progressive revelation and the uniqueness of the post-exilic contribution, only the assumption of discontinuity and the imposition of an unwarranted developmental theory of wisdom.

150. J.A. Grant, “Wisdom and Covenant,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 861.

“Keep them and do them [the statutes and rules that Moses taught], for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples....” Gordon McConville argues that this Deuteronomic emphasis shows the conception of תורה as applying to all areas of life, so that learning and doing the commandments would make one wise. “The laws have a didactic—or better, a formative—function. Those who keep torah learn by doing it that the torah is good and true, or put differently, that it is wise.”<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, recent studies of wisdom have shown that previous scholarly constructs of independent wisdom “schools” isolated or in tension with other groups in Israel cannot be sustained. Rather priests, sages, scribes, and prophets shared the same worldview and common concerns, including pursuit of wisdom.<sup>152</sup> This is because wisdom is a “totality concept,” applying to all areas of life in God’s world: living well in that world depends on understanding it rightly, in line with laws and norms that God has revealed for it.<sup>153</sup>

Ezra’s post-exilic role as a sage-scribe teaching divine instruction and law is not new. There is evidence of the sage-scribe even as royal court functionaries at the time of David and Solomon (cf. 1 Chr. 27:32).<sup>154</sup> It would not then be unusual for David to have known and propounded wisdom concerns even in relation to God’s תורה in his compositions. Jeremiah 8:8-9 shows that the wise scribes in Israel would naturally

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151. J. Gordon McConville, “Wisdom and Torah in Deuteronomy,” in *Sepher Torah Moshel: Studies in the Composition and Interpretation of Deuteronomy*, ed. Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017), 273-274. McConville also demonstrates the circular reasoning of the many scholars who have used this Deuteronomic emphasis as evidence of its late dating in service of a developmental theory of Israel’s religion and the idea of wisdom (see pp. 263-272).

152. This is the thrust of the articles compiled in *Was There a Wisdom Tradition? New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*, ed. Mark R. Sneed (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015). This acknowledges a distinction between “wisdom literature,” which can have its own genre and other distinctive literary aspects, and wisdom, which was much more pervasive and could overlap with various other literary forms and emphases (see Introduction, 1-7). Cf. also Stuart Weeks, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 132-144; he concludes: “wisdom is not specifically a genre, a movement, or a school of thought”; and “wisdom books seem not to have been cut off from other literature, in terms either of their dependencies or of their influence” (144).

153. So Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Wisdom Literature,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 848-849. An important study arguing this expansive concept of wisdom is the appropriate category for our reception of all Scripture is J. de Waal Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018). See especially the appendix (pp. 243-264). In response to critics that dismiss this approach as “pan-sapientialism,” he suggests we embrace the label, if it reflects what the biblical authors across the canon are doing with a unitary aim of conveying formative divine instruction (pp. 260-264).

154. R.N. Whybray, “The Sage in the Israelite Royal Court,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 133-139; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 25-26, 33, 35.

claim adherence to the תורה of the Lord.<sup>155</sup> The post-exilic teaching, led by Ezra and the Levites, was also not an exclusive elevation of Mosaic legislation over against subsequent revelation, so that wisdom could now simply be subsumed under law. Rather, the תורה of Moses plays its unique role because of the reconstitution of the covenant community, but they also recognized the authority of the prophets: “your commandments which you commanded by your servants the prophets” (Ezra 9:10-11). The prayer of the Levites in Nehemiah 9 alludes to Joshua and 1-2 Kings in some form. Nehemiah 9:30 appeals to the warnings of the Lord “by your Spirit through your prophets” (paralleling the Spirit instruction in the laws of Moses, vv. 13, 20). And in Nehemiah 12:24, 36, 45-46, the service of the Levites, with the singers and gatekeepers is reestablished “according to the commandment of David the man of God,” and “his son Solomon.”<sup>156</sup>

What then was new and distinctive about the תורה and wisdom presentation of the post-exilic Psalter? Some suggest that it is the emphasis on the internalization of the divine instruction, and that is clearly a preeminent concern.<sup>157</sup> It also reflects eschatological expectation that the Lord will put his law in our hearts (Jer. 31). However, this is in line with the demand of both Deuteronomic law (“these words...shall be on your heart” Deut. 6:6; and “circumcise your heart” Deut. 10:16), and the wisdom of Proverbs (“keep them within your heart” Prov. 4:21; and “keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” 4:23). Is not rather what is distinctive evident as a response to the new situation in the post-exilic community? Especially as the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah is in the past (Ez. 5:1; 6.14), now a more complete dependence on previous written revelation for divine direction is required. So notes Christopher Wright: “the strong impression one gains from the great ceremonies described in Neh 8-10 is that God now speaks primarily through his inscripturated word.”<sup>158</sup> This is what Fishbane called “the axial shift,” in which God’s speaking is now mediated particularly through the written text, and through its appointed teachers, so that our access to it depends more

155. Jeremiah’s complaint is not against a rival wisdom scribal school, as this is often interpreted, but against those who have unfaithfully mishandled the law of the Lord. So Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 33-36. Notice that those verses combine law (תורה) of the Lord, wisdom, and word of the Lord, as intended to cohere with each other. This illuminates Jer. 18:18. Each group had their specialty, but they were not sealed off from one another, and it is implied they would be in agreement.

