THE WESTERN INSTROSPECTIVE CONSCIENCE:
A Biblical Perspective On Decision Making

by

LORIN L CRANFORD

INTRODUCTION

This study comes out of a discussion that arose in September 2014 in the Wednesday evening Bible study group in Santa Ana, Costa Rica. In the process of discussing the life of Paul, I made mention of the significant impact of a lecture presented by Prof. Krister Stendahl in 1961, that is titled, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." In 1963 the article was published in the *Harvard Theological Review* (Vol. 55, No. 4). This article has enjoyed major impact on how the study of Paul's life and teachings are studied in modern times.

From the reading of this article by members of the study group, questions about the meaning of terms such as conscience, guilt, forgiveness etc. Have arisen. This study represents an effort to throw some light on these topics from several angles. My strategy is as follows:

1) Just what did Stendahl say and not say in his lecture.

2) What do the terms conscience, guilt etc. mean in our modern world, in a pop culture and also in a medical perspective?

3) What then do we find in the Bible? This has to do with relevant terminology and depictions. Comparisons of these perspectives to the modern viewpoints will be made.

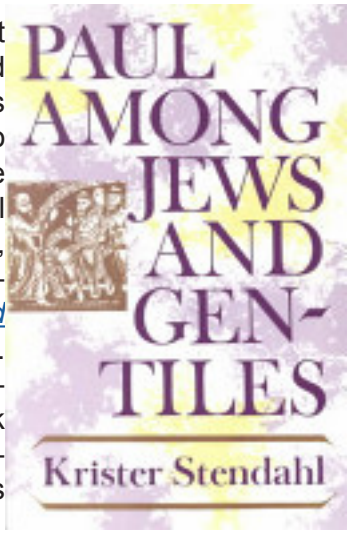
Finally some conclusions will be drawn in light of the variety of perspectives that emerge.

I. Krister Stendahl and Paul's conscience.

The starting point has to be an examination of what Prof. Stendahl did and didn't say about Paul's conscience in his lecture. This is necessary since his comments triggered our discussion in the first place.

First, a little background on him, that summarizes the excellent bio information about the professor in wikipedia.org. His very significant career as an ordained Swedish Lutheran pastor focused on teaching and pastoring on both sides of the Atlantic during the second half of the previous century. He was born in Sweden in 1921 and passed away in 2008 in retirement after retiring in 1989. He was for many years professor and dean at the Divinity School of Harvard University. But also at other periods beginning in 1984 he was bishop of the national Lutheran church in Stockholm, Sweden. His influence was substantial on both sides of the Atlantic, and his views were highly regarded across Christian denominational lines.

I first was made aware of Prof. Stendahl's lecture while a doctoral student at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in the Pauline Seminar of Dr. Jack MacGorman in the fall of 1968. Stendahl's challenging of much of the interpretive approach to Paul's writings impressed me to commit myself to always understand the biblical text on its own terms rather than automatically assume a much later, and usually, modern world view for the apostle and then trying to read his writings out such a context. This guiding principle has given me personal direction for almost half a century of Bible study and teaching.



To understand the point of his lecture, we need to remember that it was an address presented to the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association on Sept. 3, 1961.[1] It was subsequently published in the *Harvard Theological Review* (vol. 56, no. 3 [July 1963], 199-215). A subsequent book publication in 1976 extended and refined much of his

[1]The original material was an article "Paulus och Samvetet" that was published in the Swedish journal *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 25 (1960), 62-77.

presentation in the earlier lecture, titled *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*.

The central thesis of both lecture and later book is that most of the interpretive understanding of Paul from Augustine to the present has ignored the historical setting of Paul's writings which largely centered around the tensions of Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in the churches he founded that were struggling to understand the role of the Torah in the life of Christians. The influence of the church father Augustine of Hippo was through his work titled *Confessions* in English translation and should be read as a background for it. This works sets the foundation for understanding the reformer, Martin Luther, a converted Augustinian monk. As a youth Augustine led an unusually immoral and rebellious life. He was plagued by profound and sometimes disabling guilt after coming to Christ in conversion at age 32. Luther's experience was much the same in his ongoing struggles with guilt and temptation.

Added to that is Augustine's highly questionable exegetical method in which Paul's wrestling with the role of Torah in the believer's life in Romans especially, and in Galatians also, was 'spiritualized' into a completely different contextual setting.[2] The Judaism of Paul's past became for Augustine a symbol of 'religious legalism' that stood as inherently evil. Romans 7 becomes a critical text for Augustine with him seeing Paul agonizing over his past out of perpetual struggles with guilt in the same manner that Augustine wrestled with his immoral past. Transfer that thinking to central Germany in the early 1500s and you find a German monk in the tradition of Augustine thinking the same way about himself and his past. A blanket adoption of Augustine's teaching about Paul and these two letters of Paul paved the way to inject into the emerging Protestant Christianity the idea of a believer always needing to scrutinize his every action, word, and thought looking for signs of evil and temptation. In order to become a Christian, one must wrestle with a profound sense of personal guilt and unworthiness before God. Thus incorporated into Luther's famous 'justification by faith' was the necessity of wrestling with guilt as a part of the 'faith' experience.

Because of the enormous influence of Martin Luther upon not only religious thinking in Western culture but all across the spectrum of social life in general, the Western world has developed the so-called "introspective conscience" that permeates all of society.[3] This has been extensively documented through many different types of studies, as is documented in footnote three of Stendahl's lecture.[4] Thus the human dilemma is unresolved guilt that plagues individuals not only in a religious manner but in an individualized psychological manner:

> In the history of Western Christianity — and hence, to

[2]Usually this method of interpretation is labeled 'allegorizing' the text. But is also labeled 'spiritualizing' the text. The falseness and danger of such approaches have been repeatedly demonstrated and exposed over the past several centuries.

This method of handling ancient texts was developed first by Greeks in order to interpret the writings of Homer centuries before in a relevant contemporary manner. Never mind that these writings took on often completely unrelated meanings and a huge variety of often contradictory meanings depending upon each interpreter. The Jewish philosopher Philo brought this method over into Jewish treatment of the Old Testament texts, largely to justify the teachings of the Torah as relevant to first century BCE Greco-Roman life styles. Through the influence of many church fathers from the second century onward this approach became dominate in Christian interpretation of both the Old and New Testaments. The same impact plagued Christian understanding but the emergence of the Historical Critical Method of interpretation in the eighteen century in Protestant Christianity. But this 'spiritualizing' tendency has clung on in many circles simply because cherished beliefs in many groups largely rest upon this phony approach to interpreting the Bible. Plus it is the 'lazy man's approach' to interpretation that requires almost no careful analysis of the biblical text. And unquestionably it gives no serious attention to either the literary or historical setting of biblical texts.

Consequently unending heresies have emerged, especially in the cultic groups on the fringe of Christianity. But the same methodology is found often inside 'mainstream' Christianity as well, and usually with similar disastrous consequences to the spiritual health of those following it. It is here in this last setting that Stendahl sought to make his point in both the lecture and the subsequent book.

[3]"Twenty-five years ago Henry J. Cadbury wrote a stimulating study, "The Peril of Modernizing Jesus" (1937). That book and that very title is a good summary of one of the most important insights of biblical studies in the 20th century. It has ramifications far beyond the field of theology and biblical exegesis. It questions the often tacit presupposition that man remains basically the same through the ages. There is little point in affirming or denying such a presupposition in general terms — much would depend on what the foggy word 'basically' could mean. But both the historian and the theologian, both the psychologist and the average reader of the Bible, are well advised to assess how this hypothesis of contemporaneity affects their thinking, and their interpretation of ancient writings." [Stendahl, lecture pp. 199-200]

[4]D. Cox, *Jung and St. Paul: A Study of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and Its Relation to the Concept of Individuation* (1959). Attention should also be drawn to the discussion in *The American Psychologist* (1960), 301-4, 713-16, initiated by O.H. Mowrer's article, "'Sin,' the Lesser of Two Evils"; cf. also the Symposium of W.H. Clark, O.H. Mowrer, A. Ellis, Ch. Curran and E.J. Shoben, Jr., on "The Role of the Concept of Sin in Psychotherapy," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 7 (1960), 185-201. For an unusually perceptive and careful attempt to deal with historical material from a psychoanalytical point of view, see Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther* (1958). Not only the abundance but also the "Western" nature of the Luther material makes such an attempt more reasonable than when it is applied to Paul, who, as Erikson remarks, remains "in the twilight of biblical psychology" (p. 94).

> a large extent, in the history of Western culture — the Apostle Paul has been hailed as a hero of the introspective conscience. Here was the man who grappled with the problem "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want to do is what I do..." (Rom. 7:19). His insights as to a solution of this dilemma have recently been more or less identified, for example, with what Jung referred to as the Individuation Process;[1] but this is only a contemporary twist to the traditional Western way of reading the Pauline letters as documents of human consciousness. (Stendahl, lecture, p. 199).

In regard to Paul, this 'introspective conscience' understanding of Paul depends entirely on looking backwards from Luther to Augustine to Paul and then reading the views of Luther and Augustine back into the writings of Paul.[5] But as Stendahl correctly points out this is an enormously flawed interpretive process that recasts Paul in a western cultural mindset, mostly post Enlightenment. Paul, however, was a first century Jew seeking to understand and then communicate how the God of the Jews could open the door of salvation to the entire world of mostly non-Jews. And this struggle came out of his training as a Pharisee, and thus gave distinctive perspective to his struggle. One important aspect of this struggle mostly forgotten in modern western based critiques is that this struggle took place in a collective oriented society and not an individualistic society. Thus the apostle's conclusions in this struggle will have collective implications and tones.[6]

[5]"Especially in Protestant Christianity — which, however, at this point has its roots in Augustine and in the piety of the Middle Ages — the Pauline awareness of sin has been interpreted in the light of Luther's struggle with his conscience. But it is exactly at that point that we can discern the most drastic difference between Luther and Paul, between the 16th and the 1st century, and, perhaps, between Eastern and Western Christianity." [Stendahl, lecture, p. 200]

[6]Most individuals that I have discussed this angle with, both in Europe and North America, including some of the brightest minds of the twentieth century in biblical studies, have virtually no clue as to how a collective orientation would impact one's thinking, over against an individualistic orientation.

In over the almost half a century of teaching numerous international students at the masters and doctoral levels, I have been educated by them enormously at this point in my own understanding. Yet, I must confess that a collective oriented cultural way of thinking continues to baffle and puzzle me as I seek to comprehend how it shapes one's conclusions about life, society, and religious understanding.

The extreme expressions of individualism in my west Texas heritage have proven to be enormously difficult to overcome. My living in Europe at various times has been helpful since a much more subdued individualism dominates most all modern European cultures. One of my regrets is the lack of opportunity to spend meaningful time in a highly collective oriented culture in order to gain first hand awareness of how it works. I must say, however, that being pastor of a Baptist congregation made up largely of African immigrant members in Cologne, Germany from 2008 to 2010 was a most helpful learning experience for me. I learned immensely from them through conversations and watching how they functioned as an ethnic group inside the church as well as in the city generally.

Here is perhaps where the New Testament, and in particular Paul, have both suffered misunderstanding the greatest. Stendahl alluded to this, but did not develop this motif in favor to focusing on other aspects. And indeed himself wrestled unsuccessfully with this collective background of Judaism in trying to grasp Paul's sense of 'covenant' in his writings.

What I have come to appreciate, though not fully understand, is the deeply collective oriented ancient Jewish mindset in the first Christian century, along with a substantially collective oriented Greco-Roman way of thinking

Ancient Greek culture is often asserted to be the root of western individualism. But such is completely false and represents the same backwards thinking that Stendahl is addressing regarding Paul. The Greek πόλις, city, was the defining parameter of one's existence in ancient Greece. One's entire perception of personal value and worth revolved completely around being a πολιτής, citizen, of a city. Outside of this status as citizen, no person had any more value than a cow, house etc. and was fit only to be a slave, a piece of property owned by a citizen. The central thesis of Plato's *Republic* was the achieving of an orderly society by every member recognizing and functioning properly inside his alloted στάσις, station, in life. This was the exclusive means of achieving personal value. This was not something anyone achieved, but was granted by fate. The goal of virtue for individuals was the recognition of this station in life, whatever it might be, and functioning well within it. Only in this manner could the individual contribute to the well being of society which is the far greater objective that took precedence over all personal goals and interests.

The American *Declaration of Independence* that asserted individual value and worth completely from within, rather than being defined by the collective society around the individual, was indeed a remarkable and radical claim. And it was then -- and continues to be -- severely challenged as to its legitimacy. But in so far as American Protestant Christianity is concerned, that independent personal value claim is one of these backwards readings of the biblical text that does not hold up under close scrutiny of the biblical text, either Old Testament or New Testament. The collective perspective of early Christianity is quite clear in passages such as Acts 10:2; 11:14; 16:15, 31, 34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15; Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 15; 2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19; Tit. 2:6; cf. 1 Pet. 7:17.

Declarations such as Acts 16:14-15 remain puzzling to most westerners and prompt all kinds of flimsy explanations around the obviously collective mentality of Lydia and members of her household, as one of many examples in the New Testament:

> 14 καί τις γυνὴ ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἧς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. 15 ***ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς,*** παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα· εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε· καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς.
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> 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 ***When she and her household were baptized***, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Yet modern Asian and rural African believers read this as entirely normal and clear. How an entire household could function as one mind and be exclusively expressed through the head of that household escapes a western individualistic mind.

Stendahl develops his understanding of Paul around the theme of a 'robust conscience.'[7] He correctly exegetes the theme of no one being able to perfectly keep the Torah in Rom. 2:17-3:20 and Gal. 3:10-12. The background of Rom. 2:5-11 plays a critically significant role here, although presenting a real problem to many western interpreters.[8] Nowhere inside the Judaism of the first century was perfect obedience of the Torah expected or required for being a part of redeemed Israel. God's mercy and forgiveness were frequent themes in that understanding. Paul did not misunderstand his own heritage as claimed by a few moderns. What Paul continues to claim clearly in Rom. 2-3 is that the Jews in their rich Abrahamic religious heritage had a distinct advantage over the Gentile world without this heritage and understanding. But the national rejection of Christ by Jews means they have abandoned this advantage and stand no better off before God than do Gentiles (cf. Rom. 2:9).

What Christ has opened up and offers to both Jews and Gentiles is a completely alternative way to salvation before God. It is this Gospel message that God has called the apostle to proclaim to both Jews and Gentiles. What is completely missing in both his message and in the depictions of his personal experience before and after the Damascus road encounter is any wrestling of conscience over guilt before God. Paul's statement in Acts 26:14-15 deals with overt rebellion against Christ, not with a guilty conscience.[9] In fact, no where in Luke's three accounts of Paul's conversion -- Acts 9:3-19a; 22:6-16; 26:12-18 -- do we find Paul wresting with a guilty conscience over his past. What we do find in Paul toward the end of his life is an acknowledgment of mistaken actions done in ignorance but without an wrestling of conscience over them: 1 Tim. 1:12-17 and 2 Tim. 1:3. In the later Paul claims Χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, ᾧ λατρεύω ἀπὸ προγόνων ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, ὡς ἀδιάλειπτον ἔχω τὴν περὶ σοῦ μνείαν ἐν ταῖς δεήσεσίν μου νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a pure awareness, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Some years previously he made the claim in Phil. 3:4b-6,

> Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί, ἐγὼ μᾶλλον· 5 περιτομῇ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος, 6 κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν , **κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος**.
>
> If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; **as to righteousness under the law, blameless.**

In his counting all these achievements as a Pharisee as ζημίαν, loss (v. 7), and σκύβαλα, dung (v. 8), he expresses no embarrassment or quibbling of conscience over any of these accomplishments.[10] What he came

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[7]"A fresh look at the Pauline writings themselves shows that Paul was equipped with what in our eyes must be called a rather "robust" conscience.[2] In Phil. 3 Paul speaks most fully about his life before his Christian calling, and there is no indication that he had had any difficulty in fulfilling the Law. On the contrary, he can say that he had been 'flawless' as to the righteousness required by the Law (v. 6). His encounter with Jesus Christ — at Damascus, according to Acts 9:1-9 — has not changed this fact. It was not to him a restoration of a plagued conscience; when he says that he now forgets what is behind him (Phil. 3:13), he does not think about the shortcomings in his obedience to the Law, but about his glorious achievements as a righteous Jew, achievements which he nevertheless now has learned to consider as 'refuse' in the light of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah," [Stendahl, lecture, pp. 200-201]

[8]**Rom. 2:5-11.** 5 κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ 6 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ· 7 **τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον**, 8 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσιν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός. 9 θλῖψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνος· 10 **δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν**, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι· 11 οὐ γάρ ἐστιν προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will repay according to each one's deeds: 7 **to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;** 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 **but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good**, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

[9]**Acts 26:14-15**. 14 πάντων τε καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἤκουσα φωνὴν λέγουσαν πρός με τῇ Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ· Σαοὺλ Σαούλ, τί με διώκεις; **σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν.** 15 ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα· τίς εἶ, κύριε; ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν· ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις.

14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? **It hurts you to kick against the goads.'** 15 I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

[10]This absence of any clear NT text with the sinner wrestling with a guilty conscience as a part of his conversion experience has been a big question mark for me all of my life since I began studying the Bible seriously as a teenage Christian in the 1950s. Preachers, especially revival preachers, seemed to make a big deal over such actions, but no one in the NT from Jesus to the apostles even mention it.

Stendahl helped me understand the origins of this 'backward' thinking in the late 1960s, for which I have been profoundly grateful. Over the subsequent time of deeper study into the scriptures, I have come to an enormously better understanding of the conversion moment as portrayed inside the New Testament, and sometimes at variance with modern Christian teaching. I strongly suspect that this has been one of the many failures of modern Christianity to grasp correctly the teachings of the NT and consequently has flood-

to realize in his encounter with Christ is that all these accomplishments were calculated inside a system that could get him no where in a relationship with God. Only in the alternative that Christ provided was there relationship with God for eternity. And consequently rather than seeking to continue piling up accomplishments his focus became knowing Christ (vv. 8b-11).

ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω 9 καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, 10 τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, 11 εἴ πως καταντήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ,e the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Stendahl rightly takes to task (p. 202) the common formula *"simul justus et peccator"* (=at the same time righteous and sinner) that has become the cornerstone of the introspective conscience thinking in modern times. He then calls attention of the absence of terms related to forgiveness of sin inside the Pauline writings of the New Testament.[11]

How Luther so missed Paul is laid out rather clearly with helpful documentation.[12] His personal struggles with guilt and excessive introspection reflect his religious heritage coming out of the middle ages with its emphasis upon piety and theology largely built around the syme of Penance. The various aspects of Luther's introspective conscience are summarized out of extensive referencing to specialized studies in footnotes 4 and 6 on page 203 of his lecture. Much of Luther's approach is summed up in his *De servo arbitrio*, "On the Bondage of the Will," first published in 1525 in answer to Desiderius Erasmus' *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* (*On Free Will*). Erasmus, in defense of the Catholic Church, argued for a free will and against predestination that could come to grips with guilt and sin through the church's system of teaching. Luther countered that sin has brought humanities' conscience into total bondage by Satan. Christ's redemption freed this will under Satan's bondage, but it must ever be vigilant to guard against re-enslavement to the ever present tempter. Constant introspection and confession are necessary for the Christian.

The role of Augustine in laying the foundation for Luther is next addressed. Up to Augustine, most of the fathers understood Paul in his historical context of the tension between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in first century Christianity. But for Augustine the Jewish

ed the church with professing Christians who show virtually no indication of a transformed life by the powerful presence of Christ. A 'get your soul saved' theology has virtually nothing to do with the NT 'surrender your life to Christ' teaching.

But this culturally induced theology is much simpler and easier. A momentary emotionally based 'religious experience' at the altar of the church building in a worship service can be made quickly and easily. Put yourself under a temporary guilt trip at the guidance of the preacher during the invitation, then have it erased forever with a few simple words prayed with the preacher and then publicly acknowledged before the congregation. What could be simpler? But such stands as a huge perversion of the teachings of Jesus in Matt. 7:21-23; Paul in Rom. 12:1-3 etc. Paul's own Christian life stands as a crushing condemnation of such teaching.

[11]Only in Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14 are the terms found in apposition: τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, where redemption, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, is defined literally as the sending away of sins, ἣν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, in the context of the scapegoat image of the OT image of atoning sacrifice in the temple during the Day of Atonement festival.

Paul's use of Psalm 32:1-2 in Rom. 4:7-8 plays off the same OT image of sins being carried away, ἀφέθησαν, and being covered, ἐπεκαλύφθησαν, means that they are no longer counted against, οὗ οὐ μὴ λογίσηται, the individual by God. This centers on objective accountability before God, rather than introspective guilt stemming from one's conscience. The Jewish perspective of the Day of Atonement defines the Pauline perspective here seen as resolved through Jesus' dying as the sacrificial Lamb.

Stendahl refers his readers in fn. 5 on page 203 to previously published articles "Sunde und Schuld" and "Sundenvergebung," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 6 (1962» 484-89, and 511-13, with a discussion of the absence of a common word for 'guilt.'

Not having access to these articles I'm not clear on what he means by the absence of a common word for guilt. I do know that neither classical Greek nor Koine Greek contained a single word meaning guilt, in spite of most English translations using the words 'guilt' and "guilty" quite often. The adjective ἔνοχος, -ον is often so translated but exclusively specifies answer-ability to God, not guilt before God. Also it is used only one time in Paul in 1 Cor. 11:27 in regard to inappropriate previous observances of the Lord's supper. It is for Paul inappropriate observance of the Lord's supper, as described in vv. 17-22 as social discrimination, that brings down God's punishment on the congregation, not guilt for having sinned prior to observance and failure to confess such sin.

[12]"It is most helpful to compare these observations concerning Paul with the great hero of what has been called 'Pauline Christianity,' i.e., with Martin Luther. In him we find the problem of late medieval piety and theology. Luther's inner struggles presuppose the developed system of Penance and Indulgence, and it is significant that his famous 95 theses take their point of departure from the problem of forgiveness of sins as seen within the framework of Penance: '"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said: 'Repent (penitentiamagite)...' he wanted the whole life of the faithful to be a repentance (or: penance).'

"When the period of the European mission had come to an end, the theological and practical center of Penance shifted from Baptism, administered once and for all, to the ever repeated Mass, and already this subtle change in the architecture of the Christian life contributed to a more acute introspection.[6] The manuals for self-examination among the Irish monks and missionaries became a treasured legacy in wide circles of Western Christianity." [Stendahl, lecture, pp 202-203]

/ non-Jewish issue of Paul was no longer relevant or applicable. Thus in Augustine's allegorizing method of interpretation Torah became symbolic of religious legalism which now stands as unproductive as the Law did for Paul for a path to salvation. Although Stendahl's use of Paul's image of the Torah as a παιδαγωγὸς, tutor, in Gal. 3:19-29, may have been an overly complex issue to explain clearly and simply, it does provide a pivot point for illustrating the shift in Augustine to Luther and then into western culture. Paul clearly in the passage is dealing with the Jewish / non-Jewish Christian tension of the continuing role of the Torah. Essentially Paul states the issue clearly in 3:24-25:

> 24 ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν· 25 ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν.
>
> 24 Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian,

In the context of Paul's Jewish / non-Jewish issue, the coming of Christ terminates the role of the Torah as παιδαγωγὸς. As declared in 3:29, both Jew and non-Jew become Abraham's offspring in Christ and are set free from the rigorous confinement of the Torah. Abraham, who preceded the Torah by 430 years according to Paul in 3:17, stands as the source of our religious experience in that we are his spiritual heirs to the promises made to him by God (3:29-4:7).

But once Torah becomes religious legalism of a universal nature it takes on the different role of continually defining sin and obedience which we come to recognize in our lives through persistent introspection. In the Augustinian system sharpened up in the middle ages through Anselm etc., it is dealt with via the system of Penance. Luther rejected this, but fell back on dealing with the continuing role of the Torah (in his teaching on the Second Use of the Law) as to crush man's false sense of self-righteousness and motivate him to turn to Christ. This is very different from what Paul said. This reasoning impacted generations of Lutheran scholar's including the rather radical Rudolf Bultmann.[13] Stendahl continues on in giving examples of others outside Christianity who have been impacted by Luther's thinking. For example, P. Volz in his monumental work on Jewish eschatology in 1934 assumes this religious legalism stance inside ancient Judaism although he has to stretch Jewish sources to find even an single illustration of it in the Talmudic tractate *bBer.* 28b.[14] Modern Jewish scholars have long since ridiculed this perspective as fantasy inside ancient Judaism. Other examples of this 'backward' reading of Paul are given, especially in the field of Bible translation which helps to seal such thinking into Christians generally. Prof. Stendahl calls attention to the critical importance of at least religious leaders reading the 'original' text rather than a re-contextualized 'translation.'[15]

From this quick summary overview, I find very little that I would question about Stendahl's lecture. Yet, to read some of the negative critiques of the article one would assume that it is full of heretical claims. What I have typically found among these critics is the same level of misreading of Stendahl as Augustine did of Paul.[16] Their own personal agenda leads them to paint Stendahl as the villain in order to validate their criticism.

We should note some of the things that Stendahl did not say in the article.

1) He did not deny that Paul has a conscience. Note carefully his contrast between an 'introspective' conscience which he does deny and a 'robust' conscience which he claims that Paul has (cf. pp. 200 -201 especially).

What Prof. Stendahl does acknowledge in footnote one is the intense complexity of Paul's use of the term συνείδησις, and Stendahl is right on target here.[17] As

[13]"Thus, the radical difference between a Paul and a Luther at this one point has considerable ramification for the reading of the actual texts. And the line of Luther appears to be the obvious one. This is true not only among those who find themselves more or less dogmatically bound by the confessions of the Reformation. It is equally true about the average student of 'all the great books' in a College course, or the agnostic Westerner in general. It is also true in serious New Testament exegesis. Thus, R. Bultmann— in spite of his great familiarity with the history of religions in early Christian times— finds the nucleus of Pauline thought in the problem of 'boasting,'[13] i.e., in man's need to be utterly convicted in his conscience.[14] Paul's self-understanding in these matters is the existential, and hence, ever valid center of Pauline theology. Such an interpretation is an even more drastic translation and an even more far-reaching generalization of the original Pauline material than that found in the Reformers." [Stendahl, lecture, p. 208]

[14]Volz, *Die Eschatologie der judischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (1934), 111ff.

[15]"Few things are more liberating and creative in modern theology than a clear distinction between the 'original' and the 'translation' in any age, our own included." [Stendahl, lecture, p. 215]

[16]One particularly glaring false reading of Stendahl is Paul C. Maxwell, "Analyzing the Apostle Paul's 'Robust Conscience': Identifying and engaging the Psychological Concerns of Krister Stendahl's Inceptive Article," *Westminster Theological Journal* 75 (2013); 145-164. Reading through this article I frequently wondered what article Maxwell was talking about. When he cited Stendahl, it most often was a 'cherry picking' process of lifting short statements out of the original context and attributing a different meaning to them.

Repeatedly I felt like Maxwell was debating Ed Sanders or one of the other later New Perspectives on Paul scholars who claim Stendahl as a starting point. And with whom I also would have serious objections to many of their approaches. But Stendahl should not be given responsibility for these later view points.

[17]"The actual meaning of the Greek word syneidesis, usually translated 'conscience,' is a complex linguistic problem, see C.A. Pierce, *Conscience in The New Testament* (1955).— The more general problem dealt with in this lecture is closer to the problem to which P. Althaus draws attention in his *Paulus und Luther über*

we will observe below in section three, the enormous amount of accumulated baggage attached to the English word 'conscience' raises serious questions about the advisability of using it to translate συνείδησις in the relatively few times it arises in the Greek New Testament. A few of the British English translations have dropped the word 'conscience' entirely in their expressions, but then have struggled to find clear alternative expressions to the idea of συνείδησις. We are going to explore all of this below.

2) He does not deny to Paul an awareness of his being sinful and a sinner.[18] Often in the critiques this accusation is leveled at the article. What Prof. Stendahl refuses to speculate about is the psychological perspective on sin in Paul.[19] Nowhere does he express remorse or give indication of the 'emotional burden of guilt' over his sinfulness.

But this should not be surprising since his Jewish heritage looked upon sin as overt actions of intentional rebellion against the Torah of God,[20] and his Hellenistic Jewish upbringing in Diaspora Judaism at Tarsus had exposed him to the Greek definition of ἁμαρτία as ignorance of truth that leads to an 'un-virtuous' life.[21] In neither of these backgrounds was there an 'introspective conscience' that wrestled with the burden of guilt in sorrow and remorse. This approach emerges much later out of Augustine's inability (354 - 430 AD) to come to grips with his immoral past.

What Prof. Stendahl's article puts on the table includes two fundamentally important points:

1) When both translating and interpreting the biblical writers let them speak to their own situations historically. Under no circumstances should this be ignored and a process of recontextualization of their writings into the contemporary world of the translator and interpreter replace the historical issues behind the text.[22]

The challenge here is greater for the Bible translator. Every translation into another language beyond the original language of the text has to do some recontextualization in order for the text to be understandable in the receptor language. The very nature of translation mandates this. And this is true whether the translation

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den Menschen (1951), cf. the critique by F. Büchsel, *Theologische Blätter* 17 (1938),306-11.— B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism* (1946), 174-82, gives the meaning 'loyalty' in 1 Peter 3:21, cf. idem, "Syneidesis in Rom. 2:15," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 12 (1956), 157-61.— See also C. Spicq, *Revue Biblique* 47 (1938), 50-80, and J. Dupont, *Studia Hellenistica* 5 (1948), 119-53.' [Stendahl, lecture, ft. 1 on page 201]

[18]"To be sure, no one could ever deny that hamartia, 'sin,' is a crucial word in Paul's terminology, especially in his epistle to the Romans. Rom. 1-3 sets out to show that all — both Jews and Gentiles — have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God (3:19, cf. v. 23). Rom. 3:21–8:39 demonstrates how and in what sense this tragic fact is changed by the arrival of the Messiah." [Stendahl, lecture, p. 208]

[19]"It is much harder to gage how Paul subjectively experienced the power of sin in his life and, more specifically, how and in what sense he was conscious of actual sins. One point is clear. The Sin with capital S in Paul's past was that he had persecuted the Church of God. This climax of his dedicated obedience to his Jewish faith (Gal. 1:13, Phil. 3:6) was the shameful deed which made him the least worthy of apostleship (I Cor. 15:9) . This motif, which is elaborated dramatically by the author of the Acts of the Apostles (chs. 9, 22 and 26), is well grounded in Paul's own epistles. Similarly, when I Timothy states on Paul's account that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am number one' (1:15), this is not an expression of contrition in the present tense, but refers to how Paul in his ignorance had been a blaspheming and violent persecutor, before God in his mercy and grace had revealed to him his true Messiah and made Paul an Apostle and a prototype of sinners' salvation (1:12-16).18" [Stendahl, lecture, pp. 208-209]

[20]The statement in First John 3:4 reflects this Jewish background understanding where sinful actions are equated with lawlessness: Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. Everyone who commits sin also commits lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

The translation of a wide variety of Hebrew terms by the English concept of sin and sinning poses a nightmare for the sensitive Bible translator, as describes in TDNT:

> The reasons for these defects in translation are not to be sought only in the methods of the translators but also in the peculiar difficulty of the Heb. usage. It is obvious that among the many words to be considered none was exclusively devoted to religious and theological use and therefore none constitutes an exact equivalent to the English "sin." All the Heb. words in question had a secular as well as a religious sense, and, disparate though the relation often is, the very fact of this twofold usage constitutes a warning not to overestimate the purely religious content of the term. On closer inspection all seem to be more or clearly the results of rational reflection which is religious in content. They are theologoumena rather than original terms of spontaneous experience, and the meaning falls into different groups. This explains why the subjectivity of the translator plays a more important role than is helpful. Sometimes a religious emphasis is imported where none was meant,3 and sometimes a secular word is used which weakens the religious content.4 At any rate, the relatively rich linguistic differentiation in the Hebrew may be very largely discerned of itself by reason of the fact that only with the strongest reservations, if at all, can we count on a uniform and self-contained concept of sin in the authors of the OT; the problem of sin is complicated by a series of detailed questions of linguistic history.

[*Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, page 270]

[21]Given the radically different background perspective for ἁμαρτία and its related terms of ἁμαρτάνω, ἁμαρτωλός, -όν, and ἁμάρτημα, one would wonder why the NT writers, and Paul especially, make such massive use of this word group.

But here is a textbook illustration of the enormous influence of the Septuagint upon the NT writers. It uses ἁμαρτία some 528 times in translating a whole host of Hebrew words and phrases. Additionally ἁμαρτάνω some 261 times and ἁμάρτημα some 39 times. And ἁμαρτωλός, -όν some 185 times. Well over a dozen Hebrew words and phrase are handled in translation by this Greek word group in the LXX. The impact of this massive use is to redefine the Greek word along the lines of the statement in 1 John 3:4.

[22]Readers familiar with my *Biblical Insights Commentary* series know quite well that both the historical and the literary settings ALWAYS comes first in the study of every biblical text.

method is form oriented or content oriented. There is no such critter as a literal translation; thinking such is delusional, as anyone working seriously with languages well knows! But the common goal behind all legitimate Bible translations across the methodology spectrum is accurate communication of the ideas in the source language text, whether Hebrew, Aramaic, or Koine Greek. This point was wisely taken up briefly by Stendahl at the end of his lecture even to a group of psychologists.[23]

2) Paul possessed a 'robust' conscience but Augustine developed the 'introspective' conscience who passed it on to Luther and through whom western society was substantially impacted. Thus to interpret Paul from a 'introspective' conscience perspective is false and has led to substantial misunderstanding of Paul not only in biblical studies but beyond as well.