156. Sarna notes regarding this same role given to David in 2 Chronicles 8:13-14; 23:18 (“for so David the man of God had commanded”) that this affirms a parallel authority for David as for Moses (cf. “Moses the man of God” in Deut. 33:1 and in the Ps. 90 superscription) (Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 17).

157. Weeks, *Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature*, 89.

158. Wright, in David J. Shepherd and Christopher J.H. Wright, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, Two Horizons Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 121. He also observes that “the word of YHWH spoken by Jeremiah,” at the beginning of Ezra (Ezra 1:1) would have been “the written and edited scroll of Jeremiah.” Wright’s whole section here is helpful for showing from this text the need for “reading and listening” and “explaining and teaching” as well as “doing” the commands in received Scripture, and its relevance for us in a similar situation (“The God Who Speaks in Scripture,” 119-123).

than it did before on dedicated study of that text.<sup>159</sup> And this corresponds to our situation as we are to walk according to the leading of the eschatological Spirit that still speaks and works through his inscripturated word.

## 6. Torah Psalms: Walking by the Leading of the Spirit

### 6.1. Psalm 1

The three “torah psalms” then serve most programmatically to explicate this intended wisdom framework for our appropriation of the walking by the leading of the Spirit according to Psalm 143:10 and its parallels, and they confirm and elaborate on the insights we have identified in those psalms. In Psalm 1 the alternative to the path of the wicked is not spelled out as a path, but as a deep enjoyment, a delight, in the instruction (תורה) of the Lord and consequently an ongoing occupation with studying and reciting it. The result is living like the well-watered fruitful tree. The psalmist here has interwoven components of several other texts, especially: Joshua 1:7-9 for the day and night meditation enjoined on Joshua (meditation on the תורה that will guide him like the cloud pillar in the wilderness) with consequent success; the blessed man who trusts in the Lord in Jeremiah 17:5-8, who will also be like a well-watered fruitful tree, and contrasted with “the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength”; and Proverbs 3:13-18, a similar blessing on the one who finds wisdom as “more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her...her ways are ways of pleasantness,” and she herself is “a tree of life.”

Determining the referent of the “instruction of the Lord” here is a perennial problem for exegetes.<sup>160</sup> In Joshua it is explicitly the book of the Torah which Moses

159. “No dead letter, the ancient divine words become the very means of new instruction through their proper inquiry and interpretation.” Fishbane, “From Scribalism to Rabbinism: Perspectives on the Emergence of Classical Judaism,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 441-442. Of course, Fishbane does not mean that interpretation of received texts was not important previously: but this was a “movement from a culture based on direct divine revelations to one based on their study and reinterpretation.” He illustrates this through examination of the “Torah piety” of Psalm 119.

160. The thorough survey by Lopéz in *TDOT* 15, on the usage of תורה and scholarly opinion concludes regarding the Psalms, largely following H.-J. Kraus: “Most exegetes assume that *tôrâ* is to be understood in a broad sense in the Psalms. Those who speak of “law” point out that this term does not refer here to the laws of Moses or the Pentateuch in the strict sense, but to ‘all divine revelation as the guide to life.’ Those who see *tôrâ* as meaning ‘instruction, teaching’ understand the word broadly as the revelation of God’s will, the nucleus of this revelation being God’s law in its historical manifestation.” It seems that at this point near the end of the history of Old Testament revelation, the influence of Deuteronomy, the wisdom books (Proverbs), and the prophets, (with specific resonances throughout the Psalms to each) cannot be discounted. Michael Fishbane, in a judicious overview, comes to similar conclusions (“.1. תורה,” in מקראית אבניקלופדיה [Hebrew; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1982], 470-483). He notes particularly this threefold influence in the case of Psalm 1, and that its expression of the תורת יהוה (“instruction of the Lord”) is similar to the usage of Isaiah, as for example 2:3

commanded, and many think it should be assumed to be the same here, especially given the expectation for the Davidic king to study it (Deut. 17:18-20), and the focus of the post-exilic community on the תורה of Moses. While it certainly includes that, it is striking that the passage alludes also to a prophetic word (from Jeremiah) and a wisdom instruction (from Proverbs). These could be referred to as תורה in those corpuses, and we have seen that the post-exilic community received as divinely authoritative *commandments* also the prophetic and Davidic and Solomonic revelation. This reference to תורה also occurs in the psalm which is placed as an introduction to the complete authoritative collection of songs and prayers which are mainly Davidic. It is hard then to imagine then that the referent would be limited to only that Mosaic corpus as source for divine instruction, especially as it could easily have been so identified with Moses or his book (as in Ezra and Nehemiah, cf. Ezra 7:10 with 7:6; Neh. 8:1ff.). Thus it should be understood to mean all the revealed texts of divine instruction, including the collection it introduces (even especially pointing to it as a 5-book “Davidic Torah”).<sup>161</sup>

According to this framing text then, walking by the leading of the Spirit is not first and foremost our applying ourselves to obedience and doing the right behavior—and then adding reliance on the Spirit’s power (though we must certainly also do that!), but rather continually or repeatedly treasuring up the Spirit’s word and wisdom as our greatest delight, as we put trust in the Lord and his gracious working through that word and not putting any trust in our own flesh.<sup>162</sup> Then as we are inwardly taught by the Spirit with that word, we will think (more consistently) the things of the Spirit, and thus act from that heart orientation. As with wisdom in Proverbs 4:6: “love her, and

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(= Mic. 4:2): “...that he may teach [יירה] us his ways and that we may walk in his paths,’ For out of Zion shall go instruction [תורה, so not *the* law], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (cf. Is. 1:10; 8:20) (478-479). He also finds that “Deuteronomy and these psalms [89, 78, 105] participate therefore in a testimony that תורה became a characteristic term for the divine leading [הדרכה] in general” (479). This confirms our findings from the parallel between leading and teaching in Nehemiah 9 and the Psalms. Goldingay in his glossary in *Psalms, Volume 3: Psalms 90-150*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 761, holds that the term in the Psalms, besides referencing the “teaching” of Moses, “would also cover a priest’s instruction of individuals, a wisdom teacher’s instruction, and a prophet’s teaching.”

161. Sarna (*On the Book of Psalms*, 36-38) emphatically argues that it must be a text (or texts) as the object of this kind of study and recitation (as in Joshua; and referenced above for Ps. 143), even though no book is mentioned. As he notes, no specific book is ever mentioned with תורה in the Psalms, and thereby the term can apply to all the received scrolls of the Lord’s instruction. It should be recalled also that the nighttime study would not typically be by reading, but by memorization!

162. In a sense then we are not first of all even walking anywhere, but becoming planted in the word, which will then direct our walking. Robert Banks makes a good case that the nuance of Paul’s choice of περιπατέω (rather than the typical LXX πορεύομαι) for metaphorical walking: with this verb it is the process or the dynamics or the manner of walking that is in view, rather than a pilgrimage toward a destination (Banks, “‘Walking’ as a Metaphor of the Christian Life: The Origins of a Significant Pauline Usage,” in *Perspectives on Language and Text* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987], 309-310). So we keep “going about” in the sphere of the Spirit in his word or “walking around” in the word in reliance on the Spirit day by day.

she will guard you,” that is, we will be kept from carrying out the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). The streams that nourish us here certainly recall the water imagery of the Spirit, from the wilderness water that flowed out of the rock, to Isaiah’s eschatological outpouring of the Spirit, to the water from the new temple in Ezekiel. The Jeremiah and Proverbs texts, as well as those Isaiah references (Isa. 32:2, 15-18; 44:3-4; 58:11), describe not just fruitfulness, but life-giving refreshment, peace, and confidence. This water will satisfy our deepest selves as well as equip us for every task: “And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters do not fail” (Isa. 58:11).

## 6.2. Psalm 19

Psalm 19, by its positioning in the structural center of Book I of the Psalter, emphasizes the centrality of the instruction of the Lord for the righteous rule of the Davidic king, and all who follow his example (and prayer) for living wisely with integrity.<sup>163</sup> The ascription to Davidic authorship especially in this case is rarely considered in scholarship, largely because of the high “torah piety” the Psalm shares with Psalms 1 and 119, and because with them it functions to structure the whole Psalter. But if, as we have seen, there is good reason to credit Davidic authorship, and that a Deuteronomic framework of obedience to divine instruction, especially for the king, and even as associated with wisdom (Deut. 4:6; and walking in the way), need not be dated late, then this psalm should be viewed as a key *source* for the same perspective developed in Psalms 1 and 119.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, the ancient Near Eastern background evident here of the king who reigns in justice as vice-regent under the divine lawgiver (the sun god for the surrounding nations: Mesopotamian Shamash and Egyptian Aten) fits better in the time of David.<sup>165</sup>

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163. Cf. Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2004), 11, 73-74. The psalm is at the center of a chiasmic structure, in which it is immediately preceded and followed by kingship psalms (18 and 20-21). Patrick D. Miller points out the many lexical and thematic correspondences with this context in “Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15-24,” in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, ed. K. Seybold and E. Zenger (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 127-142.

164. Whether this means the “instruction” of the Lord here (v. 7) has exclusive reference to Mosaic teaching is not especially consequential, as the perspective of the Psalter compilers is that the passage of time since David has made clear the expansion of divine instruction texts, and so for them and for us it would apply to that. However, there is also good reason to believe that David in his own time would not have limited divine instruction to Moses, even though his teaching would be foundational for the king. David endorsed the ongoing revelational role of prophets and sages, and claimed that the Spirit also spoke through him in his songs (2 Sam. 23:1-2).

165. This background is often overlooked by commentators. Cf. the famous Hammurapi Stele in which the king is depicted as receiving his laws from Shamash (James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*, 2d ed. [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969], 77). The psalm is refuting that by demoting the sun to a creation of