The larger objective of Prof. Stendahl in the original lecture was to raise questions about the lingering impact of this misunderstanding of Paul upon modern psychological studies of human nature. As a Lutheran pastor and professor he seriously questioned the accuracy of aspects of Luther's understanding of Paul. Not treated but referenced in footnotes was how Luther's misunderstanding has impacted modern psychology in western culture.

The subsequent publication of the lecture in the Harvard Theological Review had a much greater impact upon biblical studies in the United States and some in European circles.[24] What has come to be called New Perspectives on Paul has emerged with motivational roots in the work of Stendahl.[25] An American scholar especially forms something of the core of these emerging viewpoints, along with a couple of British scholars.

The retired Duke University Methodist professor Ed P. Sanders published in 1977 a work titled Paul and Palestinian Judaism which picked up on the religious legalism issue raised by Stendahl. He, however, took the issue far beyond Stendahl and essentially has his version of Paul get Jews into heaven apart from Jesus on the basis of their Torah obedience.[26] The term 'covenantal nomism' was coined by Sanders as a key element in his viewpoint.

The British scholar James D.G. Dunn, now retired professor at the University of Durham in English coined the phrase *New Perspective On Paul* in the 1982 Manson Memorial Lecture at Durham. Dunn's writings on Paul have picked up the theme of Sander's criticism of Judaism as a works-righteousness based religion, but he has gone his own separate ways in criticizing Sander's understanding of Paul's justification concept especially. He also is a Methodist minister but has served in the Church of Scotland.

The second British scholar identified with this movement, i.e., NPP, is N. T. (Tom) Wright. He is a retired Anglican bishop who has often served in academia as well at both Durham and the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He is the most conservative of these three and his views of both Judaism and Paul's doctrine of justification by faith are closer to the more traditional views, although he is in essential agreement with most of Stendahl's points, as the review article by Ligon Duncan, "N.T. Wright and the New Perspective on Paul" points out.[27]

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[23]"Few things are more liberating and creative in modern theology than a clear distinction between the 'original' and the 'translation' in any age, our own included." [Stendahl, lecture, p. 215]

[24]In the years of my participation in the *Society of Biblical Literature* professional group in North America from 1974 to 2008, I have been fascinated to watch with how much impact biblical scholars with a European origin have had in North America. To be sure the levels of such curiosity began diminishing in the 1990s and somewhat moved toward a negative posture in the 2000s. In particular, this impact has been true in evangelical circles with the influence of Cambridge and Oxford universities upon North American evangelicalism being quite substantial. This is especially the case with British evangelicalism and its North American influence. Of course, lots of good has come out of this pattern, but some not so good influence has come as well.

[25]The wikipedia article on this movement is one of the worst written articles I have ever come across in this website. I would not recommend it for any kind of accurate description of the movement.

[26]He essentially contends that Paul either didn't understand the Judaism of his day as well as Sanders does, or else that he deliberately misrepresents Judaism in order to villianize it

[27]"Wright's understanding of Paul is somewhat as follows: Paul teaches the representative and substitutionary work of Christ in propitiating the wrath of God. Jesus recapitulates Israel's history so as to fulfill all God's covenant promises. As the Last Adam he inaugurates a new humanity. God's justifying verdict on Jesus in his resurrection is passed upon believers now in anticipation of the final acquittal in the Day of Judgment. That final acquittal, or future justification of believers, will be in accordance with the whole life of grace led under the Spirit's leading.

"God's grace operates by the powerful working of God's Spirit through the preaching of the gospel, transforming hearts and minds and producing faith in Christ as the risen Lord.

"The difference between a first century Jew and a first century Christian was not so much their attitude to salvation. Both held that salvation is through God's gracious covenant, and that good works are the result of faith working through love. Both aim to serve God with a clear conscience and look for ultimate acquittal at God's bar of justice following God's review of the deeds of this life. The difference lies in their attitude to Jesus. The Jew rejects him as the Messiah and insists on covenant status for the Jew only, complete with its badges of circumcision, the sabbath and the food laws, 'the works of the law' in Paul's phrase. The Christian believes Jesus is the Messiah who brings the promised vindication of God's people, establishing his church among all nations, and rendering the distinctive old covenant requirements superfluous. Faith in Jesus is enough.

"Justification is not the exercise of mercy, a description of how one is saved, but a declaration about someone who has already received mercy, who is already a member of the renewed- covenant community."

[Ligon Duncan, "N.T. Wright and the New Perspective on Paul"]

As one might well expect, the discussion how to best interpret Paul, provoked by Stendahl's article, has come to encompass Pauline studies mostly in the English speaking world over the last half century. European scholarship has largely ignored this discussion and gone its own ways either within or by attacking the framework of Lutheran and Reformed Church structures. In general, I think it would be fair to say that the impact of Stendahl remains while the impact of the NPP is diminishing. And this is true on both sides of the Atlantic.

II. Contemporary western cultural perspectives

Next we want to take a look at perspectives on an 'introspective' conscience in the contemporary world of western thinking. It will become clear that both inside and outside of religious circles the manner of thinking reflected in Martin Luther is alive and well. And this is true both in naive use of it along side hostile rejection of it.

In order to keep the examination within reasonable length, the study will focus on three words and related concepts: ***conscience, guilt, and forgiveness***.

A. Popular thinking on these topics

How does one define 'pop culture'? At first it seems like it would be simple.[28] But just wait until you delve into trying to understand what it is and how various things are perceived inside the framework of pop culture.[29] It's much worse than trying to grab hold of a greased pig! But so much for 'playing it safe'! Here goes!

When trying to determine a popular understanding of any topic, the first place to turn to is a commonly utilized dictionary in that language. This is what dictionaries do: they reflect dominating popular definitions of words and ideas.[30] Depending on the particular language, the dominantly used dictionaries function as something of an official standard of definition for terms in the individual languages for popularly accepted meanings.[31]

Let's then take a look at our three key words: conscience, guilt, and forgiveness as defined by this American English dictionary.

First, conscience:[32]

con·science

noun \ˈkän(t)-shən(t)s\

: the part of the mind that makes you aware of your actions as being either morally right or wrong

: a feeling that something you have done is morally wrong

Full Definition of CONSCIENCE

1 a : the sense or consciousness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good
b : a faculty, power, or principle enjoining good acts
c : the part of the superego in psychoanalysis that transmits commands and admonitions to the ego

2 archaic : consciousness

3 : conformity to what one considers to be correct, right, or morally good : conscientiousness

4 : sensitive regard for fairness or justice : scruple

— con·science·less adjective

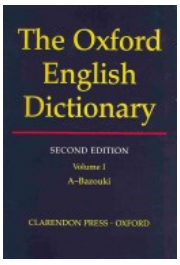
— in all conscience or in conscience
: in all fairness

See conscience defined for English-language learners »
See conscience defined for kids »

[28]"Those seeking a straightforward definition of conscience are understandably puzzled by vagueness and inconsistency in their sources. Conscience, they read, is an inner voice, a capacity in the soul, a self-awareness, or a witness. Its function, they learn, is to guide conduct, give laws, or call to account, to judge against norms for all individuals and societies, or determine harmony between conduct and moral beliefs, or to excuse, justify, or sanction behavior, to render verdicts of guilt or innocence." [Paul W. Gooch, "Conscience," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 720.]

[29]A Google search of the word 'conscience' generated 97,100,00 hits.

[30]Perhaps the only exception to this in the modern world is with the French language. The national government of France has a ministry of language charged with the responsibility of supervising the use of the French language in order to maintain its 'purity'.



[31]For British English the ultimate dictionary standard is The Oxford English Dictionary published by Oxford University Press. With twenty volumes to cover the English language it stands as the most detailed dictionary of the English language in existence.

English language dictionaries with significant influence begin with Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, first published in 1755. This dictionary continues to be updated, but does not enjoy the same level of influence as the Oxford English Dictionary.

Concerning American English dictionaries, the name of Noah Webster looms large as the dominate influence since the release of his *A Comprendious Dictionary of the English Language* in 1806. The particularly important aspect here is that, with this publication, American English began to be distinguished from British English. The name Webster has been associated with the more influential American English dictionaries ever since and into the present time. Out of this background then comes the Merriam-Webster online dictionary which is but one of a series of specialized dictionaries available in both print and digital versions under this brand name, although ironically now published by the owners of the British *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

[32]In the major western languages conscience means Gewissen (in German); conscience (in French); conciencia (in Spanish); consciência (in Portuguese); coscienza (in Italian); συνείδησης (in modern Greek); מצפון (in modern Hebrew). Of course one working cross linguistically would recognize that additional words can be also translated by this English word. It all depends upon the nuanced usage.

Examples of CONSCIENCE

- The thief must have had an attack of conscience, because he returned the wallet with nothing missing from it.
- … it is a politician's natural instinct to avoid taking any stand that seems controversial unless and until the voters demand it or conscience absolutely requires it. —Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*, 2006

[+]more

Origin of CONSCIENCE

Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Latin conscientia, from conscient-, consciens, present participle of conscire to be conscious, be conscious of guilt, from com- + scire to know — more at science

First Known Use: 13th century

Other Psychology Terms

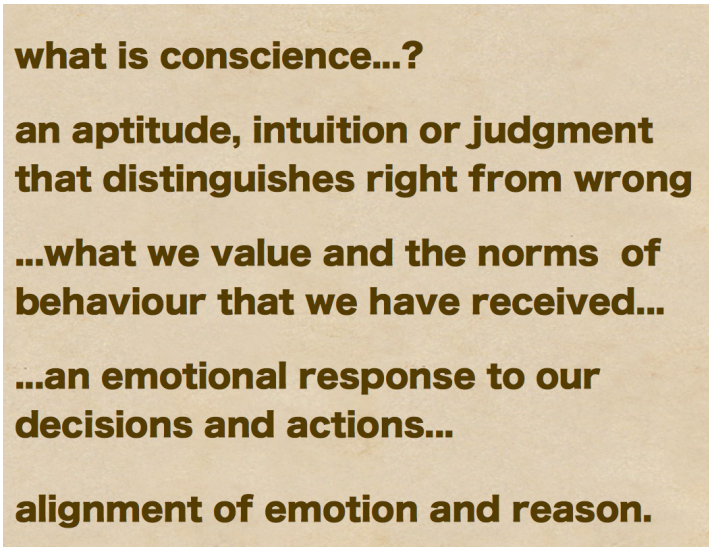
fetish, hypochondria, intelligence, mania, narcissism, neurosis, pathological, psychosis, schadenfreude, subliminal

con·science noun \ˈkän-chən(t)s\ (Medical Dictionary)

Medical Definition of CONSCIENCE

: the part of the superego in psychoanalysis that transmits commands and admonitions to the ego

The above is the full listing on the M-W.com online version of the dictionary.[33] Notice that the beginning 'short' definitions capture the generally understood senses of the word 'conscience': Broadly, it is "the part of the mind that makes you aware of your actions as being either morally right or wrong." And yet quite often the negative slant becomes its meaning: "a feeling that something you have done is morally wrong." The fuller definitions expand these ideas and include others that either are or have been in the past a part of the meaning of this word. Meaning group 1 1-c are the psychological meanings that see conscience as an abstractly functioning part of a human being.[34] Meanings 3 and 4 define conscience



along the lines of a set of moral standards of appropriate and inappropriate behavior.[35] These put conscience very similar in meaning to conscientiousness or scruples.

One point of important notice. At an earlier time conscious and consciousness were interchangeable terms as referenced by meaning 2 in the list of definitions, but not today. This will be important to remember since Paul's use of συνείδησις mostly means consciousness rather than conscience. This Greek noun covered both categories.

The etymology of the English word 'conscience' goes back to the Old French word 'conscience' that is derived from the Latin conscientia meaning 'knowledge within oneself.' This Latin noun then is derived from 'consciens' a present participle in Latin from the verb 'conscire' meaning to know or to be conscious (of wrong). The compound verb 'conscire' is made up of two parts: the preposition con meaning 'together' and

[33]The Oxford English Dictionary is also available online but only by a rather steep paid subscription fee.

[34]These meanings are similar to the article "Conscience" in wikipedia.org:

> Conscience is an aptitude, faculty, intuition or judgment that assists in distinguishing right from wrong. Moral judgment may derive from values or norms (principles and rules). In psychological terms conscience is often described as leading to feelings of remorse when a human commits actions that go against his/her moral values and to feelings of rectitude or integrity when actions conform to such norms.[1] The extent to which conscience informs moral judgment before an action and whether such moral judgments are or should be based in reason has occasioned debate through much of the history of Western philosophy.[2]
>
> Religious views of conscience usually see it as linked to a morality inherent in all humans, to a beneficent universe and/or to divinity. The diverse ritualistic, mythical, doctrinal, legal, institutional and material features of religion may not necessarily cohere with experiential, emotive, spiritual or contemplative considerations about the origin and operation of conscience.[3] Common secular or scientific views regard the capacity for conscience as probably genetically determined, with its subject probably learned or imprinted (like language) as part of a culture.[4]
>
> Commonly used metaphors for conscience include the "voice within" and the "inner light".[5] Conscience, as is detailed in sections below, is a concept in national and international law,[6] is increasingly conceived of as applying to the world as a whole,[7] has motivated numerous notable acts for the public good[8] and been the subject of many prominent examples of literature, music and film.[9]
>
> ["Conscience," wikipedia.org]

[35]One angle of great importance here is developing standardized legal definitions of conscience. So much of the legal system of virtually every country in the modern world is based upon a corporate set of moral values legally applicable to individuals and groups such as businesses etc. It then becomes imperative to establish formal and accepted legal definitions of conscience in both the writing of these laws and the enforcing of them. The role of a conscience in the violation of these laws often has a significance place in determining guilt and punishment.

the verb scire meaning 'to know.'[36] In other modern western languages 'conscience' is usually translated as Gewissen (in German); conscience (in French); conscienze (in Italian); consciência (in Portuguese); consciencia (In Spanish).[37]

B. Medical perspectives on these topics

The more scientific perspective on conscience seeks to explain the existence and functioning of a 'conscience' from an entire human perspective, as is appropriate to the medical disciplines.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary provides the following Medical Definition: "the part of the superego in psychoanalysis that transmits commands and admonitions to the ego." Now try using that definition friends! One important aspect scientifically is to keep a clear distinction between conscience and consciousness. Conscience plays a role in decision making, and perhaps, especially when the decisions relate to one's set of moral values. On the other hand, consciousness defines self awareness. That is, when a person is aware of being aware he has consciousness. Depending on how broadly this awareness is defined it may include awareness of moral values and that decisions should be made against the standards of right and wrong being followed by the individual. In purely medical terms, this discussion belongs to psychology and related disciplines because is deals with an abstract concept and not a concrete material reality.

The psychological discussion will depend heavily upon philosophy as a starting point.[38] A conscience viewed philosophically falls under one of three distinct categories:

> Philosophical theories of conscience may be categorized by bringing them under three headings: moral knowledge theories, motivation theories and reflection theories.[39]

These categories will often overlap one another, and thus are not mutually exclusive categories. Instead, the dominant orientation of some particular theory determines whether it is moral, motivational, or reflective.

In analyzing the history of understanding of the term conscience, one notes that the modern distinction between conscience and consciousness is drawn much more sharply from the time of the Enlightenment than from previous periods reaching back into the early ancient world.[40] But even in modern discussions how to define clear lines of distinction between the two has proven very difficult. The tendency of many today seems to move in the direction of conscience focusing on moral reasoning and decision making.[41]

While the defining of conscience is 'slippery,'[42]

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[36]See 'conscience' at wiktionary.org for more details: http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/conscience.

[37]For a fuller listing see "consience," wiktionary.org under the subheading "Translations." These translations focus on the moral sense of the English word conscience.

A new free wikipedia service recently made available that has some related material is called Wikibooks. The listing on 'conscience' lists some 500 plus free online digital books containing discussions of this topic. The reader simply goes into wikibooks.org and enters a key word in the Search menu. The system will then list all the books where this topic surfaces.

[38]"Conscience is the psychological faculty by which we are aware of and respond to the moral character of our own actions. It is most commonly thought of as the source of pains we suffer as a result of doing what we believe is wrong --- the pains of guilt, or 'pangs of conscience.' It may also be seen, more controversially, as the source of our knowledge of what is right and wrong, or as a motive for moral conduct. Thus a person who is motivated to act on principle is said to act 'conscientiously'." ["Conscience," Harvard University web site]

[39]For a helpful detailed discussion see Allen Wood, "Kant on Conscience," at Standford university web site.

[40]One very important player in modern western philosophical understanding is the Roman Catholic Church. Huge effort has been made to address human morality in a combination of religious and philosophical perspective. A good first exposure to this perspective is the lecture manuscript, "Conscience and the History of Moral Philosophy," an address that Fr. John Paris, S.J., gave to The President's Council on Bioethics, while he was Professor of Bioethics in the Department of Theology at Boston College on Sept. 11, 2008: http://www.consciencelaws.org/ethics/ethics118-002.aspx

[41]"Conscience is a faculty of moral reasoning. When John asserts that, say, his conscience requires pacifism, he acknowledges pacifism as a deliverance of this moral faculty. It is often claimed that an intervention, such as conscripting John to fight in a war, violates his conscience. However, if conscience is a faculty of moral reasoning, this standard way of speaking is misleading since it is unclear how a faculty can be violated. We would do better to say that violating John's conscience means to force him to act contrary to his judgments. Therefore, we should rather say that John's freedom of action is restricted when he is forced to do something that contravenes some deliverance of his conscience. The claim that "conscripting John for military service violates his conscience" is simply shorthand for the idea that conscription would violate John because his faculty of moral reasoning delivered the judgment that it is wrong for him to kill people. Shorthands like this are useful and we may use them in the discussion that follows. When we do use them, however, keep in mind that violations of conscience are violations of a person, rather than a faculty or a judgment.

"Many understand conscience as a faculty of perception, but we want to avoid the implication that conscience is a faculty that perceives an external moral reality. Such a view has figured prominently in the history of philosophy, and we will discuss it in section 2, but here we propose a definition of conscience that is neutral between views that understand conscience as a basic perceptual faculty that directly or immediately receives information about moral reality and views that understand conscience subjectively, as a faculty of reasoning where moral judgments are mediated through other beliefs and attitudes of the agent. To define conscience as a basic perceptual faculty would be to endorse a substantive characterization against subjective interpretations in our definition and preclude an assessment of more recent understandings of conscience." [Kyle Swan and Kevin Vallier, "The Normative Significance of Conscience," *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* 6, No. 3, pp. 1-2]. Also see "Conscience," *New World Encyclopedia* at http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Conscience.

[42]One interesting 'struggle' to define conscience from a non-re-

the defining of guilt is 'finding it.' Contemporary modern society has managed to push the idea far into the background with denials and other self-defense mechanisms.

What is a secular definition of 'guilt'? The Merriam-Webster online dictionary provides us with a starting point.[43]

guilt

noun \ˈgilt\

: responsibility for a crime or for doing something bad or wrong

: a bad feeling caused by knowing or thinking that you have done something bad or wrong

Full Definition of GUILT

1: the fact of having committed a breach of conduct especially violating law and involving a penalty; broadly : guilty conduct

2 a : the state of one who has committed an offense especially consciously

b : feelings of culpability especially for imagined offenses or from a sense of inadequacy : self-reproach

3: a feeling of culpability for offenses

See guilt defined for English-language learners »

See guilt defined for kids »

Examples of GUILT

- The jury determines the defendant's guilt or innocence.
- His guilt in the matter was indisputable.
- It was clear that the guilt lay with him.
- a strong sense of guilt
- She feels guilt over something that happened before she was born!
- our secret guilts and insecurities

Origin of GUILT

Middle English, delinquency, guilt, from Old English gylt delinquency

First Known Use: before 12th century

Related to GUILT

Synonyms

contriteness, contrition, penitence, regret, remorse, remorsefulness, repentance, rue, self-reproach, shame

Antonyms

impenitence, remorselessness

[+]more

Rhymes with GUILT

built, gilt, hilt, jilt, kilt, lilt, milt, quilt, silt, stilt, tilt, wilt

guilt

noun \ˈgilt\ (Medical Dictionary)

Medical Definition of GUILT

: feelings of culpability especially for imagined offenses or from a sense of inadequacy : morbid self-reproach often manifest in marked preoccupation with the moral correctness of one's behavior <aggressive responses originating in inner guilt and uncertainty>

Careful observation here reveals two core categories of 'guilt.' **First,** there is the objective aspect of guilt whereby rules and regulations established by government, religion etc. have been broken by the individual or the group.[44] Guilt comes into the picture here as accountability for such violations, normally contained in specifications of penalties to be paid for by the offender upon some kind of official determination of guilt by an authority figure of some kind, be it a judge, a priest etc. This covers meanings 1: and 2 a: in the definition.

Second, there is the psychological feeling of guilt whereby the individual has an emotional sense of being

ligious perspective is Trudy Govier, "What is Conscience?" *Science & Conscience,* 151. This Humanist Perspectives journal presents a different view point:

> My own modest proposal is that we think of 'conscience' in terms of moral beliefs rather than moral knowledge. The shift from knowledge to belief acknowledges human fallibility and uncertainty — and, as their corollary, the fallibility and uncertainty of human conscience. The idea of 'conscience' as a shorthand way of referring to moral beliefs allows for a realm of moral reflection and direction. At the same time, it renders intelligible skepticism and disagreement on moral questions. To think of conscience as a voice within is a useful metaphor, but to think of it as the definitive authority is to lapse into error.

[43]In the other major western languages guilt means Schuld (in German); culpabilité (in French); culpabilidad (in Spanish); culpa (in Portuguese); colpa (in Italian); culpa (in Latin); ενοχή (in modern Greek); אשמה (in modern Hebrew). Of course one working cross linguistically would recognize that additional words can be also translated by this English word. It all depends upon the nuanced usage.

[44]I have chosen to use the term 'objective guilt' although often this category is treated first by guilt from law, i.e., legal guilt and the rest as guilt as culpability. The inevitable overlapping of such discussions argues for an inclusive label covering everything besides emotional guilt.

guilty of having violated some law or rule. This comes into the picture with meanings 2 b: and 3.

Notice that these definitions center on behavior understood to be wrong, i.e., actions that violate some stated law or rule. They do not cover one's thinking or mere existence as a source of possible violation that creates guilt. These distinctions become important not in legal systems but do play a role in religious guilt.[45]

Notice also that the medical perspective on guilt only addresses the psychological angle of guilt, not the objective side. Here again the emphasis is psychological since we are still dealing with an abstraction, not a physiological reality.[46] Out of a fairly extensive background training in clinical pastoral care, I am aware that various theories of guilt exist in the scientific community. They range all the way from a belief that all psychological guilt is imaged and inward on one side of the spectrum. The other extreme side hardly exists, but rather a more moderating perspective dominates. And this is that the patient needs to learn how to clearly distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate psychological guilt. The above medical definition centers on imaginary guilt which disables the individual to function in any sort of healthy manner.

Secular methods of treatment struggle here because most of the imagined guilt has strong religious tones, and in depth addressing of it necessitates value judgments on religious beliefs which this methodology seeks to avoid.[47] And rightfully so! The more productive approach, which is usually taken by a non-religion based counselor, is to help the patient sort through legitimate and illegitimate feelings of guilt within the framework of the teachings of the patient's personal religious belief. Added to this is almost always the package of related emotional problems bundled together with the imaginary guilt feelings. Quite often these have to do with unhealthy feelings of low self-esteem that can unleash a Pandora's Box of consequences often leading to suicidal tendencies. The other side extension of emotional guilt issues is broken personal relationships with others. Central to emotional healing in this setting is getting the patient to think rationally and then logically working through the list of identified emotional issues with the patient genuinely choosing to take appropriate actions in resolving the issues. Here is where much of the make or break help exists that a counselor can provide a patient trying to address emotional problems.

Among many people in western society generally the abstract nature of emotional guilt provides an excuse for denying guilt completely in their life. No -- or else little -- distinction is made between objective and emotional guilt. Once it is defined largely, if not totally, as emotional guilt it can easily be denied as a sign of human weakness or inferiority. And then not until -- or even if -- the emotional destructiveness of guilt produces clinical levels of depression or tendencies toward suicide or complete break downs in human relationships, will there be any willingness to seek help in attempting to address guilt in one's life. Thus the work of the non-Christian counselor is largely an effort to deal with people either in denial or else struggling to come to terms with legitimate guilt in their lives.

Finally, what is 'forgiveness'? Most people who think about the term 'forgiveness' associate it with some religious belief. And this is true in secular society as well as within a religious community. But forgiveness is not inherently a religious concept, as the *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary demonstrates:[48]

for·give·ness noun \-ˈgiv-nəs\

: the act of forgiving someone or something

: the attitude of someone who is willing to forgive other people

Full Definition of FORGIVENESS

: the act of forgiving

See forgiveness defined for English-language learn-

[45]Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount,* e.g., radically extended the idea of guilt to the sphere of thinking as well as actions.

[46]The journal *Psychology Today* online has numerous articles related to the topic of guilt: http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/guilt. These are very helpful in understanding the medical approach to dealing with guilt.

[47]One interesting medical discussion with practical advice offered comes from *The World of Psychology* journal in an online article, "5 Tips for Dealing with Guilt." These are:

1. Recognize the kind of guilt you have and its purpose.
2. Make amends or changes sooner rather than later.
3. Accept you did something wrong, but move on.
4. Learning from our behaviors.
5. Perfection doesn't exist in anyone.

These recommendations would typify a standard approach to treating guilt from a secular methodology. Again it is easy to see the necessity of learning to think rationally as foundational to applying this suggestions. Also individual will power plays a determinative role in implementing these as well. Ultimately in this methodology the individual must 'cure' themselves, although the help of friends, family etc. is useful.

[48]In the major western languages forgiveness means Vergebung (in German); pardon (in French); perdón (in Spanish); perdão (in Portuguese); perdono (in Italian); veniam (in Latin); συγχώρεση (in modern Greek); סליחה (in modern Hebrew). Of course one working cross linguistically would recognize that additional words can be also translated by this English word. It all depends upon the nuanced usage.

ers »

See forgiveness defined for kids »

Examples of FORGIVENESS

- She treats us with kindness and forgiveness.
- <they asked her forgiveness for failing to invite her to the party>

First Known Use of FORGIVENESS

before 12th century

Related to FORGIVENESS

Synonyms

absolution, amnesty, pardon, remission, remittal

Antonyms

penalty, punishment, retribution

[+]more

Other Economics Terms

actuary, compound interest, globalization, indemnity, portfolio, rentier, stagflation, usurer

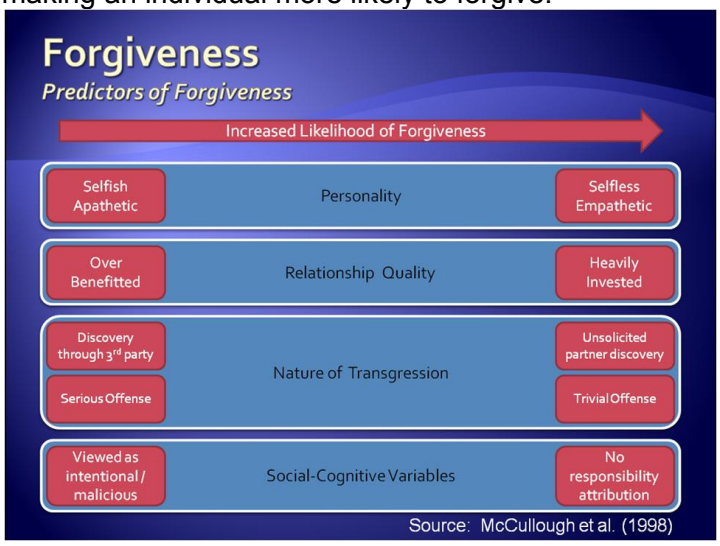
Again, here the definitions flow **first** in the direction of a concrete action of one person toward another. And **then secondly** there is the psychological attitude of forgiveness, largely in the sense of willingness to take the action of forgiveness, and also with the inner sense of accepting forgiveness once granted. One can then draw a distinction between objective forgiveness and subjective forgiveness. But this line of distinction does not preclude interaction between the two. It is interesting to note that the amplification off the two short definitions given in the beginning only develop the action of forgiving aspect. Added to this is the Merriam-Webster listing of an economic meaning to the term forgiveness. No medication definition is provided even though much work on this topic is being done in the medical field.

In medical studies on forgiveness, a lot of the emphasis is placed on developing skills of forgiving rather than diagnosing forgiveness itself. Since forgiveness is generally considered to be an admirable trait rather than a personality deficiency, the emphasis then is different in medical approaches. Of course, destructive sides of psychological forgiveness do exist such as phony self-forgiveness, 'forgiving' but not forgetting' etc. But authentic forgiveness has potential curative powers in helping an individual achieve higher levels of serenity, more wholesome relationships with others etc. The journal *Psychology Today* has a lot of articles related to forgiveness with a dominate emphasis on skill development by the patient in forgiving others perceived to have wronged the individual.

For those preferring a highly philosophical approach to defining words, here is the definition, i.e., description, found in the Wikipedia article on forgiveness:

> Forgiveness is the intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, lets go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well.[1][2][3] Forgiveness is different from condoning (failing to see the action as wrong and in need of forgiveness), excusing (not holding the offender as responsible for the action), pardoning (granted by a representative of society, such as a judge), forgetting (removing awareness of the offense from consciousness), and reconciliation (restoration of a relationship).[1] In certain contexts, forgiveness is a legal term for absolving or giving up all claims on account of debt, loan, obligation or other claims.[4][5] ["Forgiveness," wikipedia.org]

A quite interesting chart in this article signals indicators making an individual more likely to forgive.



Of course the perspective here centers on the psychological view of forgiveness and the posture of the individual toward perceived wrong or injustice done to him. The article attempts to be inclusive of all forms of forgiveness, but in the process turns the idea into a human emotion almost exclusively.[49]

In daily human life apart from religious concerns, forgiving others of perceived wrongs becomes one of the most challenging aspects for healthy living. The medical world offers services for the individual to learn coping skills in forgiveness. The majority of individuals, however, tend to live with grudges and loathing festering inside them that lead to broken relationships.

III. Biblical Understandings

Against the secular backdrop as depicted in part two above, we now come to looking at conscience, guilt, and forgiveness from a religious viewpoint. And

[49]One interesting side note is the attention given in the article to scientific based research being done on 'forgiveness.' Dr. Robert Enright from the University of Wisconsin - Madison has pioneered such work with establishing the International Forgiveness Institute there which studies this topic. Its web site is rather interesting to check out. The approach here is completely medical and seeks to be inclusive of both religious and non-religious perspectives.

Evidently another medical authority on this topic is Dr. Fred Luskin of Stanford University especially in his book *Learning to Forgive*.

due to the emphasis of Prof. Stendahl, the focus will especially pay attention to the introspective aspect of these concepts.

The religious views on these topics are enormously broad and diverse. Across the spectrum of religion generally an amazing diversity will be found. A survey of all these would expand this study well beyond reasonable limits. Thus some cross referencing of different religions will be made, but no extensive analysis is possible here.

Within Christianity tremendous diversity exists as well. At the top level different approaches will be found among Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Christians. Often these perspectives are profoundly different and deeply contradictory of one another. A little more attention will be paid to these patterns in the following analysis. But again, a detailed study of even the basics of these three branches of Christianity are well beyond the scope of this study.

And then inside Protestant Christianity considerable differences also exist. Much of this difference centers on the degree of concern with the psychological aspects of these three core terms. These range from making the core understanding of these terms of conscience, guilt, and forgiveness virtually completely centered on the emotional or psychological viewpoint. But other groups move away from such a focus and sometimes completely ignore this dimension. Once more, some attention will be given to these differing traditions, but the study is not fundamentally a denominational history of the understanding of these terms. Thus coverage of the denominational perspectives will be limited.

At the heart of my interest in gaining deeper understanding is the biblical perspective. First, and foremost, I want to understand, as best as possible, how the Bible addresses these ideas within the setting of its own ancient world. Then with such a foundation established, I can better sense what an appropriate biblical viewpoint should be. Such a viewpoint then provides a set of criteria for assessing the validity or non-validity of modern religious and non religious views.[50]

One of the important values of Stendahl's work is to remind me to let the biblical texts speak solely inside the framework of their own world. The original targeted readers lived in the same world as the writer. His mission was to speak to those readers in terms they could understand. The providential hand of God stood behind this processes so that the writer's views reflect those of God as well. The value of the contemporary cultural perspectives is to clarify and define the basic framework out of which these concepts are typically understood in today's world. The task then of interpretation is to establish a legitimate connection between these two worlds so that the relevancy of the biblical message can come through very clear to a modern reader.

Just a quick glance at the history of interpretation of these concepts of conscience, guilt, and forgiveness uncovers the horrible pattern of later cultures taking complete control of the biblical texts in order to force their thinking on to the ancient text as though it was adopting a centuries later mindset rather than its original one at the time of the composition. Stendahl sensed this with the idea of the 'introspective conscience' and sought to expose it and the subsequent damage it had done to Christian thinking. Many subsequent scholars, however, sought to grasp Paul's Jewish world and failed to clearly understand it. Consequently a new version of misunderstanding of Paul has sometimes emerged seeking to replace the old misunderstanding of Paul. That's not progress! Much of the modern controversy in the NPP movement has then revolved around either side defending their favorite misunderstanding of Paul. And thus pointing out the failures of the opposite side -- which is not hard to do from either direction in critiquing a misunderstanding viewpoint.

Our goal is to avoid these traps and simply lay out biblical perspectives and put them side by side to modern perspectives. You the reader can then better draw your own conclusions. There will be some areas of overlapping of meaning, but other areas of contradictory meaning in the then and now perspectives. The ancient biblical text will not address some areas of modern interest and the opposite will be true as well. Where clearly established areas of overlapping of meaning surface, confident application of the biblical principles can be made. But with the other categories, any possible application of biblical principle must always remain tentative.

Our analysis will follow the standard theological dictionary approach. If especially seeking to understand the NT writers, one has to examine what came before, and then analyze how they were interpreted immediately afterward. In the what came before category, how the key words were used in the Greek language prior to the NT era is the starting point. Then next comes how the ideas in the key words surface inside the OT scriptures with careful attention paid to the way the Hebrew and Aramaic words were treated by the translators of the Greek Septuagint (LXX). This early translation of the OT heavily influenced the definitional understand-

[50]Where scripture speaks with a clear voice, His people need to do so as well in today's world. Where it doesn't, for His people to speak authoritatively and dogmatically is presumption on God and leads to disaster. Man made traditions are created with the disaster that Stendahl's article pointed out. The key is having enough sense to recognize clarity and non-clarity in scripture. Also over the half century plus of ministry I have frequently noticed the human tendency of preachers and teachers to speak more dogmatically out of the non-clear biblical texts due to their huge egos taking control.

ing of NT usage of these Greek words. Then how early Christianity among the church fathers interpreted these words used by the apostles in writing the NT plays an important role. Early shifts in meaning often surface here and surprisingly these shifts frequently stand as foundational to modern understandings. This is true across the full spectrum of the three main branches of modern Christianity.

A. The Hebrew Bible and early Judaism

What does ancient Judaism say about conscience, guilt, and forgiveness?

The answer to the first word, συνείδησις, is nothing.[51] No word meaning of conscience in any of its modern meanings existed in ancient Hebrew or Aramaic. The Greek word συνείδησις never shows up in the Septuagint (LXX) in any of the documents of the canonical Hebrew OT. It is used only twice in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon under heavy Greek influence in the most basic meaning of συνείδησις as knowledge of or awareness of something.

OT scholars debate whether some idea of conscience existed in the Hebrew Bible in spite of there not being a Hebrew word for it.[52] The Hebrew idea of heart figuratively as the location of thinking, assessing, choosing, deciding etc. was perceived to be informed by the Torah, not something given by God in creation. Psalm 51 in David's confession is an example.[53] Da-

[51]"Conscience (syneidēsis) is important to moral theology and practice. However, the Bible's contribution to this notion is not easily determined. There is no corresponding term in Hebrew, and where the Greek word translated by conscience is used by the NT, an older sense of syneidēsis as self-consciousness, especially awareness of one's guilt or negative feelings, may be all that is required by the text." [Paul W. Gooch, "Conscience," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, ***The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*** (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 719.]

[52]"The absence of a Hebrew word for conscience has generated two different responses. On one view, the Israelites could not have experienced anything like conscience because of their mentality: they were not introspective. Their attention was focused upon the observance of divine decrees rather than inner motivation. A related view describes Israelite society as a shame culture, in which conduct was governed by one's perceived status before others, including God, rather than by feelings of guilt necessary for conscience.

"The contrary view holds that, although there is no one Hebrew word for conscience, there is good evidence in many OT writings of the moral reflection involved in the processes of conscience. On this view, it is appropriate to employ the concept of conscience in translating some OT passages; on the first view this is impermissible.

"In fact some translators have found it natural to use the term in certain contexts. The earliest example comes from the LXX. The Greek translators of the OT used the word *syneidēsis* in Eccl 10:20, 'Do not curse the king, even in your syneidēsis.' But the meaning is, as in the Hebrew, 'even in your secret thoughts.' The LXX uses the word more intelligibly in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon at 17:11: wickedness is 'distressed by conscience.' (There is also a variant reading of *syneidēsis* for *kardia*, heart, in Sir 42:18.)

"In the Lat. Vulg. *conscientia* occurs twice in the OT (Gen 43:22, 'it is not in our conscientia,' NRSV, 'we do not know'; and Eccl 7:23, 'your *conscientia* knows that you have cursed others,' NRSV, 'heart,' but Douay-Rheims, 'conscience').

"English OT translations have only recently employed conscience. The KJV never uses it, and the NRSV only once, in 1 Sam 25:31. Other more popular translations such as the Good News Bible employ idiomatic expressions like clear conscience in Abraham's representation of Sarah as his sister, Gen 20:5, 6 (NRSV, 'integrity of heart'). In Job's assertions of innocence, his 'conscience is clear' (27:6). Several translations refer to David's conscience in three stories. After cutting off a corner of Saul's robe, David's conscience was stricken (1 Sam 24:5); his conscience troubled him after counting the people (2 Sam 24:10); and Abigail tells him he will not suffer pangs of conscience if he refuses to take murderous revenge upon her husband Nabal (1 Sam 25:31).

"*More literal translations keep the Hebrew notion of heart in such passages, and thus remain faithful to Hebrew moral psychology.* The OT concept of heart carries a complexity of meanings, having to do with the core of the person and encompassing emotive and mental states; it is thus wider in connotation than the English term. But as the seat of moral emotions and judgments, especially as present to the subject's own awareness, the heart is the place where moral self-assessment takes place. Its interior operations are secret: God alone knows the heart when others cannot (1 Sam 16:7). When David's 'heart' is stricken over his conduct (1 Sam 24:5), he has reflected upon his behavior and feels guilt (even if, before his men, he also experiences shame for not respecting Saul as king)-in our words, then, he has a guilty or stricken conscience. In the Bathsheba episode, Nathan's parable of the rich man's theft of the poor man's beloved lamb demonstrates how general moral sense is different from the guilt of conscience: David's sense of justice causes him outrage, but only Nathan's pointed 'You are the man' goads him into self-reflective confession, even though the work of conscience may not be fully realized in proper repentance (nothing is said about David's 'heart,' 2 Sam 12:1–15).

"Much evidence of the operation of conscience is to be found in the Psalms, which contain some of the greatest introspective passages in the world's literature. The innocence of conscience is illustrated in Ps 17:3 (God tries the heart in night solitude); in Ps 32 hidden sin must be acknowledged to alleviate the anguish of self-conscious guilt. It is likely that an understanding of the heart's self-reflection developed over time; the notion of the 'new heart' in particular achieves prominence in exilic and post-exilic writings (the law written on the heart, Jer 31:33; the new heart of flesh, Ezek 36:25–26). Psalm 51, ascribed by tradition to David perhaps to sanitize his reputation, reveals a guilty mind aware of sin as a self-conscious condition of inner defilement rather than social transgression, and asks God to do a new thing in creating a clean heart within (v. 10).

"The phenomenon of a seared or deadened conscience may be part of the meaning of the OT hardened heart (Exod 9:34) or heart of stone-but only part, for the expression can signify simply stubbornness (Ps 95:8) or even lack of any feeling or response (1 Sam 25:27).

"Significantly, however, the introspective heart knows guilt but is not the source of moral direction. Such direction comes from the law and commandments of God."

[Paul W. Gooch, "Conscience," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 722.]

[53]Versification of Psalm 51 in English translations omit the title as verses 1-2, but these are listed as the first two verses in the MT, LXX and the Vulgate. Thus verse 10 in the English translations is verse 12 in the MT, the LXX, and the Vulgate.

vid became aware of his violation of divine law through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1-5).[54] David sought a cleaned up heart, לֵב טָהוֹר, καρδίαν καθαρὰν (v. 10).[55] In the synonymous parallel that follows and defines it is and put a new and right spirit within me, נָכוֹן חַדֵּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי וְרוּחַ, καὶ πνεῦμα εὐθὲς ἐγκαίνισον ἐν τοῖς ἐγκάτοις μου.[56] David seeks from God not a conscience cleansed from guilt, but instead a new personality that is wholly committed to obeying the Law of God. Feelings of guilt before God are never mentioned in the Psalm. What David experienced was awareness of his wrong doing (Tí ἐγκαυχᾷ ἐν κακίᾳ, v. 3), not feeling guilty for his wrong actions. This awareness sin reaches back to his childhood (v. 7).[57]

[54]"On the other hand, there is a full confession of sin which is without parallel in any other biblical psalm (though such confession in the past is recalled in 32:5; also note 38:19; 41:5; 69:6; 130:1–8; cf. the confessional prayer of Ezra in Ezra 9:6–15, which is communal in nature; also Num 14:13–23; Isa 6:1–13; Neh 1:4–11; Job 42:1–6; Dan 9:4–19). The paucity in the Psalms of the confession of sin and pleading for forgiveness is striking. B. W. Anderson (Out of the Depths, 93–102) treats the "Psalms of Penitence" (6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143) as a subcategory of individual laments and suggests that they differ in that they tend to internalize the problem of evil (94) and argues that 'they agree on the fact that there is no human ground for claiming God's grace (ḥesed)' (99). Anderson (Out of the Depths, 95) also argues that the confession in 51:3–7 serves as the complaint element of the lament. Westermann (Praise and Lament, 185) contends that in such prayers as that found in Ps 51 (he cites 27:9) 'the complaint lies hidden in the petition,' assuming that in later Israelite religion there was a gradual curtailment of the direct complaint to and against God and an increase in petition, with the element of complaint tending to disappear (186). Thus in a broad sense, Ps 51 may be called an individual lament, but it is more specifically an individual confession of sin and a prayer for forgiveness (cf. Kraus, I, 58–59)." [Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 8.]

[55]"The first major division can be subdivided as follows:

- Prayer for forgiveness
  - vv 3–4
- Confession of sin
  - vv 5–6b
- Rightness of divine judgment
  - vv 6cd
- Confession of sinfulness
  - vv 7–8
- Prayer for forgiveness
  - vv 9, 11

The second division divides as follows:

- Prayer for restoration
  - vv 10, 12–14
- Vow to teach sinners
  - v 15
- Prayer for the ability to praise
  - vv 16–19

Vv 20–21 form an addendum."

[Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 12.]

[56]ἔγκατον equals the Hebrew קֶרֶב and means 'inward part.'

[57]"The counterpart of v 6 is formed by v 7 and extends the acute present sense of sin into the past. The suppliant's sinful condition is not merely of recent vintage. The whole of life is involved in the confession of sin: 'Indeed I was born in waywardness, and my mother conceived me in sin.' Thus the sin confessed in the present extends back to the very beginnings of the speaker's life.

"This verse has been especially popular with Christian expositors, who have used it in connection with the doctrine of original sin (see Dalglish, Psalm Fifty-One, 118–23; Zink, VT 17 [1967] 354–61). Some interpreters have understood the sin involved as that of sexual passion or sexual intercourse, and perhaps even adultery on the part of the mother. Attention is focused on יחם, 'to be hot/rut/conceive.' Delitzsch (157) flirts with the attraction of this view when he says that the verb 'hints at the beast-like element in the act of coition,' though he does not adopt it. This interpretation is augmented by the widespread interpretation of the 'knowledge of good and evil' in Gen 3 as sexual intercourse and by references that declare sexual acts, bodily discharges, and birth to be ritually unclean (Exod 21:9; Lev 12; 15; etc.). A modern Jewish scholar, Y. Kaufmann (*The Religion of Israel, from Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, tr. M. Greenberg [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969], 293–94), illustrates this approach when he argues that sexual desire is the archetypical sin in Gen 3, 'the characteristic mark of the evil impulse.' Procreation becomes not a blessing (as in Gen 1:28), but the result of sin. 'The sexual act … is the child of sin. Offspring was given to man only after he had sinned and became subject to death.… The race was born from sin.' Kaufmann applies this interpretation to Ps 51:5, 'Man was created by grace, but is born through sin.' More recently Caquot (RHR 1969 [1966] 144–45) interprets v 5 as applying to Jerusalem as the 'mother' of the Israelites. He suggests that the background is found in the sexual symbolism used in Hos 2:6–9; Ezek 16:3; 23:25 (also note Isa 50:1; 64:1–8; Jer 50:1–12). He notes that the coarseness of the verb with its bestial application would be appropriate if sinful and adulterous Jerusalem is in mind.

"However, this influential interpretation is dubious. That sexual desire is the 'archetypal sin' of Gen 3 is very doubtful (see commentaries). Dalglish points out that 'nowhere in the Old Testament is the legitimate act of coition referred to as sinful' (Psalm Fifty-One, 119). Such passages as Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; 29:31; 30:22, 23; Ruth 4:13; Job 10:8–12; Ps 139:13–16 make it extremely difficult to maintain any inherent sinfulness in sexual intercourse, conception, and birth. Admittedly, the verb is used elsewhere of animals (Gen 30:38, 39, 41; 31:10; the more common verb is הרה) and one can understand Delitzsch's 'hint.' But it occurs only six times, and too much should not be built on such limited usage. Caquot's case for Jerusalem is possible, but far from certain. Regardless of the identity of the mother, her sexual passion is not the central focus of the confession. The suppliant is not confessing a mother's sin. The emphasis is on personal sinfulness: 'For my acts of rebellion, I know indeed … against you, you only, I have sinned.'

"The passage is more commonly understood today as a confession of the essential human condition of the speaker. 'He is a sinner simply as a result of one's natural human descent' (W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, I, 268). Closely related to this approach is what may be called the social view. 'It is the tragedy of man that he is born into a world full of sin' (Weiser, 405; also A. A. Anderson, 395). No particular sinfulness of the mother or the process of conception is involved. The emphasis is on the sin of the speaker, who admits that sin has been 'no freak event' (Kidner, 190), but goes back to the roots of personal existence (see Ps 58:3). Thus the psalm reflects acceptance of the understanding that human life always involves sin and guilt (see Gen 8:21; Job 14:4; 15:14–16; 25:4; Ps 143:2; John 3:6; Kraus, 544).

"J. K. Zink has taken up the interpretations of various Jewish commentators and argued that 51:5 and Job 14:4 should be understood in the sense of ritual uncleanness. This approach links these

The OT treatment of guilt centers on objective guilt established by violation of the Torah.[58] The word 'guilty' more naturally defines objective guilt as violation of God's Law. Sin as action becomes guilt before God by violating His Law. From the OT perspective guilty defines a state of guilt, still derived from violating God's Law. Neither idea is associated in the OT with feelings of guilt[59] or of remorse.[60] The OT therefore stresses actions of sin, חָטָא, and terms more related to violations of divine Law.[61] In the sacrificial system, the guilt offer-

verses to laws on uncleanness and purification after sexual intercourse (Lev 15:18). Zink (VT 17 [1967] 360) points out that the Levitical laws frequently use 'sin' and 'uncleanness' as synonyms and argues that 'iniquity' and 'sin' in 51:7 should be understood in the same way (note the 'cleanse me' in v 2). Thus the confession is concerned with a birth that occurred in the 'sinful' state of disqualification from participation in ritual worship.

"The best interpretation seems to be the second discussed above. However, the background of ritual impurity enhances the force of the confession and properly deserves attention. Further, the verse may indeed have been understood with Jerusalem as the mother after the re-interpretation of the psalm by the addition of vv 18–19. A purely ritual basis (as proposed by Zink) is too restricted for the comprehensive confession of sin. Such ritual uncleanness would be, after all, unavoidable on the part of every person (and could be used as an excuse). This is hardly adequate for the emphatically personal confession of rebellion and sin in vv 5–6. It is hardly probable that the ritual uncleanness of the worshiper's mother at conception and childbirth would be continually before the speaker or that he or she should declare 'against you, you only, I have sinned.' The main point is the comprehensive nature of the suppliant's own sin."

[Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 18–20.]

[58]"For the biblical writers, guilt is not understood primarily as an inward feeling of remorse or a bad conscience, but rather as involving a situation that has arisen because of sin committed against God or one's neighbor (sin either of commission or of omission). Thus, in the Bible, guilt appears to have two primary presuppositions for its existence: first, human beings are responsible and accountable for their actions, thoughts, and attitudes; and second, these actions, thoughts, and attitudes constitute a state of guilt when relationships between human beings and God or other human beings have been broken because of sin." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 362.]

[59]"For the biblical writers, guilt is not primarily an inward feeling of remorse or a bad conscience, but rather a situation that has arisen because of sin committed against God or one's neighbor; a clear presupposition is that human beings are responsible and accountable for their actions, thoughts, and attitudes. The latter notion of responsibility is so great that people can be guilty without even being aware that they have done anything wrong (e.g., Lev. 5:17–19). Guilt, furthermore, can be collective as well as individual. Ps. 51 testifies to a situation in which an individual has sinned and brought guilt upon himself, but what one person does can also cause guilt to come upon an entire group of people (cf. the story of Achan in Josh. 7). In the Bible, guilt brings serious consequences, including separation from God and one's neighbors. Guilt is depicted as a burden or weight that can crush a person (e.g., Ps. 38:4, 6), as a disease that can destroy a person from within (e.g., Ps. 32:3–4), or as a debt that must be paid (e.g., Lev. 5:1–6:7; Num. 5:5–8)." [James M. Efird, "Guilt," ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated) (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 348.]

[60]"Remorse is an emotional expression of personal regret felt by a person after they have committed an act which they deem to be shameful, hurtful, or violent. Remorse is closely allied to guilt and self-directed resentment. When a person regrets an earlier action or failure to act, it may be because of remorse or in response to various other consequences, including being punished for the act or omission. In a legal context, the perceived remorse of an offender is assessed by Western justice systems during trials, sentencing, parole hearings, and in restorative justice. However, it has been pointed out that epistemological problems arise in assessing an offender's level of remorse.[1]

"A person who is incapable of feeling remorse is often labeled with antisocial personality disorder - as characterized in the DSM IV-TR. In general, a person needs to be unable to feel fear, as well as remorse, in order to develop psychopathic traits. Legal and business professions such as insurance have done research on the expression of remorse via apologies, primarily because of the potential litigation and financial implications." ["Remorse," wikipedia.org]

[61]**2627 חָטָא** (ḥā·ṭā(ʾ)): v.; ≡ Str 2398; TWOT 638—1. LN 88.289–88.318 (qal) **sin, do wrong, bear blame, be guilty**, i.e., commit an infraction of law or agreement, implying a penalty must be paid or forfeited (Ge 20:9; Ex 9:27); (hif) commit sin, cause guilt (Ex 23:33); 2. LN 53.28–53.32 (piel) **purify**, cleanse, i.e., make an object ceremonially clean by certain actions, including an offering (Ex 29:36); (hitp) purify oneself (Nu 8:21; 19:12(2×),13, 20; 31:19, 20, 23+); 3. LN 85.65–85.66 (qal) **miss**, i.e., no longer be visibly present, pertaining to an object no longer being in a normal or assumed place (Job 5:24; Pr 8:36); 4. LN 31.8–31.13 (qal) **err**, miss the way, i.e., have an opinion that is a wrong view (Pr 19:2); 5. LN 67.118–67.135 (qal) **fail to reach**, i.e., pertaining to having a time period cut short (Isa 65:20); 6. LN 57.55–57.70 (piel) **bear a loss**, i.e., lose an object with remedy from another source (Ge 31:39); 7. LN 53.16–53.27 (piel) **offer a sin offering** (Lev 9:15; 2Ch 29:24); 8. LN 83.18–83.22 (hif) miss, i.e., take aim at a specific object but not be able to hit the object, and so have the projectile occupy a space outside what is intended (Jdg 20:16); 9. LN 15.34–15.74 (hitp) retreat, i.e., leave an area by linear motion (Job 41:17[EB 25])

2628 חַטְאָ (ḥēṭᵉ(ʾ)): n.masc.; ≡ Str 2399; TWOT 638a—1. LN 88.289–88.318 **sin,** i.e., the doing of wrong and so an offense against a standard (Ps 51:11[EB 9]; Isa 1:18); 2. LN 88.289–88.318 **guilt**, i.e., a focus on the resulting liability of sin (Dt 15:9; 23:22[EB 21]); 3. LN 88.289–88.318 **sin**, i.e., an offense against a person, with a focus on failure or possibly omission (Ge 41:9)

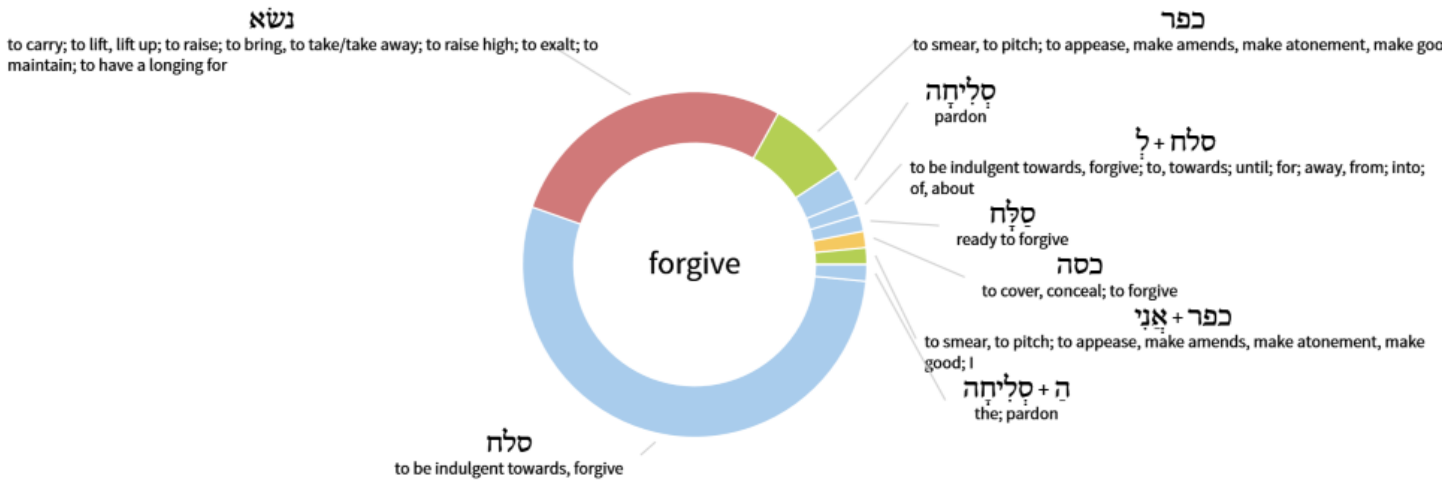
2629 חַטָּא (ḥăṭ·ṭā(ʾ)): n.masc. [see also 2629.5]; ≡ Str 2400; TWOT 638b—LN 88.289–88.318 **sinner, wicked person**, i.e., a class of persons that offend a standard, and so incur moral guilt (Ge 13:13; Nu 17:3[EB 16:38]; 1Sa 15:18; Ps 1:1, 5; 25:8; 26:9; 51:15[EB 13]; 104:35; Pr 1:10; 13:21; 23:17; Isa 1:28; 13:9; 33:14; Am 9:10+)

חַטָּא (ḥăṭ·ṭā(ʾ)): adj. [served by 2629]; ≡ Str 2400; TWOT 638b—LN 88.289–88.318 **sinful**, i.e., pertaining to being morally guilty of violating a standard (Nu 32:14; 1Ki 1:21; Am 9:8+)

2630 חַטָּאָה (ḥĕṭ·ʾā(h)): n.fem. [BDB: qal inf.]; ≡ Str 2398; TWOT 638—LN 88.289–88.318 **sin, fault,** i.e., an error incurring guilt and penalty (Nu 15:28+)

]James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).]

These are the primary Hebrew words off this common stem, but topics 2631-2633 continue the emphasis. The root and its derivates occur some 595 times in the OT.



ings, חַטָּאת, stood as the key to removing guilt before God.[62]

Out of this background then comes the idea of forgiveness, which in the OT mostly deals with God forgiving the actions of the offender of His Law.[63] The OT use of סָלַח is central to the idea of forgiveness.[64] Humans

> More than one-fourth of the occurrences of the verb [חָטָא] belong to the language of the priestly traditions (Lev, Num, Ezek). A further one-fourth occur in the historical books (esp. 1 Sam–2 Kgs); a great segment of these occurrences, esp. the hi. forms, is shaped by Dtn-Dtr linguistic traditions, incl. also Hos and Jer. The prophets (somewhat) independent of these two groups do not use the word or use it only minimally.

[Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 407.]

[62]"Guilt cannot be removed by the offenders themselves; guilt requires a guilt offering (Lev. 5:5–19, 15–19; 6:6; 22:16; Num. 5:8). The connection between them is emphasized by the use of the same word (*'āšām*) to denote both 'guilt' and the guilt/reparation offering (*cf. Jer. 51:5 and Lev. 5:14–19). The word *'āšām* occurs thirty-nine times in the OT, and twenty-five times in Lev., mainly chs. 5–7 and 14; see also Ezra 10:19 and NIDOTTE 1, pp. 553–566. In neither of its meanings does it occur in the context of the day of atonement in Lev. 16. God provides the means of grace whereby guilty people may be restored and live in his holy presence. God removes guilt (Jer. 33:8 'I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin'; Zech. 3:4, 9); he will make the life of the servant of Isaiah 53:10 a guilt offering for others (*cf. Mark 10:45 for Jesus as the 'ransom' for indebtedness; also John 1:29). Such sacrifices are to be accompanied by recognition of guilt and confession of sin (Lev. 5:5; 6:4–5; Ezra 9). Fools mock the guilt offering (Prov. 14:9). David confesses his guilt (Ps. 51:3–5) and prays for its removal (2 Sam. 24:10; 1 Chr. 21:8; cf. Pss. 25:11; 32:5)." [T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). S.v., "Guilt."]

[63]"The basic term for forgiveness in the OT is *slḥ*, occurring some 50 times: the verb *sālaḥ* occurs 46 times in the active Qal (33) and passive Nipʿal (13). The remaining 4 uses of the root comprise the noun *sĕlîḥâ* (3 times) and the adjective *sallaḥ* (once). The agent effecting forgiveness is the deity: This usage is consistent both for the Qal, where the subject of the verb is always God, and for the Nipʿal, which functions as a divine passive (e.g., wnslḥ lw = "and it shall be forgiven him [by the deity]"). The verb in the Qal takes as object both the person to be forgiven and the sin, expressed by the nouns ʿāwôn ("iniquity, guilt") ḥăṭāʾâ ("sin"), and pešaʿ ("rebellion, transgression")." [John S. Kselman, "Forgiveness: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 831.]

[64]"1505 סָלַח (*sālaḥ*) forgive, pardon.

Derivatives

1505a סַלָּח (*sallāḥ*) ready to forgive, forgiving.

1505b סְלִיחָה (*sĕlîḥâ*) forgiveness.

"This verb, together with a few others, such as *bārāʾ* 'to create,' is used in Scripture solely of God. *sālaḥ* is used of God's offer of pardon and forgiveness to the sinner. Never does this word in any of its forms refer to people forgiving each other.

"The same root appears in Ugaritic (UT 19: no. 1757) and Akkadian, but without any apparent connection to the form under consideration. The Akkadian *salāḫpu* means 'sprinkle' in cultic and medical contexts.

"One of the greatest evangelical notes in the OT is struck by this word: forgiveness and pardon from the very God of forgiveness. It also raises the greatest problem as well: What was the nature of this forgiveness? Hebrews seems to state just as categorically that OT forgiveness was ineffective and impossible (Heb 9:9; 10:4).

"The resolution is clear. In the first place, Jehovah himself announces, in response to Moses' prayers for Israel, that he has forgiven Israel at two of their darkest moments, the golden calf incident and the murmuring at Kadesh Barnea (Ex 34:9; Num 14:19–20).

"In the second place, on the basis of Mosaic legislation, real atonement and forgiveness were available for all sins except those of the defiant and unrepentant sinner (Num 15:30–31) who 'despised the word of the Lord.' The claim is made repeatedly (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35, 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 26; 19:22) that when atonement was made, the sinner's sins were forgiven. For all such sins as lying, theft, perjury, fraud (Lev 6:1–7 [H 5:20–26]), or those 'against any of the Commandments of the Lord' (Lev 4:2), it was possible to obtain divine pardon. Rather than being excluded, these sins were specifically included in God's provision for the OT believer along with 'sins of ignorance' (Num 15:25, 26, 28). As if to emphasize the point, it is stated repeatedly that on the Day of Atonement, 'all the iniquities' and sins of Israel were atoned (Lev 16:21, 30, 32, 34). But the individual Israelites had to properly 'humble themselves' in true confession (Lev 16:29, 31). This is the kind of forgiveness which Solomon prayed would be available to all as he led a prayer of dedication for the temple (I Kgs 8:30, 34, 39, 50, and its parallel in II Chr 6). Amos requested it for Judah (7:2) as did Daniel (9:19). However, at times Israel was not pardoned (Deut 29:19; Lam 3:42).

"So exciting was the openness of this offer of forgiveness that Isaiah (55:7) featured it as the heart of his invitation to salvation. So ready was their Lord to forgive, that Isaiah's listeners must for-

forgiving one another is motivated by the experience of divine forgiveness and defined by it as well. Again the action of God forgiving is His not imposing the set penalty for the offense or sin by the individual. Answer-ability to God, i.e., the objective guilt, is removed from the offender. In the sacrificial system of the Torah, this is due to the animal sacrifice having paid the penalty in its being sacrificed to God.

What one can conclude from a survey of the Old Testament and related Jewish literature prior to the beginning of the Christian era is that 'ancient Jews had no conscience'! That is, in the sense of an intuitive sense of right and wrong, and a 'bad conscience' in the sense of feeling guilty for wrong actions.[65] The Old Testament instead puts emphasis upon discovering wrong doing from the Torah, and then immediately taking the appropriate action of making a guilt offering in seeking removal of the divine accountability for one's sins. What he discovers in such action is a God who is willing to meet him in forgiveness through the sacrificial offering. In this offering lay an implicit pledge to not repeat the sin against God. The experience of Solomon dedicating the temple in 2 Chron. 7:1-22 with the enormous animal sacrifices being made to God forms the interpretive backdrop to 7:14

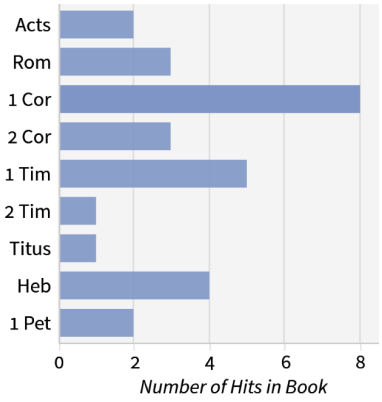
> καὶ ἐὰν ἐντραπῇ ὁ λαός μου, ἐφ' οὓς τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπικέκληται ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ προσεύξωνται καὶ ζητήσωσιν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ἀποστρέψωσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁδῶν αὐτῶν τῶν πονηρῶν, καὶ ἐγὼ εἰσακούσομαι ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν καὶ ἰάσομαι τὴν γῆν αὐτῶν.†
>
> if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

God's forgiveness was based upon proper sacrifice in which was contained a promise of the people to continually seek God and live by His commandments. Sacrifice was the vehicle of coming before a holy God. Obedience to was essential to His forgiveness and blessing.

B. New Testament and early Christianity

One must remember that the NT writers develop their thinking off the foundation of both the OT teaching and the contemporary Judaism of their day.[66] What we encounter from Jesus and the apostles will be a development of the OT foundation.[67]

In regard to our three words -- conscience, guilt, and forgiveness -- a varied picture emerges. Related to these three words will be a few other secondary words that can add some light to the picture.



Conscience: συνήδεισις. As the chart indicates, this word was never used by Jesus and is a Pauline word in so far as the NT documents are concerned. Of the 28 total uses inside the NT, only two are found in

get all notions based on the reluctance of men to forgive each other.

"The experience of forgiveness in the OT was personally efficacious, although objectively the basis and grounds of that forgiveness awaited the death of Christ. Other terms used for forgiveness stressed the ideas of wiping out or blotting out the memory of the sin (māḥâ), covering or concealing the record of the sin (kāsâ), lifting up and removal of sin (nāśāʾ), passing by of sin (ʿābar), and pardoning on the basis of a substitute (kāpar in the Piel q.v.)."

[Walter C. Kaiser, "1505 סָלַח," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 626.]

[65]Interesting, only a very few modern translations use the word 'remorse' in their translations. What is happening with them is the adoption of a highly level dynamic equivalent approach to translation whereby modern concepts are read back into the biblical texts for the sake of easier reading by the modern reader. Little or not attention is paid to the underlying Hebrew concept. One ought never to depend upon heavy dynamic equivalent translations in the quest to understand the ancient Hebrew or Greek mindset.

[66]Particularly vigorous in the scholarly debate about Judaism has been the perceived influence upon the apostle Paul. Usually framed as Tarsus or Jerusalem, most NT scholars prior to the mid 1950s assumed a dominate Greco-Roman cultural influence on Paul, and his writings were interpreted from this perspective. But starting with British scholarship, and in particular W.D. Davies with his *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* first published in the late 1940s, the Jewish dominating influence on Paul's thinking has become recognized. Today a more balanced perspective dominates the scene.

[67]Failure to fully recognize this primary truth has plagued much of Christian interpretation for many centuries. Much of this failure came out of vigorous anti-semitism inflecting Christianity since the latter part of the second century onward. Added to this blind spot has also been the thinking that the Jewish - Christian issues of Jesus and the apostles were not the problems of later Christians even down into our contemporary world. Deeply embedded into this thinking has been, until recent times, the allegorizing method of spiritualizing scripture texts in order to make them say what the interpreters desire them to say. The huge dangers of such an approach to scripture has been exposed during the past century or so in biblical studies. It is the very approach that is foundational to all of the cultic groups on the outer fringe of Christianity. Unfortunately, Protestant fundamentalism still retains such questionalbe approaches in a desperate attempt to hold on to its theological fantasy house of cards. But over my teaching career of the past half century I have watched this house of cards come crumbling to the ground as scholar after scholar abandons both the methods and the conclusions. There is some hope that conservative scholars will abandon these deplorable methods in favor of sensible approaches by which a case can be made for a relatively conservative approach to biblical studies. The work of the IBR in the US has contributed substantially to this trend in North America. Although my colleague at SWBTS Earle Ellis and I differed substantially on many issues, credit must be given to him for founding this movement among conservative biblical scholars.