The second part of the psalm matches the hymn to the speaking of the Lord's creation with the even more glorious speaking of the Lord in his instruction/law.<sup>166</sup> It provides the template for Psalms 1 and 119 in its picture of great delight in the word,<sup>167</sup> and for Psalm 119 in its depiction of the life-giving and life-directing power of the word. It extols the qualities of this law, which are the qualities of God himself, and infers that those same qualities can be conveyed to the one who so treasures that word. Christians today might tend to think that this is rhetorical exaggeration, or at least that our redemptive-historical advance has rightly clarified that it is rather the Spirit of life that has this effect, rather than a mere letter. But that is just the point of our need to understand Paul's Old Testament appropriation: the apostolic proclamation comes not to correct it, but to fulfill it and explain its ultimate intent. We see here that there is no disjunction between the Lord and his word. As supernatural and divine, it is living and active (Heb. 4:12); it objectively has these qualities and powers, even though it can be resisted in unbelief (also Heb. 4:11!). Therefore a first step in walking by the leading of the Spirit is to rightly estimate and treasure his word, including his commandments and rules. Then, we can look to the Lord for his Spirit to create these effects in us through his word: reviving us, making us wise, giving us joy (vv. 7-8). This word is equated to the fear of the Lord (v. 9), meaning the teaching about the fear of the Lord; the Spirit through his word teaches us this proper reverence and so creates wisdom (cf. Ps. 34:11-14). Several of these benefits are described with wordplays, as they also can refer to what the sun does: as the sun it is pure or "radiant" so we can see clearly (8b); the warning that it provides also means "made resplendent" or "enlightened" (v. 11).<sup>168</sup> Worked in us by the great Creator himself, and specifically the Spirit that hovered over creation, this instruction does in us in an ultimate way what the sun does externally and materially.

The last section of the psalm is prayer. Though the word of the Lord conveys his own character and life, our prayer is not to the word! But it is to the Lord in response to the word. Here we see the same dynamic as in Psalm 143 and its parallels. First we need to be acquitted or cleansed; we don't know our own sin (v. 12; 1 Jn. 1:8-9) and we confess the Lord is our "redeemer" by grace alone (v. 14); then we can seek

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Yahweh, and elevating the instruction/law of the Lord above the power of the sun, and by depicting David as the godly ruler who reigns with wisdom and justice because he fears the Lord—and so is himself like the sun, a preeminent servant of the Lord for his people. See J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 220-225; Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 69-96; and William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 81-103 (his chapter 4: "The Sun of Righteousness: Psalm 19 and the Joy of Lex").

166. See VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 220-222, for a helpful study of the eight different terms used here and in Psalm 119 for the instruction or word of the Lord.

167. Cf. Moshe Greenberg, "Three Conceptions of the Torah in Hebrew Scriptures," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65 Geburtstag* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 365-378.

168. Niphal זָהַר I ("be enlightened") and II ("be warned"), cf. BDB ad loc.; see Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 86, 88-89, 92, and the notes there, for the parallel biblical and cognate references for these and other wordplays in the poem.



deliverance from sins that would “have dominion” over us. We do this by asking God to hold us back from them (v. 13), and the promise of God is that his Spirit will do that (Gal. 5:16).<sup>169</sup> What results is not the misleading “blamelessness” (as “perfection” here clearly does not fit the context, as indeed it never does in the psalmists’ use), but integrity (תָּמַם < אִתְּמַם), that is, a wholeness, or consistency, or whole-heartedness, because we confess our sins. Yet there is more, because the adjective for this is used in verse 7 for the instruction of the Lord. Like the other qualities, our meditation on the word of the Lord creates its own inherent quality of integrity and wholeness in us. Then the final petition in verse 14 in the language of sacrificial worship reveals that David’s “meditation” on the text(s) of the Lord’s instruction, typically meaning thoughtful reflection and recitation, but properly engaged from “the heart” (that is, with his deepest thoughts and affections), also includes his response of prayer and worship expressed in this psalm.<sup>170</sup> This would naturally be the case also when what we meditate on includes models of prayer and worship, or calls us to that response, as do the Psalms. Because of the leading of the Spirit then, we can know that in our heart meditation on the word, he is already at work to create our response and also make it acceptable to God.<sup>171</sup>

### 6.3. Psalm 119

Psalm 119, the massive composition that dominates Book V of the Psalter, is also at the structural center of this final book,<sup>172</sup> and so it recalls the center of the first book (Ps. 19), and the introduction to the whole (Ps. 1), and yet expands their themes on a comprehensive scale. Formally, this is indicated in three ways: first, it is a complete alphabetic acrostic, with a stanza of eight verses for each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet: and so it is an A-Z of divine instruction; second, it uses (also) eight words for that divine instruction, most of which are repeated in each stanza: and so it provides a vocabulary of instruction; and third, it incorporates throughout its length variations on every genre and mode of expression of the psalms (lament, confession,

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169. Similarly, Rom. 6:12-13: “Let not sin reign.... but present yourselves to God.” It thus does not mean *us* keeping it from reigning, but asking and depending on the Lord by his Spirit to keep it from reigning.

170. Sarna points out that the request for the meditation to be acceptable is the language of sacrifice, and that תָּמַם is used for the requirement for the sacrificial animal (*On the Book of Psalms*, 84, 94-95). Likewise for us, the acceptable sacrifice is humble contrition and praise (Ps. 51:15-17). Cf. also Rolf Jacobson in DeClaisse-Walford, Jacobson, & Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 212. Citing Romans 12:1-2, he reminds us that presenting our whole life as a living sacrifice begins here with the words of our meditation.

171. Recall Romans 8:14-15: if we are led by the Spirit, *our cry* of Abba, Father, can be offered *by him*; and verses 26-28: the Spirit’s help is preeminently at this point, “because we do not know what to pray for as we ought.” Cf. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 866-867: “he is our divine ‘pray-er.’”