Heb. 10:22 and 13:18, and another pair in 1 Pet. 3:16, 21. The all the rest are in the writings of Paul except for two in Paul's speeches in Acts 23:1 and 24:16. In the speech before the Sanhedrin in 23:1, Paul was actually speaking in Aramaic to the council which had no word for συνήδεισις. But Luke uses συνήδεισις to translate one of Paul's Aramaic expressions denoting self awareness. The concentration of usage in Paul's letters is First Corinthians with eight uses.[68]

One of the challenges of the word συνήδεισις is its origin in the Greek language. It is built from the verb σύνοιδα meaning "I know something." *In the non-reflexive meaning*, σύνοιδα τινί τι or τι or τινός τι or περί τινος, it has the sense of I have knowledge of something with another person. That is shared knowledge.[69] But in the reflexive meaning of σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ, the literal idea is of the person with two egos sharing knowledge.[70] The modern idea of self-awareness is built off of this foundational concept.[71] The verb is then often translated in this category of meaning as "I am conscious of."

Philosophical definitions take over the concept beginning with Socrates in the reflexive category. The individual becomes knowledgeable of himself with an evaluative thrust that mostly is negative. He becomes aware of his ignorance and thus of a conflict of knowledge inwardly, i.e., he knows that he doesn't know. This inward evaluation of knowledge in Socrates extends to one's actions mostly in awareness that they are not proper.[72] One very important aspect of the Greek origin

[68]Listing by scripture reference:
Acts 23:1; 14:16
Rom. 2:15; 9:1; 13:5
1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27, 28, 29;
2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2, 5:11
1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2
2 Tim. 1:3
Titus 1:15
Heb. 9:9, 14; 10:22; 13:18
1 Pet. 3:16, 21

[69]"The one who has this knowledge may be a witness either for the prosecution or the defense: ἢ [sc. Δίκη]; σιγῶσα σύνοιδε τὰ γιγνόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα, Solon Elegiae, 3, 15;1 σύνοιδέ μοι Κύπρις, Eur. El., 43; or he may share the guilt as well: πλῆθος ὃ V 7, p 900 ξυνήδει "the knowing (i.e., conspiring) crowd," Thuc., IV, 68, 4 or he may be the knowledgeable expert in contrast to the ignorant people: βουλήσεται οὖν μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τοῦ συνειδότος αὐτῷ ὅτι ἄξιός ἐστι τιμῆς τιμᾶσθαι, 'he (the one honoured) desires to receive honour from those who know with him that he is worthy of honour,' Aristot. Eth. M., I, 26, p. 1192a, 25 f." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:899–900.]

[70]The verb σύνοιδα in the reflexive sense is only used in 1 Cor. 4:4 , ***οὐδὲν*** γὰρ ***ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα,*** ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ δεδικαίωμαι, ὁ δὲ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν. ***I am not aware of anything*** against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. In the non-reflexive sense it is found only in Acts 5:2, καὶ ἐνοσφίσατο ***ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς, συνειδυίης καὶ τῆς γυναικός,*** καὶ ἐνέγκας μέρος τι παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔθηκεν. ***With his wife's knowledge,*** he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

[71]"The reflexive expression σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ combines in one the person who knows and the person who shares the knowledge. There are thus two different egos in the one subject. In the first instance this process of reflection has no moral significance and emphasizes the taking cognizance of accomplished acts or states: σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ ποιήσας, 'I know, am aware, am clear about what I have done.'

The 1st person plur. is a certain transitional stage to the reflexive when it involves a rhetorical appeal to the given knowledge of several persons: ὡς σύνισμέν γε ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς κηλουμένοις ὑπ' αὐτῆς, "we are aware that we have received a delightful stimulus from it (sc. art),"2 Plat. Resp., X, 607c. But one may detect something of the same in the sing. When the orator tries to establish probability he must appeal to things familiar to the listeners from their own knowledge: ἕκαστος γὰρ τῶν ἀκουόντων σύνοιδεν αὐτὸς αὑτῷ περὶ τούτων … ἔχοντι τοιαύτας ἐπιθυμίας, Ps.-Aristot. Rhet. Al., 8, p. 1428a, 29–31.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:900.]

[72]"c. The verb is given a fresh accent in the philosophy that commences with Socrates. Here there is evaluation, and since this is negative it takes the form of condemnation. The judgment is a rational process, but what is judged is a perception, not an act. When a man reflects about himself, however, he is conscious of his own ignorance, and hence of a conflict of knowledge.[3]

When the accusation is brought against Socrates that by his questioning method he makes citizens seem to be ignoramuses, he defends himself by pointing out how this has come about. Socrates himself was faced by the contradiction that the Delphic oracle had called him the wisest of men and yet he was aware of his own complete ignorance: τί ποτε λέγει ὁ θεός …; ἐγὼ γάρ δὴ οὔτε μέγα οὔτε σμικρὸν σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ σοφὸς ὤν· τί οὖν ποτε λέγει φάσκων ἐμὲ σοφώτατον εἶναι; Plat. Ap., 21b. Awareness of this discrepancy was the reason he investigated his own situation, and thus examined himself, by comparison with others. This fortunately led to the birth of Socratic philosophy. Since the issue in this self-knowledge is a deficiency of knowledge rather than a moral lack (ἀμαθία cf. Phaedr., 235c.) it is best to transl. "for I realise that I …" The same intellectual trend clearly prevails in the famous address to Socrates in which Alchibiades acknowledges how helpless he is in face of the words of his teacher: καὶ ἔτι γε νῦν σύνοιδ' ἐμαυτῷ ὅτι εἰ ἐθέλοιμι παρέχειν τὰ ὦτα, οὐκ ἂν καρτερήσαιμι ἀλλὰ ταὐτὰ ἂν πάσχοιμι, Symp., 216a: … σύνοιδα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ ἀντιλέγειν μὲν οὐ δυναμένῳ … "I am aware that I can put up no resistance," 216b.

"d. When reflection extends to one's own deeds assessed in connection with human responsibility conscience arises in the moral sense.

The rational character of the knowing process is maintained here. The moral approach is related only to the matter assessed. This may be seen in the oldest instance for reflexive verbs, though the context is not clear: ἔγω δ' ἔμ' αὔτα τοῦτο σύνοιδα, Sappho Fr., 37, 11 f.4 Hdt., V, 91, 2 is to be taken in the same way: συγγινώσκομεν αὐτοῖσι ἡμῖν οὐ ποιήσασι ὀρθῶς, "we realise that we have done it wrongly."[5] Clear examples of moral values are found only from the 4th cent. In the moral use of the verb, and indeed the nouns, the following groups may be distinguished:[6] 1. In most cases the judgment of the act or attitude is negative. It may be expressly so, as indicated

of σύνοιδα is that it never had any connection to deity at all. This ability to think rationally about oneself was never attributed to anything religious.

by an added part.: σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ ἀδικήσας or ἀδικήσαντι, or by a nominal obj.: σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ κακόν (the normal use in a bad sense). The hopeless state of a bad conscience is more precisely set forth psychologically when the matricide Orestes, asked what sickness has seized and destroyed him, replies: ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύνοιδα δειν' εἰργασμένος,[7] Eur. Or., 396. Socrates says of those who bore false witness against him: ἀνάγκη ἐστὶν πολλὴν ἑαυτοῖς συνειδέναι ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν, Xenoph. Ap., 24. Demosth. Or., 18, 263 accuses an opponent of leading the life of a coward and always expecting shattering blows ἐφ' οἷς σαυτῷ συνῄδεις ἐδικοῦντι. Ironically ξυνειδέναι τί μοι δοκεῖς σαυτῷ καλόν, Aristoph. Eq., 184. 2. The matter assessed is not indicated, or is noted only neutrally, but is condemned unequivocally by the context (the abs. use in a bad sense): μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν ποιήσας ἔλπιζε λήσειν· καὶ γὰρ ἂν τοὺς ἄλλους λάθῃς, σεαυτῷ συνειδήσεις, Isoc. Or., 1, 16. At this pt. one may also ref. to the difficult Soph. Fr. if the unknown context contains no obj.: ἦ δεινὸν ἆρ' ἦν, ἡνίκ' ἄν τις ἐσθλὸς ὢν αὐτῷ συνειδῇ, "how dreadful it would be if one who is noble were conscious of one (something bad),"8 Soph. Fr., 845 (TGF, 327). 3. Not so common is the negation of a bad conscience (negative use in a bad sense): "I am aware of no evil." Conscience is not positive here; it is free from concrete accusations: τῷ δὲ μηδὲν ἐδυτῷ ἄδικον συνειδότι ἡδεῖα ἐλπὶς ἀεὶ πάρεστι, Plat. Resp., I, 331a. 4. To be distinguished from an empty conscience is one which is positively good in a moral sense: "I am conscious of a good thing," "I am aware of having done good." The three examples given[9] are so placed, however, that one can hardly speak of a morally good conscience. Cyrus fires his officers with confidence: ἀλλ' ἐπείπερ σύνισμεν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ παίδων ἀρξάμενοι ἀσκηταὶ ὄντες τῶν καλῶν κἀγαθῶν ἔργων, ἴωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους, Xenoph. Cyrop., I, 5, 11. Acc. to the context the good and excellent works are simply training in handling weapons, which the enemy lacks. In a letter wrongly ascribed to Demosth. we read: εἰς ἣν [sc. πατρίδα] τοσαύτην εὔνοιαν ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα, ὅσης παρ' ὑμῶν εὔχομαι τυχεῖν, Demosth. Ep., II, 20. Here, too. we simply have an assertion rather than a positive moral evaluation: "I have in my self-consciousness (I feel) as great a love for my native place as I hope to find on your part." The passage thus belongs under b.10 → 900, 6 ff. In these circumstances it is unlikely that the Soph. Fr. (→ lines 18 ff.) is an example of the positive moral use in a good sense.

"e. Only a survey can be given of the reflexive formula σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ. This occurs from the 7th cent. to the post-Chr. era. It comes to be linked with the phenomenon of the moral conscience in the 5th cent. and becomes relatively common in the comedian V 7, p 902 Aristoph. (→ 901, 14 f.), the historian Xenoph. (→ 901, 11 f., 27 ff.) and in a special sense Plat. (→ 900, 24 ff.; 901, 21 ff.). The closeness of Aristoph. and Xenoph. to the people, also Demosth. in the 4th cent., suggests that what we have here is not an invention of lit. or art but the adoption of a current expression.

"It is another question what the formula is meant to express. For Gk. thought self-awareness is above all a rational process. But since reflection is often upset by conflicts in which one's own acts are condemned, the verbal expression usually denotes a morally bad conscience."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:900–902.]

The origin of the noun συνήδεισις[73] from the verb σύνοιδα is very spotty. Very few examples of its use can be demonstrated prior to the beginning of the Christian era. But beginning in the century just prior to the Christian era συνειδός and συνείδησις begin showing up in the meaning of conscience as self-awareness.[74] Mostly the usage is in regard to a 'bad conscience' in the sense of a negative assessment of one's actions. The first reference to a 'clear conscience' is about 136 AD in Egypt referencing the awareness of the defendant that the charges brought against him in court were false.

The Greek writer Plutarch (46 - 120 AD) is the first writer to make reasonably frequent use of συνείδησις in ancient Greek literature.[75] For him συνείδησις is the

[73]Three early spellings of the noun are συνειδός, συνείδησις, and σύνεσις. The neuiter noun τὸ συνειδός is actually a nominalized neuter participle of σύνοιδα, and συνειδυία a feminine participle form. The feminine noun σύνεσις means intelligence or the facility of comprehension. In a specifically religious understanding Paul's prayer for the Colossians in 1:9 is that they may received from God σύνεσις πνευματική, spiritual understanding. In the mystery of the Gospel from God one finds the wealth of rich understanding about life and serving God, πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως, in 2:2.

[74]"From the 1st cent. B.C. the nouns συνειδός and συνείδησις are used for 'conscience' quite often in pagan Gk. as well in the Hell.-Jewish (→ 909, 17 ff.; 910, 33 ff.; 911, 26 ff.) and the Roman sphere (→ 907, 11 ff.). συνείδησις occurs esp. in the historians: ἐτάραττε δ' δὐτὸν ἡ συνείδησις, ὅτι … δεινὰ δεδρακὼς ἦν αὐτούς, Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom., 8, 1, 3, also Diod. S., 4, 65, 7 and Philodem. Philos. Fr., 11, 5 f.17 The ref. is always to the moral conscience in a bad sense. Twice a good conscience (→ 901, 24 ff.) would seem to be mentioned in profane passages in pre-Chr. Hell. But it is unquestionable that post-Chr. sayings are here attributed to the ancient philosophers. Periander is supposed to have said: ἀγαθὴ συνείδησις … ἐστὶν ἐλευθερία, Bias: ὀρθὴ συνείδησις … ἐστὶ τῶν κατὰ βίον ἀφόβων, Stob. Ecl., III, 24, 11 f. Similarly the Epictet. Fr., 97, in view of its echoing of Philonic material (→ 912, 10 ff.), is to be situated in post-Chr. Jewish Hell.: παῖδας μὲν ὄντας ἡμᾶς οἱ γονεῖς παιδαγωγῷ παρέδοσαν, ἐπιβλέποντι πανταχοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ βλάπτεσθαι· ἄνδρας δὲ γενομένους ὁ θεὸς παραδίδωσι τῇ ἐμφύτῳ συνειδήσει φυλάττειν· ταύτης οὖν τῆς φυλακῆς μηδαμῶς καταφρονητέον, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῷ θεῷ ἀπάρεστοι, καὶ τῷ ἰδίῳ συνειδότι ἐχθροὶ ἐσόμεθα.[18] The first unequivocal instance of καθαρὰ συνείδησις in paganism is in Egypt, P. Osl., II, 17, 10 (136 A.D.). It ref. to a conscience clear of concrete charges." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:903.]

[75]"The most numerous instances of συνειδός are in Plut., who had contact with the intellectual world of Rome. On the basis of the well-known passage in Eur. Or., 396 (→ 901, 8 ff.) he gives a vivid description of the bad conscience which shares our V 7, p 904 knowledge and thus uncomfortably reminds us of our sins and evokes the torments of hell, Plut. Tranq. An., 18 f. (II, 476a–477a). Conscience is like a wound in the flesh. It makes reproaches which burn more than any external fire, for it is the rational man who finds fault with himself. In conversion the bad conscience is repulsed and set aside; the soul ponders πῶς ἂν ἐκβᾶσα τῆς μνήμης τῶν ἀδικημάτων καὶ τὸ συνειδὸς ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐκβαλοῦσα καὶ καθαρὰ γενομένη βίον ἄλλον ἐξ ἀρχῆς βιώσειεν, Plut. Ser. Num. Vind.,

sense of consciousness, i.e., self awareness. This is a rational process of decision making guided by virtue that has to be learned from sages. The ignorant make bad decisions because they are not informed by virtue. Nothing religious is connected to συνείδησις in the thinking of Plutarch, who tends to treat religion with disdain for the most part. The well trained συνείδησις means the individual knows how to make appropriate decisions, some of which are moral, and that he makes these kinds of decisions through a good conscience.[76]

Thus nothing in either the Jewish or Greek heritage of Paul exists to provide a definition of συνείδησις as anything but mental self-awareness that enables him to make decisions, especially moral decisions. The background in Greek affirms that a good conscience in Paul meant having made the right decision based on the knowledge he had at the moment of decision making. A bad conscience was just the opposite of making the wrong decision based upon available knowledge.

Thus in Luke's rendering of Paul's words with the phrase πάσῃ συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ in 23:1 and with ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν in 24:16, what Paul was saying first to the Jewish Sanhedrin and then to Felix is that he always made the proper decision based on what knowledge he had at the time. His choice was consistently to do God's will. And this was true before he became a Christian (23:1) as well as afterwards (24:16). Conscience then for Paul in Luke's accounts is a mental choice based upon learned knowledge, not some moral thermostat. A crucial revelatory turning point for Paul was his Damascus road encounter with the resurrected Christ as he shared with the Jewish mob in the temple courtyard (Acts 22:14-15):

> ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν προεχειρίσατό σε γνῶναι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἔσῃ μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὧν ἑώρακας καὶ ἤκουσας.
>
> The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard.

The moral and religious principles guiding Paul came through revelation from God, not from within. Thus Luke can make use of the established meaning of συνείδησις in the existing literature of the first century. No needs exists to assume a very different meaning that did not come into existence for many centuries later.

But what about Paul's use? Some sorting out of Paul's usage is helpful. Then a brief examination of each of these uses should throw considerable light on to the subject. Paul talks a little about his own conscience, some about that of unbeliever's, and a lot about the conscience of fellow believers. It be will instructive to note words connected to συνείδησις such as verbs, modifiers etc.

Paul's conscience:

Rom. 9:1. Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι, συμμαρτυρούσης μοι τῆς συνειδήσεώς μου ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit.

What Paul expresses here through placing himself under oath is the depth of his desire for Israel to be saved, as the following verses spell out in vv. 2-5. His decision making awareness (τῆς συνειδήσεώς) on what to do in order to reach them is informed (συμμαρτυρούσης μοι), as his says, by the Holy Spirit. The emotions of sorrow and anguish are mentioned in v. 2, λύπη μοί ἐστιν μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη τῇ καρδίᾳ μου, but they are located according to him τῇ καρδίᾳ μου, in my heart, in the choosing side of the apostle, not in his conscience. The triangle here of conscience, grief/anguish, and heart together paint a typical first century picture of the Holy Spirit instructing him of what to do, while he makes those decisions with deep sorrow, knowing that the Jews he preaches to are not going to accept the Gospel from him. Conscience here functions as the mental vehicle through which the Holy Spirit informs Paul of what to do in preaching the Gospel to the Jews. These decisions do not come easily for Paul, which is the point affirmed by his oath in 9:1.

2 Cor. 1:12. Ἡ γὰρ καύχησις ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐστίν, τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐν ἁπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, [καὶ] οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ' ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God—and all the more toward you.

Here Paul's συνείδησις is τὸ μαρτύριον, witness. The witness is affirming his καύχησις, confidence. The content of this καύχησις is spelled out in the ὅτι clause

21 (II, 556a). ἅμα τῷ συνειδότι τοῦ ἐνδεοῦς δακνόμενος, καὶ δι' ἐλπίδα καὶ πόθον χαίρων, "the man who is advancing on the way to virtue is the man who is also gnawed by conscience, which reminds him of his defects, and yet who also rejoices by reason of hope and desire (sc. for approximation to his model)," Plut. Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus, 14 (II, 84d). It is true that in context the thought of conscience warning against fresh misdeeds is not far off. Yet the only task of conscience is still that of reminding us of the corrupt past. In the one instance of συνειδός in Epict. the meaning is 'consciousness,' 'self-consciousness.' The consciousness gives the Cynic the protection weapons to give to rulers: τὸ συνειδὸς τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην παραδίδωσιν, Epict. Diss., III, 22, 94." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:903–904.]

[76]Cf. Plutarch. *Plutarch's Morals*. Edited by Goodwin. (Medford, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1874), 1:163-164. Especially section 18 on the well functioning conscience and section 19 on the bad conscience.

that asserts ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, we have behaved in the world, with propriety toward God stated positively as ἐν ἁπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, in simplicity and sincerity to God, and then negatively as οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ, not in fleshly wisdom, and then finally in positive terms as ἀλλ' ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, but in the grace of God. Paul's self awareness of making decisions verifies his claims that his behavior has been guided by God and not by worldly choices. Thus every decision he has made, especially in regard to the Corinthians (περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς) has been consistent with the standards set by God's grace,[77] not by human choices. His συνείδησις, the mechanism for know how to make those choices, verifies this claim. Some of these choices have been moral, some religious, some just interpersonal relationship decisions. But God's grace sets the standard in all of these, and Paul made the choice each time in adherence to this standard.

1 Tim. 1:5, good conscience. τὸ δὲ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας ἐστὶν ἀγάπη ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας καὶ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς καὶ πίστεως ἀνυποκρίτου, But the aim of such instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.

Here links a clean heart, a good conscience, and an unhypocritical faith commitment in a threefold bundle as the source of proper teaching of the Gospel and that teaching is to center on ἀγάπη. Timothy is to concentrate on this kind of teaching at Ephesus just as Paul had urged him to do earlier, and now repeats, mainly for the benefit of the house church groups before whom this letter would be read. The trilogy of heart, conscience, and faith as the inward source of Timothy's teaching is emphatic. The καθαρᾶς καρδίας, clean heart, stresses decisions made without impurities corrupting them. The συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς, good conscience, stresses decisions being made completely in line with understood standards. The πίστεως ἀνυποκρίτου, unhypocritical faith, stresses a genuine commitment to Christ that defines the standards for proper decision making. Every decision that Timothy makes on what to teach the people must come from his faith commitment, and be consistent with it. Failure here is what has created the mess in Ephesus that Timothy is having to clean up (cf. vv. 3-4, 6-7).

1 Tim. 1:19, good conscience. 18 Ταύτην τὴν παραγγελίαν παρατίθεμαί σοι, τέκνον Τιμόθεε, κατὰ τὰς προαγούσας ἐπὶ σὲ προφητείας, ἵνα στρατεύῃ ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν 19 ἔχων πίστιν καὶ ***ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν***, ***ἥν τινες ἀπωσάμενοι*** περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἐναυάγησαν, 20 ὧν ἐστιν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ σατανᾷ, ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν μὴ βλασφημεῖν. 18 I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, 19 having faith and **a good conscience.** By **rejecting conscience,** certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; 20 among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme.

In this further encouragement to Timothy Paul encourages him to take firm hold of faith and conscience in conducting his teaching and ministry to the Ephesians. The linking of faith and conscience continues the same emphasis found in 1:5. Timothy is to make proper decisions about how to do ministry within the framework of his faith commitment to Christ. The 'good conscience' stresses the need of making every decision on what to do within that faith framework. In so doing, Timothy will prove himself to be the genuine person that his home town folks in Lystra had indicated they expected him to do years before (cf. v. 18).

Failure to make these kind of right decisions in ministry (= rejecting their conscience) is typified in the spiritual failure of Hymenaeus and Alexander, that Paul mentions in vv. 18b-19. The standards of genuine faith commitment led them to compromise that commitment in ways that Paul does not specify. But it produced spiritual 'shipwreck' in their faith commitment and led them to slander the name of God.

2 Tim. 1:3, clear conscience. Χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, ᾧ λατρεύω ἀπὸ προγόνων ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, ὡς ἀδιάλειπτον ἔχω τὴν περὶ σοῦ μνείαν ἐν ταῖς δεήσεσίν μου νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

In the Proem expression of praise to God at the beginning of the letter, Paul expresses praise to God ᾧ λατρεύω ἀπὸ προγόνων ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, whom I have served from my ancestors with a clean conscience. Here he claims to have rendered faithful service to God like the priests did in the Jerusalem temple in dedicating his life to religious service. This service has been given consistently within the framework of the devotion to God by his Jewish parents etc. With the phrase ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει, he claims to have made his commitments to serve God within that framework established by his ancestors. Both his motives and his actions were established by the central commitment to serve God, τῷ θεῷ, ᾧ λατρεύω. This then reminds him of Timothy and the rich spiritual heritage that he received from his mother and grandmother (vv. 3b-7). Out of this heritage and commitment to serve God comes then courage, love, self-discipline etc. (vv. 6-7).

Although Paul does not appeal often to his con-

[77]In contrast to Plutarch who taught that principles of virtue taught by the sages of society informed the conscience which choice to make in all of life's decisions. For Paul, the grace of God that he came to experience on the Damascus road became his teacher on what choice to make in every decision of life.

science, when he does so it is within the standard early understanding of conscience in the first century world. A conscience provided him with the mental mechanism to receive the instruction from the Holy Spirit to define not only moral decisions of right and wrong, but far more importantly the parameters of the will of God for all of his decision making and living. Paul assets a consistent following of that instruction and the making of the correct decisions in each instance as God gave him guidance. Even in the case of the death of Stephen he could claim having made the right decision, even this his understanding of the Torah was flawed at the time (ἀγνοῶν ἐποίησα ἐν ἀπιστίᾳ, 1 Tim. 1:13c). In time he came to understand just how deep is the mercy of God in calling him to preach the Gospel in spite of being a persecutor of believers (cf. 1 Tim. 1:13-17). Thus Paul discovered the greatness of God in this experience, rather than his human frailty.

Interestingly, Paul's use of συνείδησις both follows the early use of the term in the secular Greek literature, but also provides a Christian perspective on this aspect of human life whereby God gives us a mind capable of making decisions -- of all kinds -- and then supplies His Spirit to instruct and guide us in making the correct decisions. Paul was grateful to God for guiding him through life and helping him always make the correct decisions. But in so using συνείδησις in this manner, the apostle reaches down into his Hebrew heritage of the working of God in the לֵב טָהוֹר, clean heart, of OT teaching where God makes His will known and guides the individual to make correct decisions in obeying the God of Israel. He claims to have consistently followed that principle all of his life.

Plutarch, on the other hand, who came a few decades after Paul, in his skepticism about religion saw the decision making mechanism about life, the συνείδησις, as strictly informed by the wisdom of sages and right decisions were those conforming to their wisdom. God or religion played no role whatsoever. His sympathy for principles of Stoic virtue provided all the guidelines he wanted. For those rejecting their conscience, i.e., rejecting following the directions of these teachings, they were the ἁμαρτωλοί, the sinners, who fell miserably short of living a virtuous life by Stoic standards. They contributed nothing to the betterment of society!

People's conscience:

Here the issue centers on what Paul meant when referring to the συνείδησις of pagans and what he meant by συνείδησις in reference to believers. Rather large and different assumptions are at work here.

Pagan's conscience:

Rom. 2:15. 12 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἥμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται, καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται· 13 οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται. 14 ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος· 15 οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων, 16 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

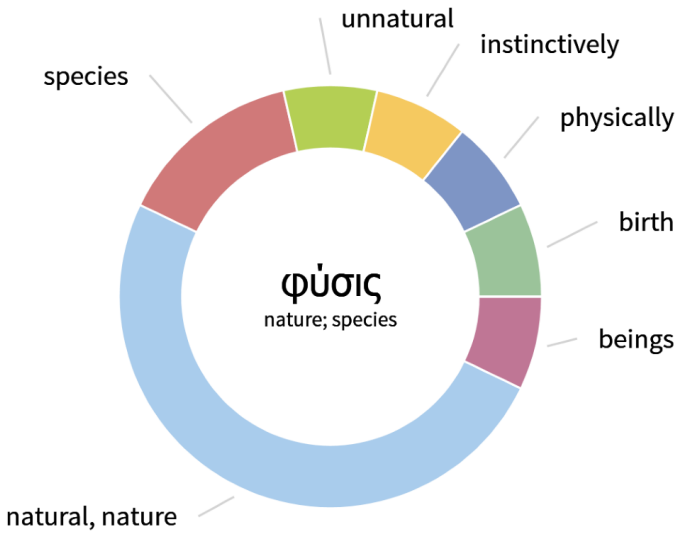
12 All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. 15 They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

In this lengthy segment on the wrath of God upon paganism and unbelieving Judaism in 1:18 - 2:29, the apostle here centers upon the coming judgment of God, in addition to the wrath of God in temporal judgments which he treated in 1:18-32. All will experience divine judgment, but will be judged differently depending upon possession or non-possession of the Law. But this will not make much difference in the final outcome since pagans have an -- different -- access to divine Law as well. This judgment will determine the severity of eternal punishment, not their eternal destiny. One must not forget that Paul's purpose in this discussion was to eliminate the sense of superiority by Jews who felt that mere possession of the written Law of Moses gave them special privilege with God. Our exploration of this text plays off of a very secondary element in the passage.

In vv. 14-15 he treats the scenario of pagans who follow basic principles contained in God's Law even though not having access to it in written expression: ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν. Important here is the role of φύσει. Does it modify the participle ἔχοντα with the meaning "by nature not having the Law"? Or, does it modify the verb ποιῶσιν with the meaning "by nature they do the things in the Law"? This is a very legitimate issue with solid commentators on both sides of the issue.[78] When

[78]"Syntax and balance of the sentence require that φύσει be taken with what follows (against Cranfield and Achtemeier); had Paul wanted to speak of 'those who do not have the law by nature' he would have put the φύσει within the phrase (that is, preceding ἔχοντα, as the parallels cited by Cranfield indicate [2:27; Gal 2:15;

all the grammar evidence is carefully considered the evidence does favor slightly the latter syntactical understanding that by nature the Gentiles do the things contained in the Law. The precise meaning of the noun φύσις then becomes important.[79] This is a dominantly Pauline word in the NT with 13 of the 16 uses found in his writings, and with 7 of the 13 uses inside Romans. As a nominal abstract of the verb ἔφῡν, the basic sense is of something that has shape and form without obvious assistance from outside sources.[80] The dative form



φύσει often implies something connected to birth. Inside Romans, Paul uses φύσις in the full range of secular Greek definition: nature/natural (11:21, 24; cf. 1 Cor. 11:14; Eph 2:3); unnatural (1:26 for homosexual activity); physically (2:27); instinctively (2:14); by birth (cf. Gal 2:15); beings (cf. Gal. 4:8), as translated by the NRSV. Thus what Paul asserts regarding the activities of pagans doing what is contained in divine Law is that they do it without obvious instruction from the Law of Moses by Jewish scribes. It is a perception of basic principles of human living with no awareness on their part that these principles come from God and are defined in the Law of Moses.[81] Inside the Judaism of Paul's day was

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Eph 2:3]; cf. already Leenhardt against Bengel). Paul therefore hardly has in view Gentile Christians here: they 'do what the law requires' not 'by nature' but insofar as they 'walk in accordance with the Spirit' (8:4; see, e.g., Althaus; Bornkamm, "Gesetz," 108–9; Eichholz, Theologie, 94–96; Hendriksen; Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, 141–45; Zeller; and particularly Kuhr; against Barth, Shorter; Fluckiger; and Minear, Obedience, 51; others in Snodgrass, 88 n. 10). Rather Paul is still intent to make a broader statement of more open-ended principle which will undermine the presuppositions of Jewish particularity. The appeal is to the same more widespread sense of the rightness or wrongness of certain conduct to which appeal has already been made in 1:26–27 (φυσικός, παρὰ φύσιν) and in 1:28 ("what is not fitting") — the appeal, in other words, to the reality of 'the godly pagan.' He does not, it should be noted, envisage some Gentiles as always 'doing what the law requires,' but simply the fact that there are Gentiles who for some of the time at least live as the law lays down (cf. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, 146, and those cited by her). Nor does Paul, of course, attribute this 'doing the law' to man's unaided effort (φύσει in that sense). 'Doing the things of the law,' even when the law itself is unknown, is possible only where 'what is known/knowable of God' (1:19, 21) is the basis of conduct, rather than the rebellion that characterizes humankind as a whole (1:18–32), and only because in Paul's mind there is an immediate connection between knowing God and doing what God wants (1:21a). If Paul makes use of Stoic ideas (see Lietzmann, Bornkamm, "Gesetz," 101–7; see also on 1:26–27; but see also Eckstein, 150–51, and those cited by him), he does so without surrendering his thought to them, just as, in a somewhat similar way, Philo makes use of the Stoic concept of 'right reason' as the rule of life (Opif. 143; Leg. All. 1:46, 93; etc.), while assuming the identification between the divine reason (λόγος) and the law (explicitly, Migr. 130); though, of course, in contrast to Paul's, Philo's treatment constitutes an apologetic on behalf of the Jewish view of the law." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 98–99.]

[79]It is a part of the word group φύσις, † φυσικός, † φυσικῶς inside the NT. But with limited usage. That which is 'natural,' i.e., understood to happen apart from the direct activity of God is very limited inside the NT.

[80]"The noun φύσις is a verbal abstr. of ἔφῡν,1 πέφυκα, φύομαι (this is undoubtedly secondary) from the Indo-Eur. root bhū, Sanscr. bhū, e.g., abhūma == ἔφυμεν, Lat. fu-,German bi-n, English be,2 whose meaning is 'to become,' 'to grow' etc., orig. with ref. to plant growth, φύσις[3] thus means 'form,' 'nature,' first with ref. to plants, e.g., Hom. Od., 10, 303, then transl. animals and men. With fresh ref. to the verb there arises the sense 'budding,' 'growth,' 'development,' 'parturition.'[4] b. In the one instance of φύσις in Hom. it denotes the 'external form of nature' of the curative herb moly, Od., 10, 303.[5] The word is first used for man's 'external form'[6] in Pind., who in Nem., 6, 5 distinguishes φύσις from νοῦς, cf. Isthm. 4, 49.[7] φύσις has the same sense sometimes in Hippocr.,[8] the tragedians, e.g., Aesch. Suppl., 496; Soph. Oed. Tyr., 740 and elsewhere, cf. Aristoph. Vesp., 1071.9 ***c.*** *The meaning 'birth' occurs for the first time in pre-Socratic philosophy. Emped. Fr., 8, 1 f. (Diels, I, 312) has φύσις (== γένεσις) as a correlative of τελευτή (== φθορά),10 cf. Fr., 8, 4 of the 'origin' of human members, Fr., 63 (I, 336). The dat. φύς(ε)ι can thus mean /by birth,/ so first in Hdt., VII, 134, 2, then the tragic dramatists, cf. φύσει νεώτερος 'the younger son,' Soph. Oed. Col., 1294 f.; cf. Ai., 1301 f. From this arises the technical use of φύσει to denote 'physical descent,' either in the sense of the natural claim to legitimacy in contrast to the bastard, Isoc. Or., 3, 42; Isaeus Or., 6, 28, or later for physical descent as opp. to legally established paternity: φύσει μέν ... θέσει δέ, Diog. L., IX, 2511 and cf. P. Oxy., X, 1266, 33 (98 A.D.); P. Fay., 19, 11 (letter of the emperor Hadrian); Ditt. Syll.3, II, 720, 4 f. (2nd cent. B.C.); Ditt. Or., II, 472, 4; 558, 6 (both 1st cent. A.D.);12 κατὰ φύσιν occurs V 9, p 253 in the same sense; Hamilcar is Hannibal's father κατὰ φύσιν, Hasdrubal is Hamilcar's son-in-law by marriage, Polyb., 3, 9, 6; 3, 12, 3, cf. 11, 2, 2.* ***d.*** *The adj. φυσικός does not occur in Hom., the tragedians or direct quotations from the pre-Socratics.13 It is one of the many adj. in -ικος which first become common in the vocabulary of sophistry and science from the 2nd half of the 5th cent. B.C.14 It is first found in Xenoph. Mem., III, 9, 1 in the sense "natural" as opp. to διδακτός, and first becomes an established part of the vocabulary of philosophy with Aristot.15*

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:252–253.]

[81]Although Paul does not explore this in his writings even though he gets close to it in Gal. 3, this would most likely have been his perception of human access to divine law from Adam to Moses and the giving of divine Law in written form on Sinai. But this would have been countered vigorously by dominate scribal

the affirmation of the essence of divine law contained in universal wisdom as a gift of God to humanity.[82] Something similar to this is what Paul had in mind with the statement: οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος, these not having the Law are Law within themselves. In the modern world we call it 'common sense,' but I doubt that Paul would accept such a label. He is too closely anchored in the Law of Moses as the basis for life universally to allow this rather secularized definition to fit.

How that works in Paul's thinking is explained in v. 15. The actions of these Gentiles give proof of this Law's existence inside them: οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν. The validation of these actions as evidence of this divine Law within them comes from their conscience as a mental mechanism for making rational decisions: συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως. The evidence is the occasional right choice made. Here Paul uses συνείδησις strictly within the established Greek definition in existence at that time. This is then reflected by their reasoning powers (λογισμῶν) approving or disapproving different actions: καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων. Thus τῆς συνειδήσεως and τῶν λογισμῶν are very close to one another in meaning.

Notice that these principles are embedded in the hearts of these pagans, not in a conscience. How this took place is not indicated, and assuming in creation of them or at their birth is baseless speculation. That is unimportant to Paul. His statement merely affirms that their obeying these principles shows that they possess them inwardly. How is this known? There is a witness that validates that these principles are embedded in their hearts (γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν). And that witness is the conscience (συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως). the decision making capacity they possess which is distinct from the heart.

Thus even among pagans the idea of conscience in Paul's depiction is clearly within the framework of the secular Greek understanding of that time. He does make heavy use of the term in Romans and in his writings somewhat surprisingly since the term was just beginning to be used among Greek writers of his time and was not widespread. Perhaps this prompted his explanatory expansions in Rom. 2:12-16.

Titus 1:15. πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαροῖς· τοῖς δὲ μεμιαμμένοις καὶ ἀπίστοις οὐδὲν καθαρόν, ἀλλὰ μεμίανται αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις. To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted.

This axiom from Paul comes in the middle of a general portrayal of the character of the people living on the island of Crete found in 1:10-16. It is not a positive picture of the Cretans that Paul paints. Many of the traits are found inside the churches on the island that Titus is commissioned to help straighten out. Paul even quotes a Cretan poet by the name of Epimenides who had said of the people on Crete several centuries earlier, Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί. Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons. Thus the cultural and moral climate on the island was not conducive to the Gospel. But churches were there by the early 60s. And it is not surprising that the secular mindset dominating the island had found its way into the churches with false teachers present.

Verse 15 sets forth a general truism with timeless tones as a backdrop to the stinging critical depiction of these false teachers in verse 16 which he has already alluded to in vv. 10-11 and 13-14.

The truism contrasts what is καθαρὰ, pure, to its opposite οὐδὲν καθαρόν, nothing is pure. These opposites match up to two categories of people with similar traits.

Positive: πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαροῖς, all things are pure to those who are pure. What does Paul mean? Life experience clearly reveals that not everything in life is either clean or pure. The prior reference in v. 14 to the false teachers advocating Jewish myths and human based commandments most likely dietary based provides the crucial context for understanding statement by Paul. All three pastoral letters vigorously attack these kinds of teachings related to a Jewish asceticism, as well as elsewhere (cf. Col. 2:16-17, 20-23). The infusion of the Greek philosophical belief that all things material were inherently and irretrievably evil into Torah obedience as a part of Christian practice had devastating impact. This material world that God created was

views that God gave revelatory assess to the Law of Moses even to Adam, and especially to Abraham. Something which Paul vigorously denies in Gal.3:15-18.

[82]"It is not some other universal or 'unwritten law' (full documentation in Kranz) which Paul has in view. The measure of what is pleasing to God is the law, as much for Paul as for his fellow Jews (cf. Philo, Philo, 275–76; 2 Apoc. Bar. 57.2; Ap. Const. 8.98; see particularly the discussion in Michel); though the possibility of a broader view is provided by the Jewish Wisdom tradition's identification of universal divine wisdom with the law (Sir 24:23; Bar 4:1). Indeed the whole point of what Paul is saying here would be lost if νόμος was understood other than as a reference to the law, the law given to Israel (see particularly Walker, 306–8; against the older view of Lightfoot, SH, still in Black, and especially Riedl, Heil, 196–203; see also on 4:13). For Paul's object is precisely to undercut the assumption that Israel and the law are coterminous, that the law is known only within Israel and possible of fulfillment only by Jews and proselytes. 'The intention of Paul is not to reflect systematically on the possibility of moral norms among the Gentiles, but to emphasize the one point, that the exclusively understood pledge of election, the law, is also present among the Gentiles, so that the 'boasting' of the Jews is 'excluded' (3:27)' (Eckstein, Syneidesis, 152). In what sense Gentiles 'are the law' is explained in the next verse." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 99.]

fundamentally evil, and in order to please God the individual must observe strict laws about marriage, diet etc. Paul's truism here denies the legitimacy of such claims. This statement follows the reasoning behind other similar axioms of Paul like 1 Cor. 6:12 and 10:23:

6:12. Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό τινος. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything.

10:23. Πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ. "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up.

What somewhat similar emphases are made but some important differences need to be noted as well. The Πάντα ἔξεστιν statement, made four times, most likely reflects the attitude of libertine Corinthian Christians falsely assuming that God's grace freed them to do whatever they pleased. In chapter six it reflected the attitude of Christian men assuming they were still free to visit the brothels in Corinth just as they had done prior to Christian conversion, even as married individuals. In chapter ten, it reflected the attitude of believers about freedom to eat meat offered to idols after conversion just as they had prior to becoming Christians. The contrastive statements on the opposite side of each of the statements represents Paul's stance reflecting a true Christian perspective that placed limits on Πάντα ἔξεστιν. Yet, in quoting the opponents view point Paul agrees with the general principle that what ever God has created is fundamentally good. It is human abuse that turns the 'good' into 'evil.'

What Paul asserts in Titus 1:15 is that τοῖς καθαροῖς, to those who are clean/pure before God, are those who can see clearly the goodness of God's creation and find value in its proper use. They will not look at God's creation with a distorted perspective.

Negative: τοῖς δὲ μεμιαμμένοις καὶ ἀπίστοις οὐδὲν καθαρόν, ἀλλὰ μεμίανται αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις. but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted. The qualities of these individuals are μεμιαμμένοις καὶ ἀπίστοις, corrupted and disbelieving. The preoccupation with Jewish myths and man made commandments in violation with the truth of the Gospel has contaminated the lives of these people. Although professing Christians (cf. v. 16) this perverted corruption and disbelief comes through in their actions. They are living a lie, and evidently don't realize it. The perfect tense participle μεμιαμμένοις from the verb μιαίνω defines corruption as something or someone made ritually impure or the purity of something or someone to be defiled by improper actions. They are further defined as ἀπίστοις, and adjective denoting the opposite of being committed to Christ in faith commitment. While formally professing faith in Christ, they are convinced that self-effort based ritual purity through the Torah is central to acceptance by God. These teachings out of Jewish myths (v. 14) have convinced them of this.

The impact of such false teaching is defined then as οὐδὲν καθαρόν, ἀλλὰ μεμίανται αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις, nothing is clean, but both their mind and conscience have been corrupted. Here again Paul understands conscience in close connection to thinking. In the exceptionally close linkage of these two entities inwardly, Paul asserts that they can neither think nor make rational decisions based upon thinking. The external standards they have adopted from the false teaching has so distorted their minds that neither thinking nor deciding can be done properly. Once again Paul understands συνείδησις within the framework of the established Greek definition. Interesting a corrupted conscience here in Paul is virtually the same as a bad conscience in Plutarch and a few others. For the Greek writers a bad conscience was the inability of the individual to make wise decisions due to ignorance of the truth. For Paul the adoption of these false teachings that were utterly contradictory to God as Truth tainted the minds of these teachers so that they lost the ability to make decisions consistent with God as Truth revealed in the Gospel.

Here we especially notice the dangers of getting our understanding of God's truth out of focus. The false teachers were causing upheaval in the churches (v. 11) out of a deep passion to become acceptable to God. But the corrupting influence of injecting man made ideas into the Gospel from one's surrounding cultural influences was enormous. The end product was πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἀδόκιμοι, unfit for any good deed. Rather than becoming more righteous in God's eyes, instead they became βδελυκτοὶ ὄντες καὶ ἀπειθεῖς, detestable and disobedient.

Man oh man! I'm glad that Titus was commissioned to clean up this mess among the churches and not me. Paul outlines the strategy in the letter body that centered on getting proper leadership in place and on intensive teaching of the apostolic Gospel to all the house church groups across the island. But the job before Titus was huge, given this early depiction of the situation there. Could it also be that cleaning up a mess inside a church today needs to follow the same strategy? Centering the church squarely on the apostolic Gospel correctly understood and followed by leaders and members alike is the key.

1 Tim. 4:2. ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων, κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot

iron.

In this final use of συνείδησις in reference to non-believers, Paul deals with a situation rather similar to the one on Crete in Titus 1:15. Jewish asceticism mixed with Platonic teaching about the fundamental evil of matter proved to be a potent mixture that wreaked much havoc in the churches in the late 50s and 60s of the northeast Mediterranean region.

In the pericope of 4:1-5, Paul treats such false teaching as fulfilled prophecy of the Holy Spirit, and thus to be expected. The ultimate source of such perversion of the Gospel was demonic: πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. Their human vehicle however was ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων, in the hypocrisy of liars. An earlier depiction in 1:3-6 provides important additional insight into what they were teaching.

In very graphic imagery the lies that spewed out of the mouths of these hypocrites came because κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν, they had their consciences seared over. This is the only use of καυστηριάζω, to brand or sear over, in the entire NT. The point clearly in this figuratively image is that their decision making mechanism has been seared over so that it doesn't function, at least as the point of making correct decisions. This is what stands behind their ἀποστήσονταί τινες τῆς πίστεως, renouncing their faith commitment to Christ. Instead then of devoting themselves to obeying Christ, they προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, were devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons. The demonic blinding of them seared over their ability to make the right decisions and thus produced the awful corruption coming out of their mouths. It made hypocrites of them in that outwardly they claimed to be Christians, but inwardly they were controlled by demons.

The horrible teaching that resulted is specified in verse 3 in forbidding marriage and meaningless dietary regulations. This list is supplemented in 1:3-6 as being derived from myths and endless genealogies in opposition to divine training derived from faith commitment. All of this has the same Jewish tone as that in Crete. Paul's statement in 4:4-5 about the goodness of God's creation being denied is the same as that in Crete as well. Mistaken Greek and Jewish thinking mixed together spells real trouble for believers! It's a toxic mixture.

What we see here once more is Paul's use of the idea of συνείδησις inside the established secular Greek understanding, and especially along the lines of the 'bad conscience' but with a distinctively Christian twist to it. Here for Paul a bad conscience is one seared over by demonic power so that it becomes incapable of making correct decisions. Not one that makes wrong decisions out of ignorance, as Plutarch believed.

One implication of this passage in 1 Tim. 4 is that messing around with man made teachings rather than centering on the Gospel in faith commitment to Christ can open the doors of one's mind to the demonic. When demons gain access to one's mind they will play havoc with it by twisting its thinking into all kinds of really screw ball thinking.

Christian's conscience:

This final category centers on Paul's use of συνείδησις in regard to believers in Christ in addition to himself.

Rom. 13:5. διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.

In the pericope of 13:1-7 the apostle discusses the divine obligation of Christians to be subject to government authorities (cf. v. 1). Implications of the admonition in verse one are laid out in vv. 2-7. In vv. 3-7 a series of explanatory reasons are put on the table. Verses 3-5 assert essentially that God has put these authorities in place and to rebel against the authorities is to rebel against God. Verse 5 introduced by διὸ brings this discussion to a summarizing close. Then vv. 6-7 add a couple of more reasons and implications around Christian obligation to pay taxes to them.

The core statement in v. 5, ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, set up in infinitival form, plays off the initial command of ὑποτασσέσθω in v. 1a.[83] The use of ἀνάγκη, necessity, characterizes the initial command in v. 1 as a divinely mandated necessity, not some human command.

Two reasons for this divine mandate are provided: τὴν ὀργὴν and τὴν συνείδησιν. The 'not only this...but also that' construction stresses the objective reason as self evident, and the inward reason as important also: **οὐ μόνον** διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν **ἀλλὰ καὶ** διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. To refuse to command to submit to government authorities means facing the wrath of God, as well as that of the authorities (cf. vv. 3-4)), but also it violates one's conscience. That is, God has given us sense enough to make rational, sensible decisions. Knowing that we face God's anger in refusing His command means we should be able to figure out the right response to this command, especially as one committed to Christ as Lord. Interestingly, in verse six with διὰ τοῦτο, for this

[83]No English translation can render this literally because no such grammar construction exists in the English language. Several times in Romans especially a foundational command will be given in regular verb form. Subsidiary commands evolving out of this command will be set up using participle and/or infinitives as the core command expression. In the Greek the interconnectedness of all these commands is very clear. In English translation one would never know any of this.

reason, Paul indicates the Christian obligation to pay taxes: διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε, for this reason also you must pay taxes.

Once more, Paul uses συνείδησις consistent with the standard Greek definition of evaluative decision making. Clearly this would be how the initial readers would have understood Paul here.

1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12. 7 Ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνῶσις· τινὲς δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ***ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενὴς οὖσα*** μολύνεται. 7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and ***their conscience, being weak,*** is defiled.

In 8:1-13, Paul tackles one of the most vexing issues that Christians in the first century faced who lived outside Palestine: whether or not to eat meat offered to idols. In the highly complex social order of the Greco-Roman society where connections with others on at least an equal or superior social level was critical to one’s ability to earn a living etc., being a part of the trade guilds were essential for survival. But these unions were always connected to some pagan deity and meetings were held in the temple of the pagan deity. These began with meals that followed the dedication of all the food to the deity for its blessing. Most Christians were caught in a ‘catch 22’ dilemma here. Matters were not much easier in the market place of the cities where food was for sale. Virtually all of the available meat in the market place was the ‘left over’ meats from these temple rituals and meant that the meat bought there had previously been ‘blessed’ by some pagan deity. So even if meats were just purchased in the market place, it was virtually certain that they had been prayed over in dedication to some pagan deity. What then to do as a Christian? Jews managed to get around this with their “Kosher” food laws where they had their own supplies apart from the public markets. But given the hostility between Jews and Christians, such sources were not assessable to Christians. One of the questions posed to Paul in Ephesus by the delegation from Corinth requested advice on how to approach this matter. Chapter eight contains Paul’s answer to their question: Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, Now concerning food offered to idols (8:1a).

The foundational principle that Paul works off of in his response is stated as οἴδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχομεν. ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, We know that all of us possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs us but love builds ups. By knowledge Paul explains in vv. 4-6 that believers understand that God alone has existence, and these pagan deities do not. Thus they have no capacity to either bless or inhabit -- the most common understanding of their blessing -- the meat that is dedicated to them. So this so-called ‘blessing’ to pagan deities has not altered the meat in any way at all. And therefore it could be eaten completely safely by Christians.

But he goes on to explain in vv. 7- 13 that no all believers have come to such a clear understanding about the existence of idols. They have grown up worshiping such gods and goddesses and the nothing of the absolute non-existence of these deities is not clearly established in their Christian understanding.

Out of this Paul develops the idea of these people having a ‘weak conscience’: ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενὴς (v. 7); ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς (v. 10); αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν (v. 12). Clearly what Paul meant by this phrase is their inability to make a decision to eat this meat in the awareness that nothing is wrong with it. To his readers, he assumes a ‘strong conscience’ that can make a clear, firm decision to eat the meat based upon the divine instruction through the Gospel that God alone exists. They know this is true and thus know that nothing has been altered in the meat by its being first dedicated to a pagan idol.

Paul plays off the initial emphasis upon both knowledge and love in his advice. To those considering themselves strong, go ahead and eat the meat knowing that you have made a proper decision that God will honor. But, -- and this is a big one -- if you are in the presence of other believers either in public or in a private home as a dinner guest where the other believer has a ‘weak conscience’ that would be offended to see you eating such meat then don’t eat it under any circumstance.

In such circumstances he speaks of the strong believer’s action defiling (μολύνεται) the weak conscience of a fellow believer (v. 7). That is, the weak conscience believer sees his brother eating the meat and although he thinks that doing so probably means ingesting the presence of the idol into his body he is convinced by the example that this is okay. Thus his future ability to make proper decisions as a fellow believer suffers harm. Such a bad example to these weak believers with such harmful impact means that you are sinning against Christ: εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε, v. 12. Additionally such ignoring of the ‘weak conscience’ of a fellow believer represents a serious abuse of the Christian liberty that one has received in Christ (vv. 9-10). And it may ruin the Christian faith of the weak brother (v. 11).

One additional point made by Paul that is often overlooked in this passage is v. 8: βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν. Meat does not bring us closer to God; if we do not eat them we are no worse off and neither are we better off. Paul absolutely denies the relevance of the Torah based dietary

code followed rigidly by Jews in his day. Food, βρῶμα (= food more than just meat), has utterly no spiritual value. This stands against both the first century Jewish belief that adhering to the dietary code was important to one's spiritual life and then especially against the false teachers inside Christianity during these days who advocated adherence to this code as necessary for one's spiritual welfare. 8:8 here stands with Col. 2:16 with a similar emphasis.

Paul concludes with the personal declaration διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω, Therefore if meats scandalize my brother, I under no circumstance will ever eat meat, so that I may not scandalize my brother. Thus the apostle commits himself to not offend any weak brother. In no way does he imply that he would never eat meat again. Rather, that he would never ever do it in the presence of a weak brother.

Once again, the idea of a weak conscience here is similar to the bad conscience of Plutarch in the sense of the decision making mechanism in us not being able to reason through the right understandings in order to make a correct decision. Wrong ideas, i.e., polytheism, obscure correct information, i.e., monotheism, as a basis for proper decision making.

Most commentators are convinced that Paul implies in this discussion at Corinth that the source of the weak conscience brothers was non-Jewish with their polytheistic religious heritage, while those 'strong conscience' brothers with clear knowledge of the exclusive existence of God were Jewish with their deep heritage of monotheistic belief in God. It is not absolutely clear that such was implied in Paul's discussion, but the polytheism / monotheism backgrounds certainly provided two very different religious teachings that would have been embedded in the thinking of the believers at Corinth.[84]

1 Cor. 10:25, 27, 28, 29. 25 Πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience,

In 10:23-11:1, Paul brings to a summarizing close several of his responses to the questions posed from chapter 7 onwards, including the meat offered to idols issue in chapter eight. His reference to conscience occurs inside the meat offered to idols issue in vv. 23-30.

As is to typical of Paul's strategy, the foundational principles are set forth at the beginning (vv. 23-24) and then applied to specific circumstances (vv. 25-30). Here the application centers on the meat offered to idols issue, but here an additional specific situation is addressed directly rather than assumed as in chapter eight. Additionally, some qualification of the chapter eight discussion occurs as well.

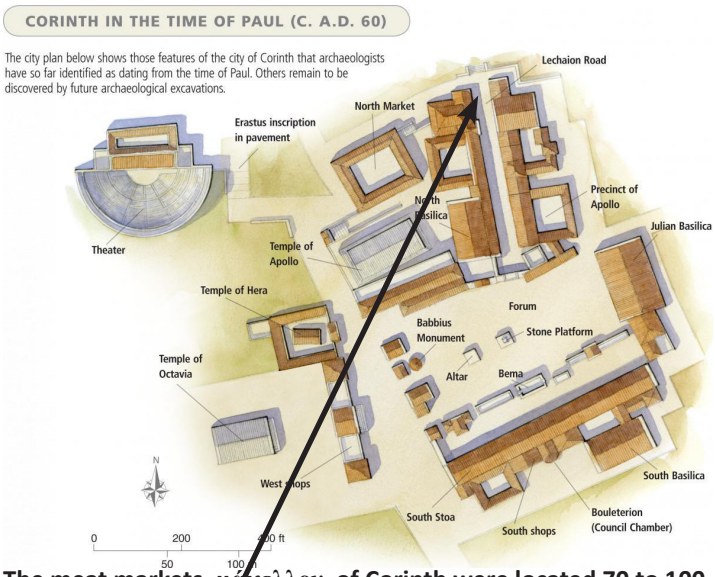
The issue of conscience here focuses upon the other person's conscience rather than the conscience of the believer being addressed. Here the actions of eating or not eating by the strong believer are primarily in view. How this impacts the conscience of the other person is the point of concern.

The guiding principles underlying these situations are clear: 23 Πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ. 24 μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητείτω ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου. 23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. Therefore, what builds up the other believer spiritually takes precedence over my privileges. This parallels the foundation principles in the chapter eight discussion: Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, οἴδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχομεν. ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up (8:1). This second discussion assumes the principles of monotheism that deny polytheism and that are laid out in 8:4-6.

The primary application scenario in vv. 25-28 is new in that the believer is the dinner guest of an unbeliever. But Paul first deals with the believer going to the market place to purchase meat for himself (vv. 25-26): 25 Πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν· 26 τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, 26 for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." Although the precise meaning of ἐν μακέλλῳ, in the meat market, is debated, archaeology has discovered the primary location of the meat markets of Corinth about 70 to 100 meters north of the Agora, the general market place.[85] Meat,

[84]One modern situation that compares here is the special considerations that Christians must give to converts mostly coming from Hinduism with its massive polytheism. This passage takes on different meaning in a Christian church in India than in the US.

[85]"Older modern writers argue that the Greek μάκελλον (only here within the NT) is a late loanword from Lat. macellum.[8] In spite of the close relationship of virtual transliteration however, the word can be traced to an inscription of 400 BC at Epidaurus as well as to Ionic Greek, and BAGD insist that it was 'not originally a Latin word taken into Greek.'[9] Robertson and Moulton-Milligan, among others, however, observe that it also relates to Hebrew, and demonstrate its use in Dio Cassius, Plutarch, the papyri, and inscriptions to mean market for provisions, or the meat market.[10] Kent shows that of the 104 inscriptions dated prior to the reign of Hadrian, 101 are in Latin, and only 3 in Greek.[11] If Latin was used mainly in the early days of Corinth as a Roman colony (from 44 BC onward), in Paul's day Greek would have been the language of trade and commerce, and interaction between the languages was inevitable. The markets, however, may not be identified with the row of shops immediately on the north side of the Agora. They were likely to have been situated between 70 and 100 meters further to the north along the Lechaeum Road.[12] D. W. J. Gill has undertaken recent research on the site of the macellum at Corinth, and suggests



The meat markets, μάκελλον, of Corinth were located 70 to 100 meters north of the Agora on the Lechaeum Road.

both dedicated and not dedicated, was offered to the residents of the city for sale. Most likely little if any distinction would have been made between the two types of meats. The believer likely had a household slave do the purchasing of the meat for the family, if it was to be prepared and eaten at home. If the dinner host did the purchasing through a member of his household, most everyone eating would have no idea what kind of meat it was. One should also note that normally meat was regularly included in the diet of the very wealthy, while peasants seldom could afford such items in their meals. For most of the members of the Corinthian Christian community, the opportunity to enjoy meat at a mealtime was a luxury seldom available to them.

The admonition to eat ἐσθίετε is second plural imperative covering all of Paul's readers. The strong need not to question the propriety of eating meat even if dedicated to a pagan idol. The weak conscience believers identified in chapter eight should eat without questioning whether it is proper or not, since they don't know the status of the meat being offered to them.

The common phrase διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν (vv. 25, 27); τὴν συνείδησιν (vv. 28, 29); ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως (v. 29b), understands conscience here in the same way as elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, as the decision making mechanism that each individual possesses. Again Paul is using the standard Greek understanding of συνείδησις.

In verse 25, the admonition to eat doesn't need any evaluative deliberation over whether to obey it or not. The participle ἀνακρίνοντες from ἀνακρίνω clearly points this direction with its meaning of sifting through evidence in order to reach a decision.[86] For the strong, that decision has already been made. For the weak, they just need to obey the admonition without putting themselves through the deliberation of whether it's okay or not, since it is okay and their polytheistic background is interfering with proper reasoning to begin with. This is their opportunity to take action based on their Christian teachings rather than wresting over their polytheistic background. Paul then quotes Ps. 24:1 as the basis (γὰρ) for the admonition (v. 26): οὖ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς, for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." This quote is paralleled by 8:6 in the first discussion. And it may here point to Jewish Christians as the weak believer since their Jewish heritage would push questioning the source of the meat in light of the Torah dietary code.

In vv. 27-30, a specific scenario is projected: εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορεύεσθαι, if someone among unbelievers invites you to a meal and you desire to go. The use of the first class conditional protasis with εἴ assumes that such invitations are coming to the believers at Corinth. Also the plural you, ὑμᾶς, covers all of the believers at Corinth, both strong and weak Christians. Now the general admonition to eat in v. 25 takes on specific application.

Also assuming the believer is inclined to accept the invitation, θέλετε πορεύεσθαι, how are they to approach eating meat set before them at the meal? Simple: πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, eat whatever is set before you without raising questions because of conscience. This is a non issue for Christians living in a pagan society.

The only exception comes from someone else at the meal: ἐὰν δέ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ· τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν, μὴ ἐσθίετε δι' ἐκεῖνον τὸν μηνύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν, if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience (v. 29). Most likely this 'questioner' is a fellow believer at the dinner a hosted by the unbeliever. It could be the unbeliever host making the statement τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν as a test of the guest believer, but the context points more to another believer, a weak one, also present at the meal

that Latin inscriptions dating from very shortly before the period of Paul's ministry attest to its presence as a gift from the social elite of the city.[13]" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 782–783.]

[86]"In 2:14–15; 4:3–4; 9:3; 14:24 ἀνακρίνω means to sift evidence, to ask about (something), or to reach a judgment (not simply to ask about). The lexicographical evidence is clear and harmonizes with Fee's comment about Jewish obligations.[28] If Weiss, Conzelmann, and Murphy-O'Connor are right about most meat's coming from the temple, this would make it all the more important for Jews and the scrupulous to ask about 'uncontaminated' supplies to reach a judgment." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 785.]

and making the statement about the meat. In either situation the appropriate response of the guest believer is clear: μὴ ἐσθίετε δι' ἐκεῖνον τὸν μηνύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν, then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience. The believer should politely decline to eat the meat. If the 'informer' is the unbeliever host, then the Christian has an opportunity for witness to him. But if the 'informer' is a fellow believer weak in his conscience, then the guest believer must put the interest of his Christian brother above his own. This goes back to the foundational principle in v. 23-24 that no all things build up.

The addition of conscience in Paul's statement is somewhat vague about whether its the conscience of the 'informer' or of the guest believer. But Paul clears that up completely by the follow up statement: συνείδησιν δὲ λέγω οὐχὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου, I mean the other's conscience, not your own (v. 29a). If the 'informer' is a weak believer also at the dinner, then Paul helps this individual by not putting a stumbling block in his way spiritually. But if the 'informer' is the unbeliever host, the believer avoids a possible argument over the existence of the host's patron god and whether that deity was somehow present in the meat. This was the normal understanding of what happened when meat was dedicated to a deity. Rules of ancient hospitality prohibited personal arguments especially over dinner. The post dinner discussions were open to most subjects apart from the personal beliefs and habits of the host. Besides, a Christian didn't come into a unbeliever's home as a invited guest and then deny the existence of the host's patron deity! This was a sure fire way to loose a witness to the unbeliever. See 8:4-6 for Paul's better strategy in such discussions.

Paul's qualifications of the chapter eight discussion come to the surface in a pair of rhetorical questions in vv. 29b-30.[87] The thrust of these two questions posed by Paul have puzzled commentators for centuries.[88]

The inner connectedness of the two questions is important for correct understanding of them

1) ἱνατί γὰρ ἡ ἐλευθερία μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως; For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else's conscience?
2) εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ; If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

Both are stated in the first person singular rather than the second person plural. By referring to himself is Paul using his experience as an example, or simply recounting his own experience in this issue? Probably a little of both are implicit in this framing of the questions.

The second question unquestionably grows out of the issue in the first question. Since Paul would have eaten the meat with the thankfulness of God's providing it, based upon his quote of Ps. 24:1, what basis would anyone, especially fellow believers, have had to criticize (βλασφημοῦμαι) him for so doing? None is the clear answer assumed in the framing of the question. Such an approach represents the best case scenario.

In the first question then, the issue is over an assumption of a surrendering of his Christian liberty by refusing to eat the meat when to have eaten it would have been a stumbling block either to the host or the weak Christian -- depending upon the identity of the 'informer' -- present at the dinner. Their inability to reason beyond a polytheism perspective with their conscience in no way limits his liberty in Christ. The sense of ἱνατί, as 'to what end' in the first question over against the simple τί, why, in the second question, points to the sense of my objective in refusing to eat is not surrendering my liberty in Christ but is rather a liberating expression of Christian love for my brother. But perhaps in the context of the community of believers to give in to the weak conscience of others is taken as surrendering something vital to the believer. Paul vigorously rejects the idea that putting one's brother above one's own personal interest is in any way a surrendering of Christian liberty.

Verses 31 through 11:1 then conclude with admonitions for doing everything to God's glory. This means avoiding offending others unnecessarily. The key is putting others ahead of one's own interest. The ultimate objective is to help them find Christ in salvation. A Christianity that is deliberately confrontational to others just to make a personal point of one's convictions is utterly alien to biblical Christianity! It was not Paul's way at all. And his encouragement in 11:1 to follow his example because he is following Christ's example is good advice.

2 Cor. 4:2. 1 Διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν, οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν 2 ἀλλ'

[87]The verse division here in v. 29 is horrible. The clarifying remark about whose conscience is in view is a part grammatically of the sentence in v. 28. The first rhetorical question in v. 29b clearly belongs with the second one in v. 30.

[88]"The problems of vv. 29b–30 have been described by Barrett and Fee as 'notoriously difficult' and as 'a notorious crux.'[44] No fewer than six possible accounts of the verses have been offered by major writers, although in our view the most careful and convincing explanation can be found in an article on the rhetorical function of these questions by Duane F. Watson.[45] Watson examines all the other major proposals, but convincingly concludes that these rhetorical questions serve a multi-layered function of recapitulation, argumentation (which focuses the weakness of the position of 'the strong'), and a proposal of policy. Once the rhetorical structure and functions have been grasped, and parallels noted, the apparent abruptness of the sudden change from the second person to the first person and supposed ambiguity of the questions cease to remain a problem.[46]" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 788.]

ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

In the defense of Paul's ministry to the Corinthians in 3:1-4:18, the small pericope of 4:1-5 stands a one segment of that defense elaborating upon the divine foundation of his ministry of preaching the Gospel. The dominating theme of the pericope is Paul's integrity in this ministry. The essence of this comes in v. 5 with the declaration Οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλ' Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν. For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants through Jesus. This servant ministry posture is central to God's merciful calling of the apostle and plays a role in the apostle not yielding to temptation to compromise this calling (v. 1). Out of this calling has come a renunciation of worldly things and deceptive ministry practices (v. 2a).

As evidence of this integrity Paul commends[89] himself to others: ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. The reference of the consciences of others is clearly within the definitional framework of συνείδησις in secular Greek of that time. Here Paul invites everyone to carefully examine the evidence for his integrity and is convinced that upon honest evaluation they will decide to agree with his claim to integrity. Their συνείδησις is the mechanism to be used in doing this evaluation. It centers upon using reasoning skills to determine whether Paul's claims measure up to the truth of God or not.

In the background at Corinth stands false teachers whose claims to be preaching the Gospel did not hold up to the spotlight given the deceptive methods used in preaching their false message (vv. 2a, 3-4).[90]

[89]The very picturesque manner of saying this in συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων is in declaring that he stands himself alongside the conscience of others with the invitation to be scrutinized from top to bottom. The standard of evaluation to be used is the clearly understood Truth of God, τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας. The two major areas of examination lay in the content of his message and his approach in communicating that message. Did both of these reflect God's own character and being? Words and deeds are central.

[90]"The key part of this disavowal is that Paul will not 'recommend himself' (cf. 3:1; 5:12). His court of appeal is not in any of the self-advertised claims such as his rivals at Corinth brought onto the scene; rather he places his confidence in openly stating — as opposed to a veiled message (v 3) — the truth of the Gospel for all to see. φανέρωσις, 'open declaration,' is a favorite Pauline expression in this letter (10 times; it is scarcely borrowed from the Corinthians, as Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, 190, supposes with his idea that Paul sets the *phanerōsis* of the truth against their rejoicing in the *phanerōsis* of the spirit in 1 Cor 12:7). The expression has parallels with the Qumran community's teaching (CD 2.12 f. 'And He made known His Holy Spirit to them by the hand of His anointed ones, and He proclaimed the truth [to them]. But those whom He hated He led astray.' But J. Murphy-O'Connor in Paul and Qumran [London: Chapman, 1968] 198–99, has noted the uncertainty of the textual reading). For that reason, Paul can direct his appeal to the human 'conscience' (συνείδησις, see R. P. Martin, Dictionary of the Bible and Religion [Abingdon, 1986] under this word). Barrett, *Signs*, 85–86, makes the important point that Paul's ministry is validated by the Gospel he proclaims, not vice versa. Above all—unlike his opponents—Paul labors ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, 'as living in God's sight'." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 77–78.]