172. Erich Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of the Psalms, Psalms 107-145,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 80 (1998): 77-102; while some of his suggestions can be questioned, the case for this overall deliberate structure based on groupings and linguistic connections is textually well grounded.

confidence, commitment, petition, wisdom teaching, thanksgiving, praise): and so it is a sampler psalter, or guide to the whole, that teaches us what that whole Psalter does as divine instruction. On the other hand, it is particularly one thing, and that is (after its three verse introduction, and the exception of v. 115) all prayer: every verse informs and enacts our intimate relationship to God through his word. Thematically, it elaborates on the teaching of Psalms 1 and 19, putting it all into prayer, as at the end of Psalm 19, but more rigorously articulating how that prayer operates in relation to the divine instruction. As such, it could be regarded as the greatest commentary on Psalm 143:10 and its analogues in the Psalter, and so the fullest explanation for how we walk by the leading of the Spirit, or a manual for Christian sanctification. If that sounds extraordinary for an Old Testament psalm that lacks any reference to the Holy Spirit, we recall that we read backward and forward: through the New Testament lens, which also expects the text to be looking forward, anticipating eschatological fulfillment for its godly aspirations.<sup>173</sup>

Many have recognized that those aspirations center on an “internalized” torah, the goal to have the law on the heart, as the only adequate way to keep on walking along the righteous and wise path. Gordon Wenham’s important study expounded on Psalm 119, describing its “deeply interior spirituality,” as the whole is a prayer “that God will instruct the psalmist, so that he will love God with all his heart.” And “he yearns for the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:33, that God would write his law in the heart, to be fulfilled in him.”<sup>174</sup> And yet from his analysis we are left with the sense that this was only a frustrated aspiration for the psalmist. He loves the law and wants to follow it, but he can only wait and long for some divine intervention, and in the meantime he can only try to keep the law, and if he is faithful God will eventually vindicate him.<sup>175</sup> Wenham even suggests that in this longing there is an anticipation of a Christian view of the law in ethics, by which he means: in fulfillment of Jer. 31:33, the law is not

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173. In this regard, the study of Steven R. Coxhead is helpful (“The Cardionomographic Work of the Spirit in the Old Testament,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 79 [2017]: 77-95). Coining the term for heart (*cardio*) law (*nomos*) writing (*graphy*), he demonstrates that though the prophetic hope (Jer. 31:33 and Ezek. 36:26-27, and Deut. 30:6!) promises this as the future eschatological work of grace, there was never any other way of obeying God. Even though the clarity of the Spirit’s work was not yet fully revealed, he was so working in the godly old covenant servants of God. Thus their relationship to God in faith *and* in seeking obedience to God’s laws can appropriately apply to us, even as we have a greater “pouring out” and fuller revelation of this Spirit and his gracious work. Cf. especially 82-83, and also note 16, where he speaks of the “effective conjunction of word and Spirit” in the new covenant; but “there is yet more of God’s word to be written on our hearts,” so that “covenant instruction for God’s people is still needed.” And this work of the Spirit is for obedience to God’s law from the heart (79, note 4).

174. Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Songs Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 84-85; especially chapter 5: “The Concept of Law in the Psalms.”

175. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah*, 91, 84. Wenham does have a few hints that something more is involved, as when he affirms that “God’s word gives life,” or that when Torah means “promise,” we can see it offering more hope, but he does not develop these further. Wenham is following the interpretation of Jean-Luc Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 2006).

imposed from without, but is seen “as God’s wisdom for our good.”<sup>176</sup> Brian Rosner adopts Wenham’s approach and further clarifies: Paul appropriates, or reads, the law as wisdom instruction, and not “as commandments to be obeyed and not transgressed.” This is because our new life in Christ by the Spirit creates renewal from within, and replaces a relationship to external demands and commandments.<sup>177</sup> But this is to sever the very link that the psalmist celebrates as the key to inner renewal! As we have seen, Rosner claims that Paul would not have echoed the author of Psalm 119 with his impassioned cries of devotion to divine instruction (or inasmuch as it includes commandments); he also says that the approach to the law in Psalm 119 and throughout the Psalms “does not primarily view the law as commandments.”<sup>178</sup> Both statements are incorrect. It is exactly the perfect ways of God expressed in his commandments and demands and laws that must be kept and obeyed and observed, but from the heart. And yet in the grace of divine acceptance God offers and creates inward obedience through that same demanding word, as we trust him for that supernatural work.<sup>179</sup> This theological framework is clear in the introduction to the Psalm in verses 1-3, which explains its purpose and deliberately recalls Psalms 1 and 19.<sup>180</sup> It begins as Psalm 1 with “blessed” (twice; אֲשֶׁרִי),<sup>181</sup> and the concern for walking in the ways of the Lord according to his תּוֹרָה. This means having a way possessing integrity (v. 1; not “blameless”) as in Psalm 19, which is further explained by “with the whole heart” in verse 2. And it also means “keeping” the testimonies of God, and not practicing (פָּעַל) iniquity (rather than another misleading translation, “do no wrong”; the sense is doing in the sense of continuing to do without repentance, as also

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176. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah*, 86. He goes on in this and subsequent chapters to provide helpful surveys of the presence of Old Testament law in the Psalms, and ethical standards that continue in the New Testament, but does not seem to address whether or how Christians are obligated to divine law and commandments as such in the Old Testament, let alone what that might have to do with the Holy Spirit.

177. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 173-174, 182. He cites the same passage from Wenham regarding a Christian view of the law.

178. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 165, 173.

179. Recall Augustine’s justly famous succinct summary: “Give what you command, and then command whatever you will” (*Confessions* X.29, 40).

180. The weighty importance of this psalm for the whole Psalter warrants detailed examination of its contents, for which happily several recent studies provide abundant insight, correcting previous scholarly neglect and even dismissal. Therefore thankfully such a study will not be undertaken here. Some of the most useful contributions, even with often different conclusions, include: Alfons Deissler, *Psalm 110 (118) und seine Theologie: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der anthologischen Stilgattung im Alten Testament* (Munich: Zink, 1955); William M. Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991); McCann, “Psalms,” *NIB* 4:1167-1176; John H. Eaton, *Psalms of the Way and the Kingdom: A Conference with the Commentators* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 148-188; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*; and especially Kent Aaron Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher: The Exemplary Torah Student in Psalm 119*, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

181. Its last verse beginning with the last letter of the alphabet (ת) and containing “perish, be lost” (אָבַד) echoes the last word of Psalm 1: תֵּאבֹד (also occurring in the last verse of Ps. 2—as a “tail linkage” between the first two psalms).

clearly in Paul and John: Gal. 5:21 and 1 Jn. 3:6-9). And recalling the prayer at the end of Ps. 19, and anticipating the prayers to follow, this keeping and walking is equated with “seeking him.” In other words our deepest fulfillment is found in walking in God’s ways (the way of wisdom), which means keeping his commandments with wholeheartedness, as we seek him in his תורה.<sup>182</sup> The usage of תורה in this psalm, and introduced as the first term in the first verse, while mutually reinforcing with what we have already seen in Psalms 1 and 19 and the post-exilic context, adds additional clarification.<sup>183</sup> Of the eight terms, it occurs most often, and is the only one to occur only in the singular. The function of the other terms then is to explain and expand the meaning of this “instruction.” Kent Reynolds explains it as “an expansive conception” more abstract than the others, reinforced by the semantic overlap with the other terms that can yet have their own nuance.<sup>184</sup> For example, the two common terms for “word” (דבר and אמרה) can also be singular and abstract, and are both informed by תורה, and help explain it. So “word” can mean “command,” and can also mean in effect (and thus often translated as) “promise,” because in that case they describe aspects of God’s word by which he obligates himself to us, rather than what he obeys.<sup>185</sup> And yet there is no intended disjunction between the two, because both are תורה, as the perfect expression of God’s will, through which he powerfully works.<sup>186</sup> Other words, such as “statutes” and “ordinances,” or even the plural “words,” underscore that God’s instruction works through its specific and detailed

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182. Further guiding structural and thematic connections are being made with Psalm 94:12 in Book IV: “Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law”; and in Book V, Psalms 111-112: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it [or them, with the Hebrew, referring to the precepts in a previous verse] have a good understanding (111:10), and “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments (112:1). Psalms 111-112 and 119 frame the “Egyptian Hallel” (connected with Passover) in Psalms 113-118.

183. As for the referents of this instruction, as we have seen, we would expect them to include all the collected scrolls of authoritative revelation, including Mosaic books, prophetic texts, Davidic psalmody and Solomonian wisdom, though much of this may yet not have been in the final form as we have it, especially the final canonical grouping of the Writings. This is confirmed by the subtle way that this psalm echoes the expressions and themes of previous Scripture, as many have pointed out. Prominent are Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and the rest of the Psalter. Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 157-171, demonstrates the central influence of Deuteronomy, though some of this was mediated through other Scripture, including Psalms. For Proverbs, see Bernard Gosse, “Le Livre des Proverbes et les Psaumes 19 et 119,” *Etudes Théologique et Religieuses* 81 (2006): 387-394. Cf. Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher*, chapter 5, “Psalm 119 in Context.”

184. Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher*, 106; the expression is from Geerhard von Rad; the other words thus function as “commentary words” for תורה instruction (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 259-260).

185. Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher*, 118-120; according to Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 260, this collocation of torah with “word” highlights that “Psalm 119 is not primarily about a ‘silent’ Torah, but one that ‘speaks.’ It is not primarily about an instruction of God once received, but about one that is actually ongoing—through the medium of the Torah, out of which God speaks.”

186. Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher*, 107-108.

pronouncements and commands, the parts with the whole. Yet, the use of the תורה of the Lord, specifically as “instruction,” as the overarching category, has determining programmatic significance. For most fundamentally, as we have already seen, the way of this walking is by petitioning the Lord (“seeking” him) to teach us and instruct us in the way through this instruction.<sup>187</sup>

This petitioning prayer prominently features expressions of commitment, trust, and devotion, and even vows of obedience.<sup>188</sup> These are part of our appropriate response to God, and in the overall context of dependence, they bear no connotation of self-trust. Significantly the first two verses of the prayer, together with the very last verse, acknowledge that the prayer has not in fact kept all of God’s commands. As we have seen, that is where we must begin. Also the psalmist throughout speaks to God out of his distress and affliction, typically because of the wicked who oppose God and his instruction, and seek to bring down the godly, although this is also acknowledged as discipline for our good.<sup>189</sup> This is the conversion of the two ways conflict of Psalm 1 and Proverbs 1-9 into the necessary prayer for our context in this world, continuing in relevance for a church frequently hated by the world, although the ultimate enemies have been more clearly revealed to be spirit-forces (Eph. 6:12; Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 10:3-5).