The basis of comparison expressed in τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας, in the open revelation of Truth, is important to Paul's words here. He invites others to put his ministry along side the clear revelation of divine Truth, i.e., God's own character. As these evaluators of Paul use the reasoning skills of their συνείδησις to evaluate his ministry, he is confident they will see that it synchronizes correctly with God.

This open revelation of divine Truth as the standard contrasts with the *modus operandi* of working in secret by the false teachers (v. 7). Their claim to being preaching the Gospel supposedly came directly from the Spirit in independent revelations apart from the Gospel and granted exclusively to them (v. 3). In contrast to their methods, Paul's approach was open honesty, as he details in vv. 13-14. He recognizes and admits to his human frailty (vv. 7-12). But the servant approach to ministry puts attention away from him and on to those responding to his message and their relationship with Jesus Christ (vv. 5-6).

2 Cor. 5:11. Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, θεῷ δὲ πεφανερώμεθα· ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν πεφανερῶσθαι. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences.

In Paul's continuing depiction of his ministry to the Corinthians in 5:11-6:13, he focuses upon one aspect of this ministry in 5;11-21 as reconciliation of the sinner to God through Christ Jesus, as summarized in the admonition in 5:20, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ, be reconciled to God. Christ stands as the foundation of this reconciliation as declared in 5:21, τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. The beginning statement in 5:11 sets out the apostle's stance in seeking to persuade others to be

reconciled to God: Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, Therefore because we know the fear of the Lord we persuade men. All through this emphasis the thrust is not upon convincing people that they are sinners. This is not mentioned, except in passing at v. 19b. Instead, the central issue that people need God in control of their lives is the thrust, as he stresses in 5:15. The only way this can happen is through Christ who opened the pathway to God taking control of one's life. Verses 16-21 amplify how Christ accomplishes this through His death and resurrection. This assumption of divine control over one's life is described as becoming a new creation in Christ (v. 17). Paul is amazed that God has granted him the privilege of proclaiming this amazing news to the world (vv. 18-21).

1 Tim. 3:9, clear consience. ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει. they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

In this final Pauline reference to conscience, he uses conscience in reference to one of the qualifications for leadership in church life. The so-called leadership qualities in 3:1-13 grow out of Paul's beginning instruction to Timothy in 1:3-4, Καθὼς παρεκάλεσά σε προσμεῖναι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ πορευόμενος εἰς Μακεδονίαν, ἵνα παραγγείλῃς τισὶν μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν 4 μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις, αἵτινες ἐκζητήσεις παρέχουσιν μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει. 3 I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, 4 and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith. These guidelines in 3:1-13 were a part of that instruction to be given to Timothy to the house church groups across the city of Ephesus in the 60s of the first century. They applied both to those desiring to become leaders, and also to existing leaders. One of the clearly expressed strategies to both Titus and Timothy in the 60s for cleaning up messes that existed in both Christian communities on Crete and in Ephesus was to help each house church group put in place solid leaders, and also to give both them and the church groups solid instruction in the apostolic Gospel.

The spiritual messes were being created by leaders without adequate understanding of the apostolic Gospel. Consequently they were leaning toward using the fanciful perspectives coming out of both the fringe groups of Judaism[91] and Greco-Roman cultural methods and views about life and reality. Paul saw the only way to clean up the churches and get them on the right path was through properly trained leaders in the apostolic Gospel who would lead the various church groups within this framework. These qualifications for leaders should then be seen as guidelines both for and during ministry leadership. The spiritual health of the church will never exceed than of its leaders.

The initial declaration regarding Διακόνους in vv. 8-9 lays out the foundation: Διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνούς, μὴ διλόγους, μὴ οἴνῳ πολλῷ προσέχοντας, μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς, ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει. Deacons similarly serious, not double tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money, while holding to the mystery of faith with a pure conscience. The external qualities mentioned initially will reflect what is true inwardly. These four external traits here require self-control in thinking in speech, in drink, and in a desire for wealth. Something of an ironical play off of μὴ διλόγους, not double tongued, with τὸ μυστήριον, mystery, since the adjective διλόγους alluded to being a 'blabber mouth' who could not keep confidences.[92]

These external qualities are vitally linked to the inward quality of possessing a good grasp of Christian faith commitment to Christ. The very essence of the Gospel is faith surrender to Christ.[93] What does this

[91]Most of the heretical groups in the Judaism of the first Christian century were located in and active in Diaspora Judaism rather than in Judea. The rigid traditionalism of Judaism in Judea had no tolerance for teachings considered to be contrary to established understandings of the Torah. Scribal Judaism exercised tight control over this in Judea. But Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora tended to be much more open to "progressive" thinking and ideas. Interestingly but not surprisingly, the vast majority of this 'progressive' thinking meant the adoption of Greco-Roman ideas into Judaism. Virtually all of the Jewish writings on the fringe from this era are Diaspora based. Alexandra Egypt and the Roman province of Asia were the two main centers of this kind of activity.

[92]"μὴ διλόγους, 'not gossips,' is a rare phrase, occurring elsewhere in Greek literature only in the second century A.D. (Pollux 2.118). There it means 'repeating'; cf. its almost equally rare cognates διλογία, 'repetition,' and διλογεῖν, 'to repeat' (cf. LSJ, 431; MM, 163). The closest form in the LXX is δίγλωσσος, 'double-tongued,' a person who reveals secrets in contrast to one who keeps secrets (Prov 11:3). The δίγλωσσος winnows with every wind and follows every path (Sir 5:9). δίλογος is a compound of δίς, 'twice,' and λόγος, 'something said.' Different suggested definitions are 'repetitious,' 'gossips,' "saying one thing and meaning another,' or 'saying one thing to one person but another thing to another person.' Deacons thus must be the type of people who are careful with their tongues, not saying what they should not, being faithful to the truth in their speech. A similar requirement is applied to their wives in v 11 μὴ διαβόλους, 'not slanderers'." [William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 199.]

[93]Paul likes the word μυστήριον, mystery, by which he means that which is knowable through the Gospel by those committed to Christ. Note Mounce helpful exposition:

> μυστήριον, "mystery," is a significant word in Paul's theology, occurring twenty-one times throughout his writings. It refers to knowledge that is beyond the reach of sinners but has now been graciously revealed through the gospel. The emphasis of the concept is upon the fact that this information is now knowable, which explains its common association with words like ἀποκάλυψις, "revelation" (Rom 16:25; Eph 3:3), ἀποκαλύπτειν, "to reveal" (1 Cor 2:10; Eph 3:5), γνωρίζειν, "to make known" (Rom 16:26; Eph 1:9; 3:3, 5; Col

mean? What is implied by it? How does it express itself? All these questions and more the Christian leader must be able to explain to both converts and believers in his or her group. But what if his commitment is not genuine and the ability to think through these implication is twisted by lack of sincere commitment to Christ? The result will be the mess that Timothy stepped into upon arrival at Ephesus. The consciences, i.e., the reasoning ability of these leaders to correctly know how to instruct, doesn't work properly. It has been contaminated by all these tendencies Paul alluded to in 1:4. Their conscience is not 'clean' but contaminated. They only have the ability ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, to instruct with false teaching (1:3c). Thus Timothy's commission from Paul is to put a stop to this nonsense (1:3). One important way out of this mess then is to put new teachers in place who know how to proper explain the Gospel because it is the foundation of their life, both inwardly and outwardly.

Key to accomplishing this is testing them (v. 10): καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον, εἶτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες, but these must indeed first be put to the test, then upon demonstrating blamelessness let them serve. If one carefully compares the two sets of guidelines between the ἐπισκοπῆς (vv. 1-7) and the Διακόνους (vv. 8-13), the guidelines are essentially the same although different terminology is employed by Paul to describe the guidelines. And one should not forget that throughout the pastoral letters virtually all of these guidelines are mandated for believers generally. These leaders are not expected to meet guidelines not expected of all believers!

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Hopefully this survey of Paul's use of the word συνείδησις clearly demonstrates first of all that he used the term in his writings strictly within the framework of the established usage of the term in the world around him. He did not invent some new alien meaning for the time. Although in a few rare places the apostle did take an existing meaning and revise it considerably, e.g., with σάρξ, flesh, he is first and foremost concerned with clear communication of his ideas. But he never arbitrarily injects a completely new meaning into existing Greek words. Instead, he works off core meanings well established in his Greek speaking world, and the revisions he adds gives a distinctively Christian perspective to this core meaning. When doing this abundant explanatory extension will be found in modifiers all the way from individual adjectives to full sentence amplifications.

What Paul found in the not widely used term συνείδησις in the first century, was a handy reference to a mental capability found universally. That is, συνείδησις labels the ability of an individual to consider a situation, especially one requiring a response, and to consider the pros and cons of different responses. He never specifies this as something given by God in creation. He never limits this capacity to moral decisions alone. It is more inclusive than that. The connection of the noun συνείδησις to the root verb σύνοιδα with the simple meaning of to know with provided all that he needed. The literal meaning to knowing something with someone else was helpful. And the figurative meaning of the mental idea of putting one idea along side another in comparative analysis was even more helpful. Since his readers would also understand the word in this same way, it became a useful term. Thus the συνείδησις can easily designate the decision making capability of individuals, as well as the interconnectivity of individuals through shared knowledge which both can evaluate individually or collectively. Consistently the sources of the ideas come externally either through circumstance, and for Paul more often through divine revelation in the leadership of the Holy Spirit -- one of his Christian extensions of συνείδησις.

What I have sought to do, after establishing this as the only legitimate definition of συνείδησις for a first century usage, has been to examine each of Paul's uses of the term with a brief exegetical analysis so that one can more easily see how his use of the term with this meaning pattern throws enormous light on understanding what he seeks to say.

I trust your reading experience will be as helpful as my writing experience here. This study has given me profoundly greater insight into Paul's thinking than I had prior to doing the study. Previously some of these passages hardly made any sense at all to me, because when I saw the English word conscience for συνείδησις a modern definition came to mind and this only blurred the understanding of what Paul was getting at. Obvi-

1:27), and φανεροῦν, "to make manifest" (Rom 16:26; Col 1:26 [cf. O'Brien, Colossians, 84]). In all but one occurrence of the term, the μυστήριον is the gospel (1 Cor 14:2 refers to the mysteries uttered by one speaking in tongues). The equation of mystery with the gospel is sometimes implicit (1 Cor 2:1; 2:7; 4:1) and sometimes explicit (Rom 16:25–26; Eph 6:19; Col 1:25–27). Sometimes μυστήριον refers to one particular aspect of God's redemptive plan such as the hardening of the Jews (Rom 11:25), the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church along with the Jews (Eph 3:3, 4, 9; Col 1:26–27), the change to be experienced by believers at the parousia (1 Cor 15:51), the union of all things in Christ (Eph 1:9), the nature of Christ (Col 2:2; 4:3), the relationship between Christ and his church (Eph 5:32), and the mystery of lawlessness that will be revealed at the parousia (2 Thess 2:7–8). This mystery that Paul proclaims is a revelation of God's plan, and yet without love this knowledge will avail a person nothing (1 Cor 13:2). For comments on the background to the word, see O'Brien (Colossians, 83–84) and G. Bornkamm (TDNT 4:802–28).

[William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 200.]

ously a modern conscience, especially a religiously defined conscience, was not what Paul was talking about, but I did not understand what the alternative meaning was.

Now for Hebrews and First Peter.

Although Paul is the overwhelming user of the term συνείδησις in the NT, he is not the only one. We looked in the beginning at Luke's use of the term in two of Paul's speeches in Acts. But two places in Hebrews and two in First Peter surface as well. And they need to be checked in order to have a complete NT picture.

Hebrews 10:2. ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐπαύσαντο προσφερόμεναι διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς λατρεύοντας ἅπαξ κεκαθαρισμένους; Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshipers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin?

Here the unknown writer of Hebrews is comparing the need for annual sacrifices inside the Torah system to the once for all sacrifice of Christ in 10:1-9. His point in v. 2 that comes off of the declaration in v. 1 is that inside the Torah system annual sacrifice were necessary in order to remind the worshipers that sin offerings were necessary to atone from their sinful conduct during the past year. Although the NRSV above translates συνείδησις with 'consciousness' in the sense of awareness of sin, the better meaning is within the secular background of decision making capacity makes more sense here. When understood in terms of the established meaning of συνείδησις what the writer is asserting is that the Torah based worshipers would not have had sufficient external information sources to have reasoned out that something wasn't right in their relationship with God. The meaning of 'sacrifice' led to deliberation. That is, sacrifice is for atoning sin, since I need to make a sacrifice, there must be sin in my life.

The NRSV understands συνείδησις here in the self awareness meaning that did exist in the first century but was not as well established as the deliberating capability understanding. Although this could be the possible sense of συνείδησις here, the more established meaning of reasoned conclusion making makes more sense for the statement.

Hebrews 10:22. προσερχώμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως ῥεραντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς καὶ λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

In the unit calling believers to persevere in Christian commitment (10:19-39), v. 22 is one of several admonitions based upon a couple of foundations: Ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ, since having confidence therefore brothers for entrance into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus... (v. 19), and καὶ ἱερέα μέγαν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, and since having a great priest over the house of God (v. 21), ***let us...***.

1) προσερχ***ώμεθα***..., approach... (v. 22)
2) κατέχ***ωμεν***...., hold fast... (v. 23)
3) κατανο***ῶμεν***..., consider... (vv. 24-25)

The first admonition, which contains συνείδησις, is an appeal to believers to approach Almighty God as a worshiper in the Jerusalem temple was supposed to approach making his sacrifice in the inner court. But the huge difference now for the believer is that he approaches God already purified by the sacrifice of Christ, rather than presenting a temple sacrifice in the anticipation of being purified.

The purification accomplished by Christ touches the believer's heart where he makes decisions and his conscience where he has the ability to reason out what decision to make. This is the sense of συνείδησις in the established meaning of the first century. The marvelous message of the writer is that the blood of Christ sprinkled on both our heart and conscience has purified both. Prior to that sprinkling, our conscience was πονηρᾶς, evil. That is, our capacity to reason out the meaning of Christ and life was so tainted by evil passions that we couldn't grasp who Christ is, and what He can do. But upon encountering Him, our conscience, i.e., our capacity to think properly, got cleaned up so that we can now approach God clearly understanding how to do it appropriately. This stood, for the Hebrews writer, in contrast to the Temple worshiper still trapped by a conscience that couldn't work right, and thus led him to make the wrong decisions about approaching God.

First Peter 3:16. ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθήν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε καταισχυνθῶσιν οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφήν. yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.

That Peter would use the term συνείδησις ἀγαθή in both these references in vv. 16 and 21 should not be surprising since a close companion of Paul, Silas, is doing the actual writing of this letter (cf. 5:12). This concept of συνείδησις ἀγαθή is Pauline as well (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; cf. also Acts 23:1).

The adjective ἀγαθός, -ή, -όν references something or someone who essential essence is goodness. It stands in contrast to καλός -ή, -όν with an emphasis on external goodness containing an attractive quality.

A good conscience then is one whose reasoning

skills are not contaminated or messed up by evil.

In the 3:16 passage we are to stand ready to give witness to our Christian faith (the Greek sentence runs from v. 14 through the end of v. 16), in a specific manner containing three qualities: μετὰ πραΰτητος καὶ φόβου, συνείδησιν ἔχοντες ἀγαθήν, with meekness and respect, possessing a good conscience. Our witness must never be presented in pompousness and arrogance, the opposite of Peter's stated qualities. Keeping our reasoning mechanism working properly will be absolutely essential to sharing Christ and our commitment to Him properly. If we allow anger, frustration etc. to take control, our decision making capability flies right out the window. The consequence will be a poor testimony to Christ. We will not be able to know how to explain Christ persuasively to non-believers. This is something to remember!

First Peter 3:21. ὃ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σῴζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God forf a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Here true baptism, βάπτισμα, stands as the answer of a good conscience to God, συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν. This complex statement about baptism really is not all that complex in the Greek. The problem is translating clearly a hugely complex Greek sentence syntactically.

Baptism which Noah's ark experience pre-figures, ὃ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον, brings deliverance νῦν σῴζει. How is that? The ark represents Noah and the 8 individuals with him in it (v. 20). Here is where a mixing of metaphors seems to push the statement into meaningless.[94] βάπτισμα is both the ark and the flood waters at the same time. But Peter kinda sorts this out with the further explanation. βάπτισμα is οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου, not the removing of filth (v. 21). The flood waters of Noah representing water baptism could be taken figuratively as cleansing from sin, but Peter denies this. Instead, the ark as an expression of Noah's sincere commitment to obeying God represents βάπτισμα also. And this Peter then defines as συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν, the answer of a good conscience to God. Thus it is the sincerity of a decision to obey God openly expressed in βάπτισμα that produces salvation.

The συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς then means a deliberated decision that came to the decision to obey God in the example of Noah in the building of the ark. This is essential to salvation. Noah's inner obedience was expressed publicly in the ark. How is such a salvation decision expressed? In apostolic Christianity one way: water baptism. No baptism; no salvation. This is Peter's strong point here.

What becomes clear is that both Hebrews and First Peter also utilize the established meaning of συνείδησις in their day. Their usage generally follows the patterns of Paul, although the functioning of a συνείδησις is applied to different settings than to any of those found in Paul.

Guilt / Guilty:

Some secondary ideas are related somehow to the idea of conscience. When it comes to the idea of 'guilt' some surprising insights may surface. They sure did for me in preparing this study. The English word 'guilt' is never used in the NRSV throughout the NT. And the related word 'guilty' is only found in Mk. 3:29; Lk. 23:14; Jhn. 19:11; 1 John 3:4. On the other hand, 'guilt' shows up 122 times in the NRSV OT, while 'guilty' is used 36 times by the NRSV translators.[95]

In connection to the Hebrew OT, the Hebrew words and phrases express one's connection to the Torah and obedience or disobedience to it. As the charts below indicate a wide range of Hebrew words and phrases are used in the OT to express either the idea of guilt or of guilty. But none of these terms specifies an inward feeling of guilt or guiltiness. God's actions are never targeting making us feel guilty. They inform us of our having violated His Law and the necessity of removing these actions. Everything is predicated upon objective guilt, that is, an individual or a group has violated the Torah and are answerable to God for this violation. It's interesting that the writer of Hebrews in 10:2 (cf.

[94]Ancient writers generally, including the apostle Paul and most of the other writers in the NT, were notorious for mixing up the use of figurative language. A single metaphor could signal multiple and perhaps contradictory meanings, etc. Untangling these metaphors is a vivid reminder that the ancient Greek, Latin, Hebrew etc. minds did not function like modern post Rationalism minds are taught to reason.

[95]"For the biblical writers, guilt is not primarily an inward feeling of remorse or a bad conscience, but rather a situation that has arisen because of sin committed against God or one's neighbor; a clear presupposition is that human beings are responsible and accountable for their actions, thoughts, and attitudes. The latter notion of responsibility is so great that people can be guilty without even being aware that they have done anything wrong (e.g., Lev. 5:17–19). Guilt, furthermore, can be collective as well as individual. Ps. 51 testifies to a situation in which an individual has sinned and brought guilt upon himself, but what one person does can also cause guilt to come upon an entire group of people (cf. the story of Achan in Josh. 7). In the Bible, guilt brings serious consequences, including separation from God and one's neighbors. Guilt is depicted as a burden or weight that can crush a person (e.g., Ps. 38:4, 6), as a disease that can destroy a person from within (e.g., Ps. 32:3–4), or as a debt that must be paid (e.g., Lev. 5:1–6:7; Num. 5:5–8). When speaking of guilt, NT writers use the Greek word enochos, which usually means 'deserving of punishment' (e.g., Matt. 26:66; 1 Cor. 11:27; James 2:10). According to Paul, all human beings are guilty before God (e.g., Rom. 1:18–3:20)." [James M. Efird, "Guilt," ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated) (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 348.]

above study) asserts that Israelite worshipers needed the Torah mandate to offer guilt offerings annually in order to teach them that they had violated the Law of God. Otherwise their sins against the Law of God would have so contaminated their συνείδησιν that they would not have been aware of having committed ἁμαρτιῶν. His point is that the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus removes this need for the annual ritual. "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (μιᾷ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους, Heb. 10:14). Then believers have the Holy Spirit to instruct us regarding our behavior (cf. vv. 15-18).

Confession of sins remains important for believers after conversion as 1 John 1:5-2:2 makes abundantly clear. But it has nothing to do with guilt or being guilty. Instead as John asserts, our sins interfere with our κοινωνίαν with God and His people, and thus must be removed by God through our confession. Modern Christian commentators usually label this as guilt. But this is done without any biblical foundation and is a product of contemporary western culture particularly from generalizations out of legal perspectives. The destructive result is that Christians waste time dealing with a fictitious guilt[96] rather than following the biblical guidelines of dealing directly and immediately with their rebellious acts through sincere confession of them to God. Biblically there is no sinful action and guilt resulting from it! Only the sinful action exists and it is this alone which God holds us answerable for. And this alone is what we

[96]Feelings of guilt are a psychological reality produced by heavy cultural conditioning in western society. They are compounded by false Christian teaching as well.

The next time you 'feel guilty' over some action just remind yourself of the following. God could care less about how I feel. If I have done something in specific rebellion against Him, this is what I must face up to and then submit to Him immediately in confession, not how I feel about it. Here is where conscience according to the NT comes into play. Your reasoning ability has been informed by the Holy Spirit of your rebellious action. If in a 'clean' state, it has the ability to walk you through the decision making process to tell you that you have rebelled against God and must immediately acknowledge this act to God in confession. Emotions play no role in this whatsoever. Our mind and volition working properly together as 'conscience' is where we face up to our rebellious action. Whether or not we have then 'faced up to our sin' is determined by the sincerity of our confession and the trustworthiness of God to forgive as He promises. The sincerity of our confession is then determined by whether we stop committing the sin or not. This is the biblical scenario! The essence of confession is two things: honest acknowledge of the sinful action to God and a serious pledge to God to never ever repeat this action again. Until we do these two things we have not confessed to God, and no forgiveness will follow until we do. The 'turning' idea in both μετανοέω and ὑποστρέφω the NT words for repent (turning around our minds and our lives) center on these two items of acknowledge and pledge.

acknowledge to Him in confession. And it is this alone which He forgives. Feelings of guilt are man made fantasies and God does not deal with our fantasies.

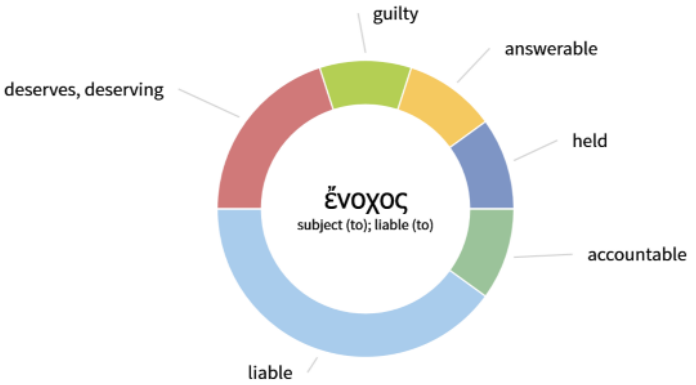
John makes this abundantly clear in 1 John 3:4-5, 4 Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. 5 καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα ***τὰς ἁμαρτίας*** ἄρῃ, καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν. Everyone committing an act of sin also commits an act of lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that That One was revealed to take away ***our sins***, and in Him is no sin.

One question then arises: Is there guilt or not in the Bible? The answer is rather simple. In the OT there is objective guilt strictly in connection to Torah obedience. No such thing as subjective guilt exists. An Israelite never 'felt' guilty of anything! And this also depends on how objective guilt is defined. The collection of Hebrew words and phrases never asserts that Torah disobedience produces guilt either in the individual or the covenant people. Instead, the idea is that disobedience brings direct accountability from God for the disobedience, not for guilt produced by disobedience.

The modern idea is that guilt, although connected to law breaking, is something different from law breaking. And that it is this guilt that must be rectified. And thus individuals convicted in a court of law breaking will carry forever the stigma of being a guilty criminal, even long after having served a sentence for his crime. This kind of thinking is profoundly shaped by a legal system of some sort. But such thinking has absolutely no connection to biblical principles.

The English word 'guilt' or 'guilty' has only a tiny bit of legitimacy in Bible translation to the degree that is clearly specifies what is the core and significant issue biblically: accountability or answerablity to God for one's actions in violation to God's Law. A careful examination of all of the Hebrew words and phrases listed above on the two charts will reveal that the basic thrust of every one is centered around God holding individuals and groups accountable to Him for their actions, not for guilt they may or may not feel.

These rebellious actions contain divinely ordained penalties to be accessed either by a Jewish council acting in behalf of God, or by God Himself acting in punishment as an expression of his displeasure with the actions. Most of the Torah in the Pentateuch is made up of cauistic laws. That is, laws that spell out specific penalties for violation of specific laws. The other category is apodictic law without specified penalty. These stand as the legal foundation to the cauistic laws, beginning with the Ten Commandments as the core foundation. The application of these core legal principles to everyday life situation produces the cauistic system of laws.[97]

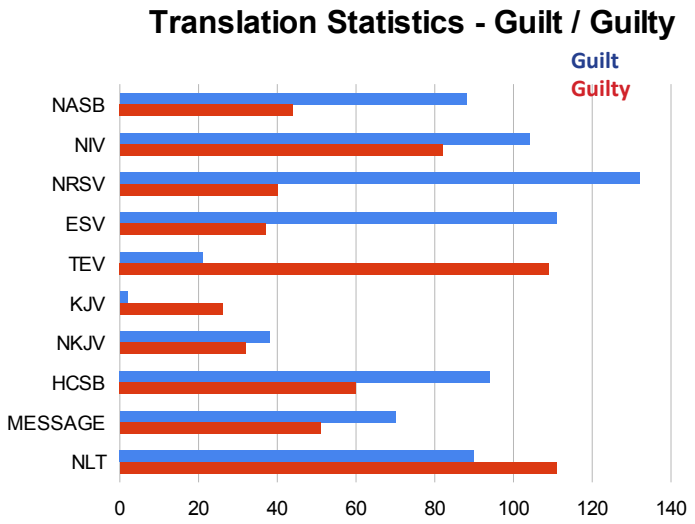


When one comes to the NT another set of challenges emerge. First, as I discovered much to my surprise in doing this study, ancient Greek did not contain any word with the specific meaning of 'guilt' or 'guilty.' Second, the NT uses only ten times the adjective ἔνοχος, -ον, which specifies answerablity for one's actions: Mt. 5:21, 22, 26:66; Mk. 3:29; 14:64; 1 Cor. 11:27; Heb. 2:15; Jas. 2:10. The NRSV uses 'liable,' 'deserves,' 'guilty,' answerable,' 'held,' and accountable' to translate these ten instances.

Interestingly, the single use of 'guilty' in the NRSV is at Mk. 3:29 which would have more accurately been translated 'answerable for.' Paul's single use of ἔνοχος, -ον in 1 Cor. 11:27 is correctly translated by the NRSV as 'answerable' but the context makes it clear that individuals participating in the Lord's Supper with the discrimination posture condemned by Paul between the rich and the poor at Corinth will mean a collective penalty imposed by God on the entire congregation, as it already has in the premature death of some of the members. Outside of this the concept of 'guilt' or 'guilty' never surfaces in Paul's writings.

Third, why then do English translations use either 'guilt' or 'guilty' in their translations? First of all, let me indicate that such usage leaves the door open for all kinds of false interpretation of the biblical texts. Second, no legitimate basis exists for such practice from either the biblical texts nor the surrounding cultures of either the OT or NT worlds. The translators have not done their homework adequately in producing their translations at this point. Some are better than others, but every translation I checked contained violations at

[97]For example, if you want to understand the meaning of "You shall not kill," (apodictic) then you must sort through the many regulations governing the taking of a life in the cauistic laws, which are sometimes called 'case laws.' And there are a large number of them in the three legal codes of the Pentateuch applying this commandment to specific situations. This is where a wide variety of differing penalties will be imposed depending on the specific circumstance in the taking of a life. Such penalties served not only to hold the lawbreaker accountable for his actions, but also served as a restraining force to prevent revenge with the level of retaliation rising above the severity of the action. This aspect was the 'eye for an eye' principle that played a very important role in defining Israelite society as more stable and less violent than other surrounding societies. .



this point.[98] Interestingly, the least violations with both words was the King James Version. In the chart above, the top blue bar is 'guilt' and the red bar underneath is 'guilty.' Third, careful notice will indicate that the newer translations and most of those following a higher level dynamic equivalent method of translating will contain higher numbers of both English words. But this pattern is not completely uniform based on these criteria. Fourth, I suspect but have no concrete evidence that the higher frequency usage has something to do with the cultural patterns of western societies in the past thirty to forty years where emotions play a much greater role in decision making than would have been true in the pre WWII era. These translations are especially focused upon clear communication of the biblical text to the modern reader.

But whatever the actual reasons for this high level usage of the English words 'guilt' and 'guilty' in these English translations, they have done their readers a serious dis-service here simply because English language readers will almost always see in these words 'guilt' and 'guilty' when used in a religious setting the modern introspective conscience based definitions and then falsely assume that such is embedded into scripture.

Forgiveness:

Somewhat related but less so to the biblical idea of conscience is that of 'forgiveness.'[99] Both the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT[100] employ a wide variety of terms to get at the idea.[101] The core idea of forgiveness has both a divine-human and a human to human dimension. In the OT the divine-human aspect is the most important, but strong emphasis upon both dimensions surface inside the NT.

How to describe forgiveness is one of the challenges religiously. In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the abstract noun 'forgiveness' is defined non-religiously two ways: a) the act of forgiving someone or something, and b) the attitude of someone who is willing to forgive other people. Unfortunately this type of noun definition doesn't tell you much about the core idea.[102] Howev-

[98] ***Frequency through both OT and NT***:

Guilty: NASB 44x; NIV 82x; NRSV 40x; ESV 37x; TEV 109x; KJV 26x; NKJV 32x; HCSB 60x; The Message 51x; NLT 111x.(the average for these translations is 67.10 per translation)

Guilt: NASB 88x; NIV 104x; NRSV 122x; ESV 111x; TEV 21x; KJV 2x; NKJV 38x; HCSB 94x; The Message 70x; NLT 90x. (the average for these translations is 75 per translation)

[99] "Forgiveness is the wiping out of an offense from memory; it can be effected only by the one affronted. Once eradicated, the offense no longer conditions the relationship between the offender and the one affronted, and harmony is restored between the two. The Bible stresses both human forgiveness and divine forgiveness: The latter is the divine act by which the removal of sin and its consequences is effected." [David Noel Freedman, ed., "Forgiveness," *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:831.]

[100] For a helpful range of the terminology in the NT see topics 40.8-40.13 in Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains.* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996) 1:502.

40.8 ἀφίημι[f]; ἄφεσις[a], εως f; **ἀπολύω[e]**: to remove the guilt resulting from wrongdoing

40.9 ἱλάσκομαι[a]: to forgive, with the focus upon the instrumentality or the means by which forgiveness is accomplished

40.10 χαρίζομαι[b]: to forgive, on the basis of one's gracious attitude toward an individual

40.11 ἐπικαλύπτω: (a figurative extension of meaning of ἐπικαλύπτω 'to cover over, to put a covering on,' not occurring in the NT) to cause sin to be forgiven

40.12 ἱλασμός, οῦ m; **ἱλαστήριονα, ου** n: the means by which sins are forgiven—'the means of forgiveness, expiation.'

40.13 ἱλαστήριον[b], ου n: the location or place where sins are forgiven (in traditional translations rendered 'mercy seat')

[101] "Hay cuatro términos heb. que se traducen perdón: (1) kaphar, «cubrir» (Dt. 21:8; Sal. 78:38; Jer. 18:23). Este término se traduce también «expiación» (véase EXPIACIÓN). (2) Nasa, «llevar», quitar (culpa). Fue usada por los hermanos de José cuando le pidieron que les perdonara (Gn. 50:17; Dios la usa al proclamar que Él es un Dios «que perdona la iniquidad, la rebelión y el pecado»: Éx. 34:7; Nm. 14:18) y al describir la bienaventuranza del hombre, «cuya transgresión ha sido perdonada, y cubierto su pecado» (Sal. 32:1). (3) Salach, «perdonar», se usa sólo del perdón que da Dios. Se emplea con referencia al perdón relacionado con los sacrificios: «obtendrán perdón» (Lv. 4:20, 26); «será perdonado» (vv. 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; etc.). Aparece en la oración de Salomón en la dedicación del Templo (1 R. 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50). También en el Sal. 103; Jer. 31:34; 36:3; Dn. 9:19.