However, the central and theologically determinative expressions of this Psalm are those affirming the wonderful working of God within us by his word, and calling on him to so act.<sup>190</sup> Interspersed with repeated expressions of devotion, treasuring up (that we might not sin, v. 11), delight, and wholehearted commitment, come the petitions: “teach me your statutes” (v. 12), “open my eyes...” (v. 18), “graciously teach me your instruction” (v. 29). The fifth stanza reaches a high point of this calling on God to act: “teach me the way,” “give me understanding,” “lead me in the path,”

187. Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher*, 126: “Psalm 119 contains a new vision of pedagogy; the new vision includes the contemplation of Torah as a facet of ethical and religious instruction.... Instruction directly from God keeps the speaker from turning aside from the path of Torah.” Thus we can recognize again the alignment with Galatians 5:16.

188. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah*, chapter 4, “The Unique Claims of Prayed Ethics,” has emphasized how this prayer language of the psalms contributes to our character formation. “In praying the psalms, one is actively committing oneself to follow the God-approved life. This is different from just listening to laws or edifying stories. It is an action akin to reciting the creed or singing a hymn. It involves strong commitment...” (76).

189. The prominence of lament has led some to classify the psalm as a lament psalm, but as Reynolds rightly explains, it is more accurate to label it *sui generis*, because of the diversity of genres it reflects, and its unique focus (Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher*, 21-29). As for the function of the enemies, Hossfeldt and Zenger suggest, with P. Botha, a striking image: “One can compare the ‘world picture’ in Psalm 119 with an equilateral triangle whose angles are the one praying, the enemies, and YHWH. In the middle of the triangle is the Torah. Everything depends on one’s relationship to this central point and what comes from it” (*Psalms* 3, 257).

190. Jon D. Levenson rightly describes this as “not only a commandment or a promise but also the energetic transformative ‘word’ through which God effects his will” (“The Sources of Torah: Psalm 19 and the Modes of Revelation in Second Temple Judaism,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, S. Dean McBride [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 569).

“incline my heart,” “confirm to your servant,” and all of these are directed to God with reference to his instruction/law/word. As in Psalm 143:10, 25:8, and Nehemiah 9:20, we see this is grounded in the goodness of God: “You are good and do good; teach me your statutes” (v. 68). Since with Paul we are to pray, “let your good Spirit lead me,” it would make no sense for the תורה to be replaced by the Spirit, since the prayer is that *God* would lead and teach us his word and his law! This dominant expression then explains how it can also be said in Psalm 19 that the word enlightens us—it is because God himself does that through it; in the same way here it can be said: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (v. 105), because God himself lightens the path through it, or we look to him to do that (cf. Isa. 2:5 with 2:3: the “light of the Lord” *is* his תורה). Likewise as the Psalm progresses, it becomes clear that the life-giving, refreshing, and nourishing property of his instruction, is because *God himself* is making us alive through it. Thus it can be said that “your promise gives me life” (v. 50), because we pray “In your steadfast love give me life” (v. 88), and “give me life, O Lord, according to your word” (v. 107), so that we acknowledge “by them you have given me life” (v. 93).<sup>191</sup> Likewise, we can say “The unfolding of your words gives light” (v. 130), because we pray “Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes” (v. 135; alluding to the Aaronic blessing, Num. 6:24-26). In this Psalm, whatever is attributed to the wonderful working of the word or command, is because we relate to it in relation to God; it is “*your* instruction,” and thus it is as reliable, sure, and efficacious as he is, and we should be devoted to it as we are devoted to him.<sup>192</sup> It would be inconceivable to this psalmist that the outpouring of the Spirit would remove that. Rather that Spirit leading is the very thing he is praying for in this psalm.<sup>193</sup>

As this is a sampler Psalter, or guide to the whole, it is appropriate that the last stanza features praise (as the last Davidic psalm [145] is an A-Z acrostic of praise, and the 146-150 hallelujah psalms are the conclusion appended to the five books of the Psalter): because God teaches us we praise him. We could say it is the leading of the Spirit in our walk that brings us to those praise psalms at the conclusion of the Psalter. So the last petitions of Psalm 119 are striking: “Let my soul live and praise you, and let your rules help me” (v. 175). We live to praise and glorify God; yet how does the second half of the verse parallel? Because God helping us with *his rules* is what gives life to our soul, so that we may praise. And the final verse brings us back to our enduring need for that help until the consummation: we are straying sheep, who are

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191. It is evident that the two middle stanzas, the eleventh (kaph) and twelfth (lamed) out of the 22, present a turning point, a nadir and a zenith, as the peak of lamented affliction gives way to ringing affirmation of deliverance: “in your steadfast love give me life” (v. 88) gives way to “by them [your precepts] you have given me life” (v. 93). See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 275-276, describing this as the “compositional center” of the psalm. Also McCann, “Psalms,” *NIB* 4:1171.