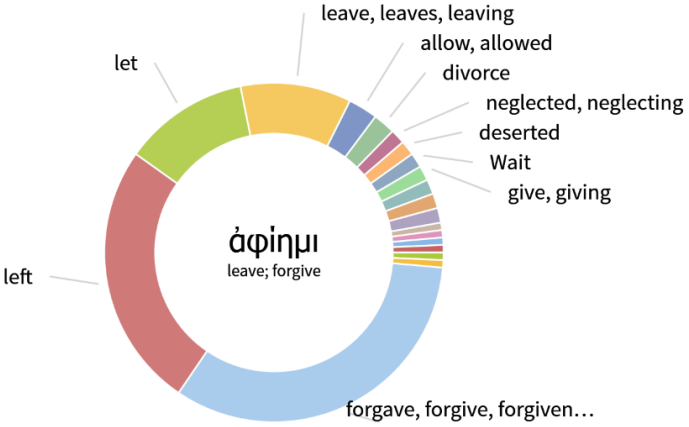
"En el NT se usan varios términos: (1) aphesis, de aphiĕmi, «enviar de, liberar, remitir», que se traduce en varias ocasiones «remisión». (2) Aphiĕmi se traduce «perdonar», que además de «despedir», «entregar», «remitir», se traduce también por el verbo «perdonar». (3) Apoluõ, que además de significar «dejar», «despedir», etc., se traduce también «perdonar». (4) Pheidomai, «dejar», «escatimar», se traduce también como «ser indulgente» y «perdonar». (5) Charizomai se traduce en varias ocasiones como «perdonar» (entregar, dar, conceder, dar gratuitamente). Todas estas palabras se aplican al perdón concedido por Dios, así como al dado por una persona a otra."

[Samuel Vila Ventura, *Nuevo Diccionario Biblico Ilustrado* (TERRASSA (Barcelona): Editorial CLIE, 1985), 917–918.]

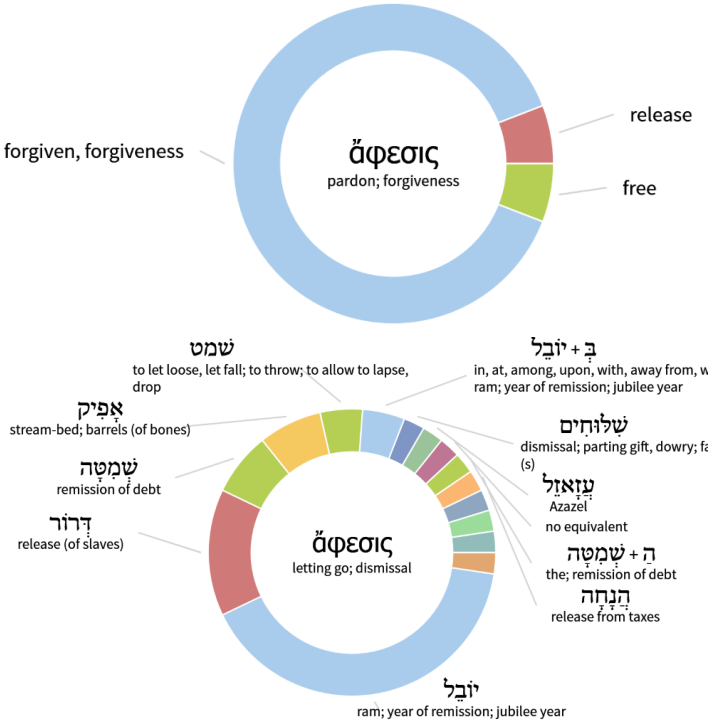
[102] Side tip: abstract nouns are hardly ever defined with meaningful definitions in English language dictionaries. Go to the verb

er, the verb definition is more helpful: a) to stop feeling anger toward (someone who has done something wrong) : to stop blaming (someone), b) to stop feeling anger about (something) : to forgive someone for (something wrong); and c) to stop requiring payment of (money that is owed). In modern pop western culture, the idea of forgiveness, defined only from the human to human perspective, is to cease feeling and/or expressing anger and/or blame toward someone or something. Most of forgiveness centers in solving a human emotional problem.

But biblically this secular idea of forgiveness is virtually non-existent in either the OT or the NT ideas about forgiveness. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terminology used for the idea of forgiveness fundamentally means something else, and forgiveness is a secondary, normally figurative meaning. The primary NT word is the verb ἀφίημι with the noun ἄφεσις. But the chart below for this verb reflects that 'forgive' is but one of many meanings which are secondary to the core idea of sending away.



The 140 uses of this verb focus not just on forgive but a number of other ideas as well. The noun form ἄφεσις used just 17 times does center more on forgiveness than the alternative meanings but these are a part of the meaning as well. But the use of ἄφεσις by the LXX to handle the range of Hebrew words illustrates the huge diversity of ideas in the Hebrew Bible (see 2nd chart to the right).[103] One needs to note carefully



a shift in emphasis when moving from the OT to the NT. In the OT everything related to forgive and forgiveness is linked to the sacrificial system in the Torah and possessed a legal tone of God addressing the office of the Israelite in his offering of sacrifice and God then removes the offense against the worshiper. The death of the sacrificial animal (Exod 34:6-7) as well as the scape goat idea (Lev. 16:22) gave visual imagery to the idea of God sending away the offenses[104] of the worshiper upon offering his sacrifice properly. Upon reflection it is a beautiful even though somewhat gory picture of how God removes what stands between Him and His people. Our offenses, i.e., sins, present a very real barrier to relationship with a utterly holy God. When an

form in order to get substantive definitions.

[103]"In the LXX ἀφιέναι is used for a whole series of Hebrew words, a. for those which denote either 'release,' 'surrender' etc. or 'leave,' 'leave in peace' etc. (esp. common for הֵנִיחַ or הֶנִיחַ, e.g., Ju. 2:23; 3:1; 16:26; 2 Βασ. 16:11; 20:3; ψ 104:14; or for צָזַב, Ex. 9:21; 2 Βασ. 15:16 etc.; and נָתַן, e.g., Gn. 20:6; Ex. 12:23; Nu. 22:13 etc.); b. for verbs of 'remission' and indeed for נָשָׂא, e.g., Gn. 4:13; Ex. 32:32; ψ 24:18; 31:5; for סָלַח, e.g., Lv. 4:20; 5:10, 13; Nu. 14:19; 15:25 f.; Is. 55:7; and כִּפֶּר, Is. 22:14. The object of remission is sin or guilt, mostly ἁμαρτία(ι), but also ἀνομία, ἀσεβεια, and in Gn. 4:13 αἰτία. The one who forgives is God; this is never so in Gk. usage, though it is naturally found in Josephus, e.g., Ant., 6, 92 (but more frequently in the secular sense). While the Gk. rendering corresponds in the first case, ἀφιέναι significantly modifies the verbs of remission or forgiveness, since the original sense of the Heb. verbs is that of the cultic removal and expiation of sin, while ἀφιέναι has a legal sense. The relationship of man to God is thus conceived of in legal terms, and this is quite alien to Greek thought.

"The noun ἄφεσις is used in the LXX to translate יוֹבֵל in Lv. 25 and 27 and שְׁמִטָּה (or שָׁמַט) in Ex. 23:11; Dt. 15:1ff.; 31:10. It is also used for "release" (רוֹהִד etc.) in Lv. 25:10; Ἰερ 41:8, 15, 17 etc.; esp. Is. 58:6; 61:1, where it denotes eschatological liberation. In Est. 2:18 it means 'amnesty' or 'exemption from taxation.' It means 'forgiveness' only in the translation of אֶת־הַשָּׂעִיר לַעֲזָאזֵל as τὸν χίμαρον τὸν διεσταλμένον εἰς ἄφεσιν at Lv. 16:26. Except in this legal sense ἄφεσις is correctly used for אֲיפִיק and פֶּלֶג.5 Josephus uses ἄφεσις for human forgiveness in Bell., 1, 481, but mostly for release, as in Ant., 2, 67; 12, 40; 17, 185.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:510.]

[104]Here is where English translations often are very misleading in using the word 'guilt' for 'offense' in this ancient Jewish system. The offense did not create some ethereal 'guilt' somehow separate from the offense. This is modern, culturally induced, false thinking. God addresses the offense itself and removes it in forgiveness. The Hebrew text is very clear and then gets muddled by English translation.

acceptable sacrifice is presents to God, this barrier is removed and relationship is healed. This action of removal is defined in the OT as atonement and expiation. Some alternative images are used secondarily such as sins being wiped clean, covered, removed, released or passed over.[105]

It is against this background that the NT must be understood.[106] Jesus came as the divinely appointed sacrifice for the sins of not just covenant Israel, but for all humanity. Humanity's sinfulness is an affront and huge barrier to relationship to the holy God of Abraham. Nothing that humanity is able to do can possibly remove this barrier. But the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross accomplishes what is otherwise impossible, as 1 Pet. 2:24 so beautifully expresses.

ὃς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν
ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον,
ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι
τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν,
οὗ τῷ μώλωπι ἰάθητε.
He himself bore our sins
in his body on the cross,
so that, free from sins,
we might live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.

An important angle in such a study on forgiveness is to examine what it is that God sends away from the offender in divine forgiveness. With the verb ἀφίημι we are looking for direct objects and with the cognate noun ἄφεσις we are seeking genitive case nouns modifying ἄφεσις.

1) forgiveness of sins, ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν / ἄφεσις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν: Mt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Col. 1:14 (w. art.).

2) forgiveness of our trespasses, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων: Eph. 1:7

3) forgiveness of these things, ἄφεσις τούτων: Heb 10:18 (τούτων = τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν in v. 17)

4) Forgive:

a) τὰ ὀφλήματα, debts: Mt. 6:12a, b

b) ἁμαρτίας, sins: Mt. 9:6; Mk. 2:5, 7, 9, 10; 9:2; Lk. 5:21, 24; 7:47, 49; 11:4; Jhn 20:23b; Jas. 5:15; 1 Jhn. 1:9

c) παραπτώματα, transgressons: Mt. 6:14f; Mk. 11:25

d) ἁμαρτίαι, sins: Lk. 5:20, 23; 7:47b; 1 Jhn 2:12

d) ἁμαρτήματα, sin actions: Mk. 3:28; Mt. 12:31f.

e) ἀνομίαι, iniquities: Rom. 4:7

Analysis of this reflects that the most common designation is that of sins. Of course both ἀφίημι and ἄφεσις can be used with person designation in the since of to forgive him or forgiveness. What is removed is by implication rather than by direct statement. Also important to notice nothing is ever mentioned about where the offending item is move to. In the developing use of the words in connection to forgive the destination of removal becomes irrelevant and the focus is upon the action of removing it from the offender. This is the bottom line since it is this offending item that stands between God and the offender.

Thirdly, it is interesting to note that Paul seldom uses either ἀφίημι or ἄφεσις. Rather he much prefers χαρίζομαι, with the to forgive meaning, because of its connection to χάρις, grace:[107] χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ παραπτώματα, forgiving us all our transgressions (Col. 2:13; Cor. 2:10a; 12:13); ὑμῖν, you (Eph. 4:32 ab; Col. 3:13ab); absolute, χαρίσασθαι, to forgive (2 Cor. 2:7). While elsewhere in the NT, the emphasis in forgiveness is the removal of the obstacle between God and the offender, in Paul forgiveness is the movement of God toward the offenders in a gracious action of forgiveness. These two perspectives compliment one another and should not be understood as in tension with each other.[108]

One interesting observation in the use of forgive (58x NRSV) in the entire Bible at only one situation. Paul in 2 Cor. 2:7 encourages the Corinthians church: ὥστε

[105]"The Bible develops the motif of forgiveness through a variety of terms and images: sins or debts or transgressions may be sent away, wiped clean, covered, removed, released, or passed over." [Anthony J. Saldarini, "Forgiveness," ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated) (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 297.]

[106]The Greco-Roman world of the first century had little idea of sin as offense against deity. Consequently little if any idea of the need to have such removed is found in the various religious traditions. To be sure, sacrificial systems were an important part of the worship of most all deities at their temples in the first century world. But the offering of sacrifices were to make deity happy and to serve as a buffer of protection against the arbitrary anger of the deity. If, for example, Zeus were happy with me and not angry at me, he might then do something very positive for me such as prosper me, give me victory in battle etc. As a worshiper of Zeus, I had no interest in any sort of spiritual relationship with him. All I wanted was for him to give me my wishes and then leave me alone. .

[107]2 Cor. 2:7, 10abc; 12:14; Eph. 4:32ab; Col. 2:13ab.

[108]The fundamental difference between the two concepts is simply this. ἀφίημι is a divine action in forgiveness of removing the barrier between Himself and the offender. χαρίζομαι is the gracious action of God moving to the offender in forgiveness. In the background of ἀφίημι is the OT sacrificial system. In the background of χαρίζομαι is the Pauline presentation of a gracious God to a pagan world that only knew capricious gods and goddesses. For Jesus functioning in his Jewish setting, the OT image was the most appropriate, and χαρίζομαι was the most appropriate for Paul's Gentile world. Additionally that world had little idea of sin as moral failure in reference to deity.

τοὐναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, μή πως τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῇ ὁ τοιοῦτος. so now instead you should forgive and console him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. The context of 2:5-11 is on forgiving a sinning believer who repents of the sins that led to him being removed from the fellowship of the church. Upon genuine repentance the church should forgive, here χαρίσασθαι rather than ἀφίημι, so that he not be overwhelmed by τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ. This is usually translated by 'sorrow' but here its use in v.5 twice in the verb form is in the sense of λελύπηκεν, caused pain, not made me sad. The more consistent translation then for the noun in v. 7 would be by excessive pain. Contextually what the expulsion has produced is the discomfort of exclusion from the Christian community in a culture where isolation from an important group has all kinds of negative consequences socially, economically etc.

This is the absolutely single passage in the entire Bible that even comes close to linking forgiveness (by a group to an individual with negative feelings on the part of the offending individual) to emotions. And even here in this human to human setting, the idea is that the church expulsion has produced substantial discomfort in many different ways to the offending individual. And it has been enough that the individual has acknowledge his offense and now the church's responsibility is full acceptance back into the life of the church.

The modern idea of forgiveness based on emotions of anger or blame have nothing to do with what Paul is describing in Corinth in the mid first century. And to project anger into this scenario is to assume a modern western individualist mindset about a first century collective oriented culture and Christian perspective. That doesn't work, even logically. The individualistic oriented modern Christian in expulsion from a Christian community which brought substantial damage to him economically, socially etc. would express anger, but not any kind of emotion moving him to desire deeply to be re-united to the congregation. I strongly suspect this points to the reason modern Christians in a western culture struggle so much with the idea of church discipline, which was considered normal and necessary in the first century Christian world.

Neither does anger play a role in the general meaning of forgiveness biblically. God's anger is targeting our sinful actions. The NT makes it very clear that God's posture toward the sinner is that of ἀγάπη, as John 3:16 expresses so well. Many Christians could avoid undue stress by simply reminding themselves that although our misbehavior upsets God, He never ceases to love us in the ἀγάπη love of the cross. Rom. 8:38-39 makes this point with marvelous eloquence:

> 38 πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε ζωὴ οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαὶ οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα οὔτε μέλλοντα οὔτε δυνάμεις 39 οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τις κτίσις ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.
>
> 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Negative emotions: remorse, sorrow, grief et als.[109] Because the modern introspective conscience, understandings of guilt et als. are so closely linked to emotions, it is necessary to raise the question: Are negative feelings of remorse etc. ever connected to the experience of guilt and forgiveness by the individual?

One can scour the entire Bible and not find a single connection in any manner similar to how this connection is made so often in modern Christian thinking.[110] Now this doesn't mean that occasionally Bible translations won't link the two up, for this does happen. But

[109]For the range of negative emotions connected to sorrow and regret used in the NT, see topics 25.270 to 25.287.in Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.. For emotions related to worry, anxiety, distress, see topics 25.223-25.250.

Interestingly, none are connected to one's conscience in scripture, and virtually all are related to others causing these emotions by their actions toward the individual feeling the emotion. Because of the unique social dynamic in the ancient world of honor / shame, see topics 25.189-25.202 related to shame, disgrace, humiliation. Again conscience has no connection here. These emotions are interpersonal and society, not inward.

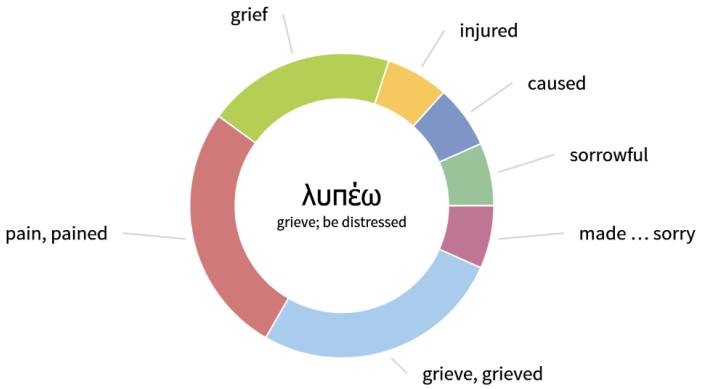
[110]A part of the issue here is that, although Greek culture and Roman culture names different emotions, not much mentioning of the act of feeling shows up in the languages. For example the NRSV uses the verb 'feel' and related words only 16 times in the entire Bible, with just three of those in the NT: Rom. 15:14; 2 Cor. 11:2; and 1 Thess. 3:9. In Rom. 15:14 the verb is Πέπεισμαι which more accurately means I am persuaded and this is a mental activitiy rather than an emotion. In 2 Cor. 11:2, the verb is ζηλῶ, I am zealous for you which is more a volitional / mental activity than relating to any emotion. In 1 Thess 3:9, the construction is πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ᾗ ***χαίρομεν*** δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, in all the joy ***we express*** about you before our God.

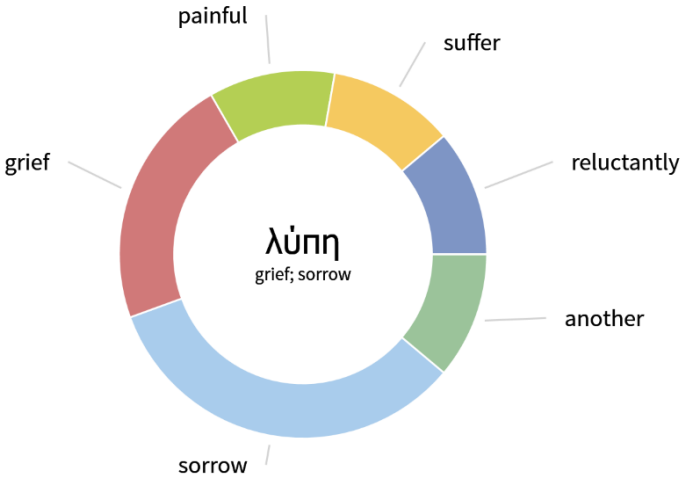
Thus once more we must not trust the translations to signal the correct thought pattern from the original language texts. The surface level meaning may not be that far off in jumping across cultures with a shift from one thought structure to another, but they tend to be worthless in grasping original thought structures in the ancient world. In reality no specific Greek verb just meaning to feel an emotion existed. Both Greeks and Romans located the orgin of emotions in the guts, while Hebrew generally located them in the kidneys. References to specific emotions virtually always come from the perspective of their being expressed either verbally or by physical actions, not as simply existing inside a person. In the ancient world a person did not 'feel' emotions; he 'expressed' emotions. None of the ancient cultures placed much trust or confidence in emotions, but the Romans viewed them more negatively than the other ancient cultures.

a careful analysis of the underlying Hebrew or Greek text will reveal that no such connection is made. Why? Because neither the Jewish or apostolic Christian traditions ever made any such connection! Bible translations -- mostly the more contemporary translations following a high level dynamic equivalent method of translating -- do rarely make this connection largely because the modern contemporary culture makes it and their deep goal in translating is easy understandability by the modern reader. I suspect also this connection is felt okay because the Bible translator doesn't really know much about the ancient cultures or religious traditions. Much of the time these kinds of translations are heavily dependent upon widely recognized 'standard' translations, as much as they are on the biblical language texts. If found in their 'model' translations, then it is okay to incorporate the link in the translation being produced.

The one passage in Paul that some may appeal to is ***2 Cor. 7:9-11***, 8 Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι· εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, βλέπω [γὰρ] ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, 9 νῦν χαίρω, οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν· ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν. 10 ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται. 11 ἰδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι πόσην κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδήν, ἀλλ' ἀπολογίαν, ἀλλ' ἀγανάκτησιν, ἀλλὰ φόβον, ἀλλ' ἐπιπόθησιν, ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, ἀλλ' ἐκδίκησιν. ἐν παντὶ συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς ἁγνοὺς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. 8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly). 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter.

In these statements of Paul, the key word is the





verb λυπέω that is translated by the NRSV as to grieve in the four uses in this passage. The word is mentioned by itself in the passive voice ἐλυπήθητε, you were caused to grieve. Used some 15 times by Paul, it carries a wide range of meanings as is reflected by the above chart of how the NRSV translates the verb inside Paul's writings. Also the noun λύπη, grief, is used twice in this passage and 9 times inside Paul's writings. But both verb and noun are only used here in connection to μετάνοια, repentance.

In Paul's brief discussion, he distinguishes between a positive and negative kind of λύπη. That is, after he mentions that his letter to the Corinthians 'grieved' (ἐλύπησα / ἐλύπησεν; v. 8) the Corinthians even though briefly.[111] The sense here is to cause pain or hurt. In vv. 9-11, he amplifies upon the pain he caused them in the letter. It was a pain prompting repentance for the way they had treated him on his last visit to Corinth: ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν, you were grieved to repentance. Their turning from regret to longing to see him is described in verse seven. He attributes the sting of his letter of rebuke to them for playing a role in turning around their stance toward him. Their pain that pushed them to turn around their stance (εἰς μετάνοιαν) is also defined as ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, for you were grieved by God. In other words, the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit convinced them of the wrongness of their hostile attitude toward Paul. Paul does indicate that this hostile stance did not harm him in any manner: ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν.

Then in v. 10 Paul bases his previous statements about the Corinthians upon an axiomatic saying: ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. Yet

[111]The letter Paul alludes to here is lost and stands as the third letter, "the sorrowful letter," written after a "painful visit." For details, see my "Paul's Relation to the Corinthian Believers," cranfordfille.com.

the statement remains stamped by the context of the Corinthians switch from hostility to longing to see Paul (v. 7). The 'godly grief produces repentance' (ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν... ἐργάζεται) leads to a spiritual deliverance into wholeness and healthy relationships (εἰς σωτηρίαν) and such repentance is one not to be regretted (ἀμεταμέλητον). Here Paul takes a generalized principle and applies it to the situation of the Corinthians. One should remember that no where in this discussion does Paul say directly or indirectly that the Corinthians have committed sin in their hostility to him. The noun μετάνοια in this context is in its broad sense of a turning around of one's thinking, in this instance, a turning from hostility against him to longing to see him (cf. v 7). In this axiom in v. 10, Paul mentions the opposite grief as ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη, but worldly grief. Here he implies a hurt from his letter that would not lead to anything productive. It would have been to linger on the pain of Paul's letter of rebuke and thus nourish the hostility. This produces death, θάνατον κατεργάζεται. Had the Corinthians taken this stance toward Paul, all ministry to them would have been over. Their relationship would have died and come to nothing. But thankfully they opted to recognize the sting from his letter as coming from God so that their stance shifted to eager desire to see him and to learn from him, as he affirms in v. 11.

The closest that this passage gets to the introspective conscience is to assert that when stings (λύπαι) come from the rebuke of a leader they should prompt us to reach out to that leader to learn more of how to serve God. Our initial hostility to him should be turned into eager desire to learn from him. The key to this is ἡ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη, the hurt prompted by God. This is not the introspective conscience idea!

But our study of the key concepts above has clearly demonstrated no links between negative emotions and guilt are present. In other words, the sinner in the first century world never have 'felt guilty' of sinning! Neither did any of the apostolic preachers ever seek to 'create feelings of guilt' in their presentation of the Gospel to a pagan audience. Rather, their focus was upon the misbehavior of depraved humans setting up an impenetrable barrier between them and God. And that the only solution was the removal of that barrier by the sacrificial blood of Christ. They needed Christ, not so much because they were sinners as because He alone could remove this barrier between them and God. Thus in the isolated conversion narratives, mostly in Acts, the background of the individual as a sinner is never emphasized and mostly never even mentioned.

Luke beautifully captures this in Acts 2:37 with Peter's message on the day of Pentecost. It 'cut open the heart' of the audience, κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν, leading them to seek directions for remedy. That is, any Jewish resistance to Jesus as the Messiah was shredded by Peter in his message to them. Now with a volition poised to make a decision, they sought Peter's instruction. And Peter's succinct answer (v. 38) was clear: μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω, repent and be baptized. Repent here stresses turn your thinking completely around to surrendering to Christ. And then prove this by open, public confession of Christ in believer's baptism.

I strongly suspect that if preachers today focused on persuading people to face up to the horrible reality of their offenses against a holy God, rather than telling them that they are guilty sinners, the final product of authentic faith surrender to Christ would prevail over shallow, superficial 'professions' of faith.

Paul's δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν in 1 Cor. 11:28.

The one passage in the entire Bible that those wishing to defend an introspective conscience[112] will try to use is Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 11:28 regarding the economic discrimination associated with the way they were observing the Lord's Supper at Corinth in the mid-50s of the first century.

One must not ignore the context of this issue as outlines in vv. 17-22, which are very clear. The Corinthians were following an evidently widespread practice among first century Christians in coming together on specified occasions for a fellowship meal that was then followed by observance of the Lord's Supper. From Paul's statements in vv. 21-22 what began happening in the house church groups at Corinth is that the wealthier members would arrive early and have their fellowship meal together before the poorer members were able to come to the gathering. When these folks arrived the fellowship meal was finished and time for the observance had come. Many, if not most of these people had no food to bring to the dinner, τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (v. 22), and thus were not allowed to participate in the 'fellowship meal' that was winding down by that time.

When Paul sets up the hypothetical scenario in the indefinite relative clause in v. 27a, ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, whoever may eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he is describing the wealthy member's observance of the supper from his scorching criticism in vv. 17-22. The indefinite relative clause was an excellent vehicle in ancient Greek to make a direct criticism of individuals without 'naming names' but yet making the reader very sure of whom he was talking about. The seriousness of

[112]At the heart of an introspective conscience religiously in the modern world is the individual caught in some misbehavior who responds by saying, "I'm sorry, I really am! I know I shouldn't have done that. Don't punish me, please! I promise -- really -- I promise that I won't ever do this again.!" What is said is typically empty words designed to escape punishment. This seems to be the easiest, and least costly way to get off the hook!

this discriminatory practice at Corinth is heightened in the apodosis main clause: ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου, he will be answerable (to God) for the body and blood of the Lord. For Paul the observance of the Supper was a signal of the oneness and the equality of all members of the church. The discrimination of the wealthy against the poor in the Corinthians practice signaled the very opposite. For them to then move from meal to observance was the height of hypocrisy! And he warns them that God takes notice of this: ἔνοχος. And this adjective carries implications of divinely imposed penalties for not addressing the practice. These are referenced in v. 30 as having already happened: διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί, For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. The implication of Paul's warning is that a lot more of this will happen if the believers don't correct their practice.

Thus the admonition of v. 28 δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν, but let a person examine himself, first of all refers back to the individuals discriminating against the poor in the Corinthian observance. It is not intended as a universal reference. Also the English verb 'examine' is misleading to the idea of δοκιμαζέτω. The verb centers upon outward demonstration of proper action after cared assessment of prior actions. The admonition calls upon these groups to serious analyze the wrongness of what they are doing and take immediate action to correct it.

Vv. 31-32 add the warning that the believers needed to take this corrective action rather than let God take His punishing actions upon them. And this is something they urgently needed to do since God had already begun punishing them (v. 30).

The essence of the corrective action that Paul demands of them is spelled out in vv. 33-34. First they are to wait for one another to eat together (v. 33). Second, if they are that hungry then eat at home before coming to the meeting place, lest their observance bring divine condemnation (v. 34).

This is clearly the situation here for the admonition of v. 28. Contextually the application of it is crystal clear. Actions taken in some kind of fellowship meal prior to the supper that have discriminatory impact prohibit the church from observing the Lord's Supper![113] To go ahead is both hypocritical and a mockery of the sacred meaning of the Supper. And God will not let such go unpunished!

Although very clear in its thrust, much too often this admonition is read and interpreted to congregations prior to observing the Supper strictly in terms of the 'introspective conscience.' Every member is supposed to take a moment to reflect inwardly over their spiritual life to discover 'unconfessed sin' prior to taking the elements of the supper. A quick verbal confession supposedly takes care of anything uncovered in the momentary search. This is utterly false! And borders on being an affront to God!

What Paul called for was that each member think back to the group practice of meal and observance. If it was found to be wrong, he should join in with others in the group in insisting that the discrimination cease immediately. The church had no business in engaging in such practice! If he had contributed to it, then he must now contribute to its correction.

Honest appraisal of this admonition by Paul provides no basis for any kind of 'introspective conscience.'

Romans 7:1-25, Paul and the Law. One last Pauline text is necessary to cover, even though conscience, guilt, and forgiveness are not mentioned: Roman seven.[114]

CONTEXT: One important consideration to never overlook: Paul is not talking about a conscience in this text! The term is not used or even hinted at. What he is discussing is stated clearly in the topic sentence of 7:1, Ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ, ὅτι ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ; Do you not know, brothers and sisters — for I am speaking to those who know the law — that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? The issue for Paul is simply the role of the Jewish Torah in a Jew's life, especially when that Jew becomes a Christian,e.g., Paul.[115] One

[113]Notice the clear shift from the third singular targeting the offending member in vv. 27-29, to the plural -- first person in vv. 31-32 and then second person plural in v. 33. Then he applies the warning in v. 33 with a hypothetical someone, τις, in v. 34. This kind of pattern was both normative and standard in making accusations against a group that one was connected to and desired to persuade. The huge mistake of translations such as the NRSV is that they completely ignore this complicated shifting of references in favor of a simple 'you' pattern, more easily understood in English. Thus the English reader has no idea of what Paul is doing in addressing the delicate situation at Corinth. .

[114]This text plays a role in the introspective conscience discussion largely because of the inner conflict section of 7:14-25. Even though none of the Pauline terminology related to conscience is used, many interpreters see this as the essence of the introspective conscience in the NT. This absence of direct terminology should be sending loud alarm bells of caution, but for many these bells are neither heard or given any attention.

[115]This is stated quite well by James Dunn in the WBC under the heading: ***B. WHAT ROLE DOES THE LAW PLAY IN ALL THIS? (7:1-25):***

> The law had been a complicating factor in the conclusion of 5:20–21, not least because it appeared, astonishingly from a Jewish point of view, on the side of sin and death rather than as a means of grace to life. Having gone some way to clarify the continuing role of sin and death in relation to the believer, with only a brief mention of the law (6:14–15), Paul can now turn to the law itself and bring it center stage.

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 357.]

His outlining of chapter seven is also helpful to the exegesis of

of the continuing criticisms of Paul's preaching of the Gospel of grace was that it did away with the restraining power of the Torah that was seen as essential to living a life pleasing to God. In certain ways and to many Jewish Christians this criticism seemed legitimate. With this letter being written to a congregation, most of whom did not know Paul personally since he had not yet traveled to Rome, it was incumbent upon the apostle to make clear his stand on the Torah to a congregation with many Jewish Christians in it.

Additionally the one must give full attention to the contrast of 'life under the law' in 7:14-25 to its opposite 'life in the Spirit' in 8:1-13. Paul carefully and deliberately contrasts these two approaches of living a life pleasing to God on this earth, particularly for one having a Jewish heritage. One must not overlook the Jewish thrust to this discussion.[116] He is not focusing on non Jews in this discussion. Such a struggle with the Torah was not a part of their experience. But for Jewish Christians in the first century it was an intense struggle.

EXEGESIS: To grasp the impact of his presentation each natural unit of text must be considered both in terms of its content and also how it fits into the larger picture being drawn here by Paul.[117]

Liberation from the Law in Christ, vv. 1-6. 7.1 Ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ, ὅτι ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ; 2 ἡ γὰρ ὕπανδρος γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδεται νόμῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνήρ, κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός. 3 ἄρα οὖν ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρὸς μοιχαλὶς χρηματίσει ἐὰν γένηται ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνήρ, ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, τοῦ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὴν μοιχαλίδα γενομένην ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ. 4 ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ, τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι, ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ. 5 ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν,

the passage:

1. The believer has been released from the Law which condemned to death (7:1-6)
2. But the Law is still exploited by sin and death, as experience demonstrates (7:7-25)

[116]"Chapter 7 of Romans is dominated by the topic of the law. We might well ask why this is so. Has not Paul, in the interests of his 'inclusive' gospel, sufficiently demonstrated the replacement of the law by faith in the first main section of the letter (1:18–4:25)? Why does the law re-emerge as a central issue in the part of the letter devoted to the hope of salvation (chapters 5–8)?

"The answer is bound up with the principle that has been central all through: that salvation depends upon righteousness, upon being found righteous in God's sight at the judgment. Paul's argument that the hope of salvation will not prove ineffectual (5:5) has rested upon the fact that all believers (Jewish and Gentile) have been gifted with God's righteousness in Christ in a way which anticipates the final verdict. They have been swept up within a 'solidarity in grace' immeasurably more 'powerful for salvation' than the solidarity in sin stemming from Adam (5:12–21). The sole task remaining is to 'live out' this gift of righteousness in the time that remains, so that the judgment will simply be a ratification of a verdict (justification) already received. In the present section of the letter (6:1–8:13) Paul is establishing both the necessity and the possibility of living out that gift of righteousness upon which the hope of salvation rests. Fundamentally the possibility is there because, for those 'in Christ,' sin has ceased to be the dominant power (6:1–11); they have been enlisted into a new 'service': that of righteousness (6:13–23).

"Throughout the long development building up this case for hope, the law has never quite faded from sight. It has hovered around in the background, a dark shadow at which Paul has from time to time thrown wounding shafts, linking it ever more explicitly with the onset of sin: 3:20 ('through the law comes knowledge of sin'); 4:15 ('the law … brings wrath'); 5:20 ('the law came in only to multiply the trespass'). The last and most serious has been the reason given in 6:14: 'For sin will not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.' Righteous living—and the hope of salvation which it entails—is possible not despite the removal of the law but because of it. For the law, instead of being ranged upon the side of righteousness, has become the tool and accomplice of sin.