192. Eaton, *Psalms of the Way*, 52, stresses this in his conclusions: the focus “remains the Lord himself, and the relation to him.... He teaches, guides, commands, and promises, and thereby in mercy and faithfulness bestows life.” And, these psalms (1, 19, 119) bring us into the Lord’s presence, “who seeks, guides and delights through his life-giving word.”

193. Cf. the reflections of Reynolds on the heart character formation for the path (echoing Deuteronomy and Proverbs) that this prayer activates. See *Torah as Teacher*, 88, cf. 84-89.

yet confident of our status as the Lord's servants who are led in the path of his commandments, so: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep (or, "a sheep which keeps getting lost" נָחַס); seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments" (v. 176).

So today when we ponder and seek to enact Paul's exhortations to walk in the way of wisdom according to the leading of the Spirit, we need to hear this. Do not forget the commandments! This is what the Spirit says, and this is how the Spirit works. Keeping the commandments of God still matters; they haven't been replaced. And only as we look to them and study them rigorously ("meditate") will the Spirit lead us into all obedience. But he certainly will, and we will praise Father, Son, and Spirit for it.

Finally, consider these words from James Hamilton, commenting on Ezra 7:10, which tells us that "Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." For this piety is surely what the author of Psalm 119 and his co-compilers of the Psalter have modeled for us:

If the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to cause you to see Jesus, you will not be able to continue in unrepentant disobedience. Paul commended the Ephesian elders to God and to the word of His grace, and he explained that the word was able to build them up and give them their inheritance among the saints (Acts 20:32). The Word will have its way in you. You will find Psalm 119:104 at work in your own heart and life: "I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every false way." If you study the Bible, and if you know God, you will obey. If you study and know God and obey, then you will teach because then you will have experiential knowledge of the things you are imparting to others.<sup>194</sup>

## 7. Postscript

This study did not begin at the beginning because of the nature of our inquiry into Pauline Spirit-leading. We have presupposed it, but we should be reminded of that context, which for Paul, is always Christological. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and the Psalms in their fulfillment are first of all the Psalms of Christ, sung by and about him.<sup>195</sup> The organizing structure of the Psalter not only frames it as wisdom instruction for our study, it frames it as instruction for the way in the hope of the coming kingdom of the Lord and his Davidic King, the king who models the path of obedience for his people.<sup>196</sup> We are the Lord's servants, because he is the preeminent Servant of the

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194. James M. Hamilton, Jr., *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Ezra and Nehemiah* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 64.

195. Edmund P. Clowney, "The Singing Savior," *Moody Monthly* (July–August, 1979) 40–42; Richard B. Hays, "Christ Prays the Psalms: Israel's Psalter as Matrix of Early Christology," in *The Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 101–118.

196. The nature and extent of that royal, Davidic, or Messianic structuring is a continuing matter of discussion in the editorial criticism scholarship on the Psalter. But the deliberate juxtaposition of the Torah psalms with royal (and eschatological) psalms (Pss. 1 with 2; 18 with 19; 118 with 119, indicated by lexical and thematic links), as well as association of the Davidic king and the expected new Davidic King with wisdom and righteous walking on the way, is

Lord.<sup>197</sup> The Davidic prayer of Psalm 143 is framed by his identification as “your servant” (vv. 2 and 12) (cf. “David his servant” in 144:10), and as such he prays “let your good Spirit lead me.” And the Greater David royal and Isaianic Servant came and followed that leading of the Spirit (Lk. 4:1, 14). He did not go astray (Ps. 119:176), because he was also the great Good Shepherd of the sheep. He is the righteous one of Psalm 1 who delights in torah, of whom it could be said without qualification, “The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of God is in his heart; his steps do not slip” (Ps. 37:30-31); and “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:7-8; Heb. 10:5-7).

But that will, by the Spirit, led him through the wilderness and all the way to the cross (Heb. 9:14; Phil. 2:7-8). And so it does for us who walk in his steps (Phil. 2:1-5), and since that walking by the Spirit means we are sons and heirs with Christ, we must also suffer with him (Rom. 8:14-17). So Calvin reminds us:

Moreover, although the Psalms are replete with all the precepts which serve to frame our life to every part of holiness, piety, and righteousness, yet they will principally teach and train us to bear the cross; and the bearing of the cross is a genuine proof of our obedience, since by doing this, we renounce the guidance of our own affections, and submit ourselves entirely to God, leaving him to govern us....<sup>198</sup>

Thus the servant is a suffering servant in Psalm 119 and Psalm 143, and thus the urgency of the prayer to be led by the good Spirit. As Isaiah says, anticipating the new covenant Spirit guiding, God’s goodness and grace will provide for us, and even though he gives us “the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher” (Isa. 30:19-20) And as we walk by faith, not by sight, we will hear him speak *in his revealed word*: “This is the way, walk in it” (Isa. 30:21). May we know ever more of the Spirit’s gracious and good leading, in all our adversity, as we heed and study and treasure up his instruction, to know the way that we should walk.

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widely accepted. Cf. especially Jamie Grant, *The King as Exemplar*; Michael Snearly, *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter*; and Michael G. McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh: A Canonical Study of Book IV of the Psalter* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014).

197. Cf. Paul, who regards his ministry, and ours by extension, as carrying forward a fulfilling of the mission of the Isaianic Servant (Ac. 13:47 and Is. 49:6; 2 Cor. 6:2-4 and Is. 49:8).

198. John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), xxxix.