"The time has now come for Paul to bring out into the open the view of the law lying behind these negative observations, to explain more expressly its mysterious nexus with sin. The Jewish law, the claims made for the righteousness it purports to offer and, in particular, the aspiration to impose it in whole or in part upon Gentiles, constitute the greatest threat or rival to the inclusive vision of the gospel Paul is presenting in Romans. While the case against righteousness through 'works of the law' has already been well and truly made in the early part of the letter (1:18–4:25), it will do no harm to drive the bolt home more securely by exalting the moral capacity communicated by the Spirit at the expense of the incapacity obtaining under the law. To use a modern image, Paul in effect makes the law the 'fall guy' in the stakes leading to life.

"So what Paul offers in Romans 7 is not really a defense of (or 'apologia' for) the law, though this is often held to be the case. True, he does disentangle it from simple identification with sin (7:7–12) and he does find a role for it, albeit a negative one, within a wider divine purpose (7:13). But what he really does is present life 'under the law' as a negative foil against which to set all the more effectively the freedom and possibility contained in the gospel. In other words, Paul adopts here, no less than in 5:12–21, his favorite rhetorical technique of antithesis. Setting positive over against negative, new situation over against past, he highlights the superiority of the new to reinforce the hope it contains."

[Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 6, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 208–209.]

[117]"First (7:1–6), Paul establishes that believers are factually free from the law (vv 1–4) and that, as far as ethical possibility is concerned, this has brought about a vastly superior situation (vv 5–6). He then sets the negative background, describing how life under the law has led inevitably to sin and, in sin's train, to death (7:1–25). This description is given from two perspectives, the first (7:7–13) telling of the encounter with the law as a narrative, the second (7:14–25) describing it 'from the inside' as an experience. Over against this negative background of ethical 'impossibility' under the law, Paul then triumphantly proclaims the freedom and 'possibility' created by the Spirit (8:1–13). The gift of the Spirit fulfills God's pledge (cf. Ezek 36:26–27; Jer 31:31–33) to defeat the power of sin and place within human hearts a true capacity to live out the righteousness leading to life." [Brendan Byrne, *Romans,* ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 6, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 210.]

εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ· 6 νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος.

7.1 Do you not know, brothers and sisters —for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? 2 Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. 4 In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

Paul begins with a reminder that these comments are addressed readers with a background knowledge of the Law: γινώσκουσιν νόμον λαλῶ, I am speaking to those understanding the Law. His foundational principle to be developed is ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ, that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime. What he means by this is then illustrated in vv. 2-3 from typical Jewish understanding of the Torah by marriage with the issue of the death of the husband releasing the wife from her marriage contract to her husband.

In vv. 4-6, he then applies both principle and illustration to Christian conversion. To be sure the application is complex and non-logical. Death by the husband releases the wife (illustration) means the death, i.e., conversion, of the individual to the Law releases the individual from the enslaving control of the Law over his/her life (application). Conversion, i.e., death, frees the individual (wife in illustration) to be united to another (now Christ rather than Law). In this new union (i.e., remarriage from illustration) fruit to the glory of God can be produced. Important to note is his comment that our sinful passions while under Law held us captive to sin. But in the second marriage (to Christ) our life in the Spirit frees us from this enslavement.

What then is the value of the Law? vv. 7-13. 7 Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου· τήν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. 8 ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν· χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά. 9 ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν, 10 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον καὶ εὑρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωήν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον· 11 ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν. 12 ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἁγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή. 13 Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλ' ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον, ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.

7 What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived 10 and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. 13 Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

Here the apostle seeks to defend the Torah as not inherently evil, since his opening declaration might leave such an impression. In Romans, it was even more important to clarify his stance in this letter of introduction to the new congregation who did not know him personally. And by this point in his career he is being viciously criticized as teaching the doing away with the Torah of Moses completely.

How to validate the Law for Jews while maintaining liberation from it in Christ posed a delicate challenge. Here is one of the pivotal points in the history of interpretation of chapter seven. The introspective conscience view point, beginning especially with Augustine, bulldozed its way into the understanding of the text by twisting Law in Paul's discussion from the Jewish Torah as a means of salvation and turning it into a symbol of religious legalism. Contextually such is utterly false and a dangerous perversion of Paul's words. Paul in no way, shape, or form is talking about religious legalism in this discussion. When he says Law, he means Law as understood in first century Judaism and as he had been taught to believe as a Pharisee.

To validate the Jewish Law but not compromise his Christian understanding of liberating grace in Christ, Paul turns to a personal illustration clearly drawn from his pre-Christian life while a Pharisee in vv. 7b-13. It is constructed off the foundational axiom in v. 7b, τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου, I would not have known sin apart from the Law. The aorist verb usage here

οὐκ ἔγνων puts this clearly in Paul's past, not his present. His illustration is drawn from his pre-Christian Jewish past. This is very clear. The Law said not to covet, and prior to learning the Law in his Jewish childhood he did not know this. But upon being taught the Law as a Jewish boy, he learned this but the impact of this study was to tempt him to covet. With no ability to resist this temptation, he violated the commandment which in turn produced spiritual death. Was the fault of the Law? Not at all! The problem was not with the Law since it accomplished the good thing of defining covetousness to him. The problem lay in the Jewish Paul, not in the Law of Moses.

Overcoming the enslavement of the Law as a Jew, vv. 14-24. 14 Οἴδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστιν, ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. 15 ὃ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω· οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ' ὃ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ. 16 εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός. 17 νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλ' ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία. 18 Οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν· τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειταί μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὔ· 19 οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ὃ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω. 20 εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ θέλω [ἐγὼ] τοῦτο ποιῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλ' ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία. 21 εὑρίσκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον, τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν, ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται· 22 συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, 23 βλέπω δὲ ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου. 24 Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; 25 χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῒ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. 15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

Paul continues his personal illustration from his Jewish past in vv. 14-25. He doesn't get to his Christian present until he presents the Christian alternative in 8:1-11 of life in the Spirit. He continues to present both life under the Law and life in the Spirit from his personal perspective as a Jew. The Gentile experience is different and not treated here by Paul.[118]

In v. 14, Paul identifies the problem with the Jewish Law. It's not the 'spiritual Law' (ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστιν). Instead, the problem exists in Paul's fleshly existence even as a Jew: ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, But I am fleshly, having been enslaved under sin. This amplifies what he had said in vv. 5-6 about being enslaved prior to Christ.[119] The Law was not the slave master; instead, our passionate craving for sin was: τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. The Law simply 'energized' those passions in our physical life: τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν.

How did all that work for Paul as a Jewish Pharisee? In vv. 15-23 Paul graphically pictures his Jewish life as enslaved to sin through his fleshly life, and the Law being utterly incapable to liberating him from this. Thus in v. 24, he raises the rhetorical question that he hopes every Jew in Rome would raise: Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? The failure of Judaism was not with the Law. Rather it failed even through the Law to provide a liberation from the fleshly life of every Jew struggling to keep the Torah.

But an answer has been provided by God in Christ!

[118]Here is the fatal error of the introspective conscience way of coming at this passage. It completely ignores the clear Jewish perspective being presented by Paul as his way to both validate the Torah but distance himself from it now as a Christian. If the exegesis of this text had remained true to the context of Paul's discussion rather than corrupting it, no issue of the 'conflict' in vv. 14-25 being a Christian conflict with religious legalism would have ever arisen. But the urge to find relevancy pushed the Gentile and anti-semitic Augustine to 'spiritualize' the text and the central issue so as to detach it from a Jewish discussion of the role of the Law as a Jewish Christian. This opened the door to innumerable corrupt interpretive viewpoints about what Paul was discussing. The struggle for the Christian, both Jewish and Gentile, is discussed in 8:12-17 as living "in the Spirit" rather than "in the flesh" ὀφειλέται ἐσμὲν οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν. It is a matter of total obedience to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, no an issue of overcoming Law defined sin.

[119]**Rom. 7:5-6.** 5 ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν, εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ· 6 νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος.

5 While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

Note v. 25, which sets up 8:1-11, χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῒ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin. Every Jew will always remain sensitive to obeying the Law (ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῒ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ) simply due to his Jewish heritage. But deliverance from this fleshly life under sin (ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου) has come through Jesus Christ, not through Torah obedience. What this means and also implies becomes the subject of 8:1-11 and following. Gradually in chapter eight Paul assumes a more universal Christian viewpoint that includes both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians.

Most all of chapter seven has little connection directly to non-Jewish individuals, since the perspective is strictly of a Jew struggling to obey the Jewish Torah. Paul quite properly uses himself as the example while writing to a church with many Jewish Christian members along with its ongoing efforts to reach out to the large Jewish community in Rome in the mid-first century.[120]

What application does Romans seven have then to a non-Jewish Christian? The primary application should center not on Torah obedience, since this has nothing to do with Christian experience, especially none Jewish Christian experience. Rather the legitimate application of this chapter to Christians generally should focus upon the enslaving power of sin with a view to the liberation from it found in Christ Jesus. It is here that non-Jewish Christians share something in common with Jewish Christians.

C. Post Apostolic Christianity

For the Wednesday night group in our lengthy study of Paul we have come to realize the tendency of Christian leaders in the centuries after Paul to squeeze Paul out of his Jewish heritage and way of thinking so that his words can be reinterpreted into a later Greco-Roman mold that suits the later interpreter.

This issue with its modern cultural mindset shaped directly and popularly by contemporary psychological perspectives sees these anthropological terms in the NT as fertile group for reinterpretation away from Paul's first century mindset. But moderns aren't the only culprits in this! The developing Christian world after the first century began the pattern and put some of the paradigms in place that are still practiced today.

The final issue to be addressed in this study is the most difficult one. How did we get to where we are today? It's clear that for Christians the modern introspective conscience is an unmistakable departure from scripture teaching. But also it is clear that this thinking is profoundly embedded into modern western thinking, and especially inside Christian thinking. At this point, Stendahl made an important point in his call for moderns to rethink the legitimacy of the entire schema of introspective conscience. For critics outside Christianity Paul usually gets the blame for beginning this process. But we have shown through examining his writings that this is utterly false. This idea did not begin with Paul. Rather it emerges much later in Christian tradition.

Let me put forth a *working hypothesis* regarding the introspective conscience. **Stage one:** the emerging sacrament of penance in western Christianity. All Christians were urged to examine their conscience to discover sins needing to be confessed to the priest. This was essential because the assigning of penance by the priest was based upon the specific sin or sins confessed. In these formative years, the Greek idea of συνείδησις and then the Latin conscientia prevailed as Paul had understood the Greek term. But expansions to the idea gradually began to emerge. **Stage two:** Augustine out of his own horrific struggles with guilt and divine forgiveness put his distinctive stamp on to the system of penance that laid the foundations for intensive emotional searching for sins. His justification for this was found in spiritualizing Paul at points like Romans 7 etc. to have had the same horrific struggle as he did. **Stage three:** The impact of Anselm inside Roman Catholic teaching and that of Luther as an Augustinian monk in the emerging Protestantism in Central Europe. Luther's intense emotional struggles paralleled Augustine's in many aspects, and he adopted Augustine's view of Paul's supposed struggles. **Stage four:** through a massive series of events and highly influential personalities both inside and outside Christianity the idea of an 'introspective conscience' found deep roots in both Christianity and western culture on both sides of the Atlantic. This has taken place from the middle 1500s to the present day. Thus today the many differing definitions of introspective conscience are tangled together in a matted maze of culture, religion, and very little Bible.

Stendahl very wisely merely called upon psychologists and psychiatrists to begin a process of rethinking their medical perspective in the lecture given to them. Later publication of this lecture in religious journals had the same effect of calling upon biblical scholars to begin rethinking both their understanding of Paul and of the introspective conscience. Unfortunately, in my es-

[120]Note Paul's own focus upon the Jewish synagogue community rather than to the Christian community upon his arrival in Rome according to Acts 28:16-28. At the time of the writing of Romans from Corinth about 56 AD he anticipated being able to preaching the Gospel to this Jewish community extensively while in the city (cf. Rom. 15:24.

timation, most of this subsequent work took enormous liberties with Stendahl and replaced one mistaken view with many other mistaken views. And not much attention has been given to the introspective conscience side, unfortunately.

Hopefully this study can stand as one small beacon of light in the darkness of western thinking that perhaps some will see and recognize as shining a light on a path toward better understanding of Paul and as well toward a more healthy spirituality that is truly biblical centered in correct understanding and application.

Stage one: ***Emerging Sacrament of Penance***.

What does the Roman Catholic teaching on Penance have to do with a western introspective conscience? Actually quite a huge amount, especially in terms of creating a conceptual foundation for this excessive inward focus on sinfulness.

But first a description of the idea of penance is needed for non-Catholic readers with little or no background in the large system of teachings of the RC church.[121] One must understand this teaching as continually being updated and revised. The foundation for much of the contemporary understanding of penance comes out of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. Both the terminology and many of the ideas about it in contemporary Catholic description are very different than terminology etc. found in most of the church fathers of the second through tenth centuries. Thus one general depiction can never be adequate because of the shifts in thinking about it over the centuries inside the Church itself. Plus an inclusive depiction at any given time period is also difficult because of differing views across both western and eastern Christianity until the beginning of the modern era when centralized control began to dominate.

Let's begin with a contemporary dictionary definition reflecting a general contemporary perspective: something that you do or are given to do in order to show that you are sad or sorry about doing something wrong. This general Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition is then expanded into three categories:

1: an act of self-abasement, mortification, or devotion performed to show sorrow or repentance for sin
2: a sacramental rite that is practiced in Roman, Eastern, and some Anglican churches and that consists of private confession, absolution, and a penance directed by the confessor
3: something (as a hardship or penalty) resembling an act of penance (as in compensating for an offense)

As hopefully becomes clear, the core idea relates to the biblical idea of repentance for and confession of sin in the New Testament in some manner or another. But these basic ideas of apostolic era are changed and expanded in directions far beyond the scope of the teachings of the Bible. And over time different formulations of the teaching have been officially adopted by the Vatican.

Here is a current depiction of penance from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops that provides a slightly different perspective from the M-W online dictionary:

> The Sacrament of Penance is an experience of the gift of God's boundless mercy. Not only does it free us from our sins but it also challenges us to have the same kind of compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us. We are liberated to be forgivers. We obtain new insight into the words of the Prayer of St. Francis: "It is in pardoning that we are pardoned."
>
> Penance is an experience of the gift of God's boundless mercy
>
> Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is God's gift to us so that any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. In confession we have the opportunity to repent and recover the grace of friendship with God. It is a holy

[121]The name of this rite inside the RCC varies over time and geography, as the following depiction reflects from the Fort Worth Diocese pamphlet entitled "Guidelines for the Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance for the Diocese of Fort Worth":

> Beneath the changes in discipline and celebration that the sacrament of Penance has undergone over the centuries, the sacrament has always contained two equally essential elements: the process of conversion for the penitent and the process of forgiveness and homecoming through the intervention of the Church. (cf. CCC 1448) These two realities of spiritual life are celebrated in the Sacrament of Penance.
>
> "What is this sacrament called?
>
> It is called ***the sacrament of conversion*** because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father (cf. Mk 1:15; Lk 15:18) from whom one has strayed by sin.
>
> It is called ***the sacrament of Penance***, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction. (CCC 1423)
>
> It is called ***the sacrament of confession***, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession" - acknowledgment and praise - of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.
>
> It is called ***the sacrament of forgiveness,*** since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent 'pardon and peace' [Order of Penance 46: formula of absolution].
>
> It is called ***the sacrament of Reconciliation***, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: 'Be reconciled to God' [2 Cor. 5:20]. He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: 'Go; first be reconciled to your brother' [Mt. 5:24]."
>
> (CCC 1424)
>
> These Guidelines will refer to the sacrament as the sacrament of Penance in order to be in agreement with the terminology used in the 1991 publication, "The Rites of the Catholic Church," approved for use in the dioceses of the United States by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See.

> moment in which we place ourselves in his presence and honestly acknowledge our sins, especially mortal sins. With absolution, we are reconciled to God and the Church. The Sacrament helps us stay close to the truth that we cannot live without God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). While all the Sacraments bring us an experience of the mercy that comes from Christ's dying and rising, it is the Sacrament of Reconciliation that is the unique Sacrament of mercy.

One should also note that the Sacrament of Penance is grouped with the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and the Sacrament of Last Rites as the three rites focused on healing of illness and sin for both this life and the life to come.[122]

The sacrament of penance has several parts, which are important to know because the changes over time have occurred to some of the parts but not to the essential concept of the sacrament which has remained relatively stable.[123]

First are the sins committed by the believer. Only sins committed after baptism are covered. And these sins are divided into categories usually labeled inside Roman Catholic definitions as Mortal Sins and Venial Sins. In Eastern Orthodox Christianity, no such distinction exists and sin is sin period in their modern view. In Catholic thinking, however, the category that one's sin falls into is theologically important.[124] A moral sin can deprive one of eternal life. But a venial sin, when unconfessed, only extends one's time in purgatory, but doesn't rob a Christian of eternal life in heaven.

Second is the confession of the sin by the Christian. Most important in the modern practice of this rite is that such confession must be made to a properly qualified Roman Catholic priest.[125] Otherwise genuine absolution of the sin is not possible. In modern practice this is done privately in the Confessional to the priest, but this was not the general practice in the early centuries, nor is it the practice of Eastern Orthodox Christians. It is formally known as auricular confession.[126] Confession is done in two distinct ways. In regard to Mortal Sins, these must be verbally acknowledged individually to the priest.[127] But with Venial Sins, a more general verbal acknowledgment without a listing of them by name is possible.[128] In confessing sins, the

[122]"Just as the sacraments of initiation form a unity, so too Penance, Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum are the sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage." ["Guidelines," Fort Worth Diocese]

[123]"Fundamentally, the rite of the sacrament of penance is composed of two elements: a penitent brings his or her sins to Christ for healing, and a priest, who stands in the person of Christ and the church, grants absolution, which gives special healing graces to the penitent. Both are essential for the integrity and validity of the sacrament. One without the other is not the sacrament, just as there can be no surgery, and therefore no healing, if either the patient or the doctor is missing." [Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 46.]

[124]Different views on distinguishing between these two categories will be found over history as well as among Catholics in the contemporary world. Below is one summation reflecting one perspective ("Venial sin," wikipedia.org):

> As such, one can arrive at what kind of sin, for example, was committed, by asking the following three questions:
>
> 1. Did the act involve grave matter?
> 2. Was the act done with full knowledge of the grave and sinful nature of the act?
> 3. Was the act done with full consent of the will?
>
> If all three questions are answered in the affirmative, the criteria for a mortal sin have been met. If any one of the three questions are answered in the negative, only the criteria for a venial sin have been met. In cases of doubt regarding any of these three questions, it is assumed that the criteria for a mortal sin were not met.

[125]"The *Code of Canon Law* states: 'A priest alone is the minister of the sacrament of penance.'[12] While in the English language, the word 'priest' usually means someone received into the second of the three holy orders (also called the *presbyterate*) but not into the highest, that of bishop, the Latin text underlying this statement uses the Latin term *sacerdos*, which comprises both bishops and, in the common English sense, priests. To refer exclusively to priests in the more common English sense, Latin uses the word *presbyter*.[13] In order to be able to absolve validly from sin, the priest (*sacerdos*) must have the faculty to do so granted to him either by canon law or by the competent Church authority.[14]" ["Sacrament of Penance (Catholic Church)," wikipedia.org]

[126]"In order for the sacrament of penance to be valid, the penitent must be personally present and receive absolution in that setting. We call this auricular confession (from the Latin auricula for 'ear') because it involves the speaking of one's sins 'into the ear' of the priest. It should be noted that the emphasis is on the proximate physical presence of the penitent and priest. Modern electronic communication devices such as telephones, video-phones, computers, faxes, and the like, obviously do not suffice to make two people physically present to each other. However, the hearing-or speech-impaired may use other means of communication in the sacrament, presuming, of course, that the penitent is in the immediate presence of the priest." [Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 51–52.]

[127]"All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those which are committed openly." (Council of Trent (1551): DS 1680 (ND 1626); cf. Ex 20:17; Mt 5:28)" ["Guidelines," Fort Worth Diocese]

[128]"Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.[Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1680; CIC, can. 988 # 2.] Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful: [Cf. Lk 6:36 .] Whoever confesses his sins . . . is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear 'man' - this is what God has made; when you hear 'sinner' - this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God

Christian must reflect remorse for his actions in order that forgiveness can be found. Mere verbal acknowledgment without sorrow is not genuine confession.[129] This is formally known as Contrition.[130] Additionally, a sincere commitment to not repeat the sin must be a part of the confession as well.[131] This is known formally as the Firm Purpose of Amendment" and can lead to the imposition of acts of penance as a reflection of genuineness by the one confessing.[132] Every Catholic mak-

may save what he has made .... When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light. [St. Augustine, In Jo. ev. 12, 13: PL 35, 1491.]" ["Guidelines," Fort Worth Diocese]

[129]"It is not true that for the Catholic the mere 'telling of one's sins' suffices to obtain their forgiveness. Without sincere sorrow and purpose of amendment, confession avails nothing, the pronouncement of absolution is of no effect, and the guilt of the sinner is greater than before." ["The Sacrament of Penance," *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*]

[130]"Contrition, essential to the sacrament of penance and the penitent's first act, means that we are sorry for and detest the sins we have committed, and we resolve not to sin again (CCC 1451). It is helpful to know that the word contrition derives from the Latin meaning 'to grind, to crush.' The knowledge of guilt crushes the soul, as it were. It is the sorrow we all experience after hurting someone we love. This is the essence of true or perfect contrition: sorrow motivated by love of the person(s) we've offended. Imperfect contrition is called 'attrition' and refers to sorrow for sins from some motive other than love, such as fear of punishment or of retribution, or even chagrin to discover one's faults. It is important to know, however, that one may be sincerely sorry for one's sins but not feel sorry. True sorrow is an act of the will. Our feelings do not always coincide with our decisions. For instance, even in the midst of some difficulty in a family relationship that may cause a person to feel angry, there is an abiding love that transcends the feeling of anger. The decision to love a family member who is acting badly will move me to help the other out of love, in spite of my feelings. So it is with sorrow. We may be puzzled that we don't feel the emotion of sorrow sometimes, especially in confession. However, true sorrow is shown in the very act of deciding to turn from the sin, confess it, and avoid it in the future, that is, willing the means to the end, taking the steps necessary to avoid this sin in the future. We can be sure that God sees into the depths of the human heart." [Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 47.]

[131]"While this sacrament as a dispensation of Divine mercy facilitates the pardoning of sin, it by no means renders sin less hateful or its consequences less dreadful to the Christian mind; much less does it imply permission to commit sin in the future. In paying ordinary debts, as e.g., by monthly settlements, the intention of contracting new debts with the same creditor is perfectly legitimate; a similar intention on the part of him who confesses his sins would not only be wrong in itself but would nullify the sacrament and prevent the forgiveness of sins then and there confessed." ["The Sacrament of Penance," *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*]

[132]"Part and parcel of sorrow for sin is the intention to not sin again. This is called the 'firm purpose of amendment.' In fact, if this purpose of amendment is lacking, even if the priest should impart absolution, the sacrament is invalid. It would be like a spouse asking forgiveness for an act of adultery, knowing full well that he or she has no resolve to avoid the sin. Even if the other were tricked into forgiving the adulterer, the forgiveness would fall on a heart impervious to the gift. The firm purpose of amendment is not an absolute guarantee against all possible sin in the future; except for the Blessed Virgin Mary, we all commit venial sins. It is, however, a resolve to take all the steps necessary to avoid sin, including avoiding temptation and seeking to grow in virtue." [Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 48.]

ing confession is therefore required to use a standard prayer incorporating these elements which is called the Act of Contrition.[133]

Third is the granting of forgiveness of confessed sins. Again much variation of understanding over the centuries exists here, but in the modern official perspective the idea moves along the following pattern. One must distinguish between forgiveness and absolution. Forgiveness is something only God can grant, but absolution is the declaration of the priest of divine forgiveness as he functions in behalf of God and the RC church. Also Satisfaction is imposed by the priest as a part of the process.[134] Absolution will normally be

[133]"All of this is summed up in the prayer called the Act of Contrition, which every Catholic ought to memorize. The priest-confessor will ask you to make an Act of Contrition just before he imparts absolution. There are several versions of the prayer. I recommend this one:

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance,
to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

"This, or any Act of Contrition, is not restricted to the sacrament or even to just this prayer. To grow in holiness and the virtue of penance, it is important to have the spirit of contrition through each day. This is built up by making repeated, even simple, acts of contrition when we sin, even venially, for example, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner'."

[Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 48–49.]

[134]"Satisfaction is the completion of the penance, to make amends for sins. To refuse to complete the penance given in confession, whether outwardly or even interiorly, invalidates the sacrament.

"The purpose of making satisfaction is a matter of justice. We see this in human relationships when one has wronged another. It is not enough simply to ask pardon of someone we have hurt. It is necessary to do something to make up for the hurt we caused. The greater the hurt, the more we are obliged to do something about it. For instance, the child who breaks a neighbor's window must not only ask forgiveness of the neighbor, but must also pay for its replacement. Stolen goods must be returned or paid for. The spouse who uttered harsh words knows that a simple "I'm sorry" is not enough; only a greater display of tenderness will act as a salve for this wound.

"We refer to any wrongdoing as sin because the wrongdoing is

granted at the time of the confession in today's practice, but is conditioned upon the individual completing the imposed acts of penance bringing Satisfaction to completion. The two categories of penalties that can be imposed are Medicinal and Expiatory penalties.[135] It usually takes the form of a formal, standard prayer by the priest in regard to the one confessing sin.[136]

The introspective conscience aspect can be seen in the Bulletin Insert provided by the bishops' conference on *"How to go to Confession"* in the *Preparation* step:

> PREPARATION: Before going to confession, take some time to prepare. Begin with prayer, and reflect on your life since your last confession. How have you — in your thoughts, words, and actions — neglected to live Christ's commands to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind," and to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37, 39)? As a help with this "examination of conscience," you might review the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes (Ex 20:2-17; Dt 5:6-21; Mt 5:3-10; or Lk 6:20-26).

With taking inventory over one's moral behavior as preparatory to going to Confession, one is moving in the direction of the introspective conscience. Add to this the many rules about how Confession is administered by the Catholic Church and one is approaching his spiritual life in a very mechanistic manner that usually accompanies the introspective conscience.

How did all this evolve? Omitting a discussion of any connection of any of these teachings to either Jesus or the apostles, our focus begins with the second century and moves forward into our contemporary day. Although a few sources group the emerging teaching about penance into three or so eras, most do not and with good reason. Sidenote: a really different history emerges from Eastern Orthodox sources over against Roman Catholic sources, particularly in the first few centuries before the split between the two groups.

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also an offense against God. No one escapes the disintegrating effects of sin. The sinner and his or her relationships with another, the community, and God are all affected by sin, even 'small' sins. All require healing. I think the example of overeating helps to illustrate the point. If I give in to my craving for chocolate to the point that I eat a half-dozen brownies in one sitting, I will show for my 'sin' with a weight gain. I may wake up the next morning and tell myself I won't do this again, and even forgive myself for having given in, yet again, to my weakness for chocolate. But all the forgiveness in the world won't take away my excess weight. I will have to make up for the extra calories by increasing my exercise. The exercise is like the satisfaction or penance of the sacrament. I must do my part to atone for my sins."

[Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 55.]

[135]"The Code distinguishes between medicinal and expiatory penalties (CIC 1312). Medicinal penalties, sometimes called censures, include excommunication, interdict, and suspension. The most serious of these is excommunication because it results in a person being forbidden to have any ministerial part in the Eucharist or in any public worship; nor may he or she celebrate any of the sacraments or sacramentals or exercise any office, function, or ministry in the church (CIC 1331). Interdict is similar to excommunication but the individual is not prevented from exercising offices and functions in the church (CIC 1332). Suspension applies only to clerics (bishops, priests, or deacons) by which some or all of their power of holy orders is forbidden to be exercised (CIC 1333). An expiatory penalty deprives a person of particular rights, goods, or faculties, either temporarily or permanently (CIC 1336).

"Note that the most severe of penalties, excommunication, is called 'medicinal.' In other words, the church uses excommunication, not to punish someone by damning him or her to hell, but to show that person the seriousness of the sin committed, with the sincere hope that such an extreme measure will cause that person to reconsider his or her state and repent. It is analogous to the action the state takes by quarantining a person with a highly infectious disease, such as TB, who refuses treatment. It is for both the individual's own health, as well as the good of society, that this person be forced into quarantine. Excommunication is a forced 'spiritual quarantine' to bring someone to spiritual health through repentance and conversion.

"The penalties of excommunication, interdict, and suspension may be remitted when the person has reformed. The penalized person should petition the appropriate authority for the remission of the penalty. This can be done through one's pastor. If it is a matter of unreasonable hardship for the person to wait for the outcome of the normal process by having to remain in the state of sin (see CIC 1357), the person may approach a priest in the sacrament of penance and ask for the penalty to be remitted and for absolution. We see here the solicitude of the church so that the repentant person can have peace of mind as the remedy for his or her healing begins. After assigning an appropriate penance (including reparation, if necessary), the confessor will remit the penalty and grant absolution. Additionally, he is to impose upon the penitent the obligation to have recourse to the appropriate authority to receive instructions regarding actions to be taken regarding the penalized sin(s) within one month, lest the original penalty be reinstated."

[Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 86–87.]

[136]"Absolution is based on a Latin word meaning 'to release from.' It is the church that grants absolution through the priests who share in Christ's power to forgive sins and release sinners from the guilt of their sins. Thus, the sinner's friendship with God is reconstituted and the sinner reconciled with the entire body of Christ, the church, on whose behalf the priest acts. In the case of serious sin, eternal punishment is remitted through the sacrament.

"It is worth reflecting on the words of the prayer that the church uses to reconcile sinners. With his hand extended over the penitent, the priest prays:

> God, the Father of mercies,
> through the death and resurrection of his Son
> has reconciled the world to himself
> and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins;
> through the ministry of the church
> may God give you pardon and peace,
> and I absolve you from your sins
> in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

"At the words invoking the blessed Trinity, the priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the penitent. The penitent makes a devout Sign of the Cross and responds, 'Amen'."

[Paul Jerome Keller, *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010), 57–58.

For example, the following is provided from an orthodox view for the first several centuries:

> By the end of the first century, the groundwork was laid for the Sacrament of Penance. From the sources of the time we can construct the following picture of this Sacrament.
>
> First, the Sacrament of Penance or "Confession," as it was called in Greek, was intended for those who sinned gravely after their Baptism. It was usually reserved for acts of adultery, apostasy or murder (including abortion).
>
> Second, the opportunity to undergo this Sacrament was given only once in a person's life.
>
> Thirdly, the act of penance involved a process; a person went to the bishop of his city and privately confessed his sin. The bishop then notified his churches that the person was undergoing penance and was forbidden to receive the Eucharist. The penitent was expected to dress in coarse clothing and mark himself with ashes. He was expected to eat only the plainest of food, even only bread and water. He was only permitted to be present at the Scripture readings and sermon during the Liturgy; he had to leave with the unbaptized after the sermon.
>
> If the penitent was faithful to these observances for a period of one to three years (sometimes as long as twenty years, depending on the offence), he was "reconciled" to the Church. This usually took place at the Holy Thursday Liturgy or at the Paschal Vigil. The penitent was led by the bishop, along with the newly baptized, to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist where he again received Holy Communion.
>
> Again, it should be pointed out that this was a once in life opportunity, a "plank after shipwreck" as the writers of the day called it.
>
> But what about those sins of a lesser nature? It was held that these "everyday" sins were continually forgiven through prayer, acts of charity, and the reception of the Holy Eucharist. The Church writer Origen (about 245 A.D.) makes this observation:
>
> In more serious offenses opportunity for penitence is given only one time; but those common offenses which we frequently incur always admit of penance and are redeemed continually.[137]

Thus penance strictly speaking related only to 'grave sins' and could be administered only one time, just as baptism was a one time action. But confession of lesser sins could be repeated either to a priest or before the entire congregation. This was not considered Penance. Also noted in this perspective is the decline of the practice of the rite of penance in the fifth and sixth centuries, due to the monastic movement inside Christianity.[138]

On the other side, Roman Catholic perspectives see both mortal and venial sins being treated by the rite of penance from the second century onward, even though clear distinctions were made between the procedures for these two types of sins. Mortal sins involved a one time only experience of the rite of penance, while venial sins could be repeatedly dealt with in the sacrament of penance with the confessional to a priest.[139] One other aspect of importance is that in the early centuries

[137]"A History of the Sacrament of Penance," American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A.

[138]"In the fifth and sixth centuries, the earlier discipline of 'Penance' underwent a decline. The early monastic movement adopted the distinctive coarse clothing of the 'penitent' as well as the plain food and austere lifestyle that they were expected to follow until they were reconciled with the Church. At the same time, the larger church congregations of the fifth and sixth centuries included many people who had joined the Church for 'social' reasons. The faith of many was not as strong as that of the earlier Christians who were subject to persecution from the state and even hostility from their pagan neighbors and families for three centuries.

"Eventually, the practice of frequent confession to a spiritual father was combined with the prayer of 'reconciliation' that was prayed over the early penitent. From this developed the Sacrament of Penance or "Confession" as we know it today."

[A History of the Sacrament of Penance," American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A.]

[139]"Christians in the early communities of the Church obtained forgiveness for those sins by practising prayer, good deeds, fasting and alms-giving. This early way of penitential discipline received in modern times the name of *public penance*, mistakenly confused with public announcement of the excommunication because of a public and grave sin. Sometimes sinners did publicly speak about their sins, but testimonies of the early Church show that in most cases offenses were known to the priest alone. When a penitent did publicly confess his/her sins, decision to do it was always private initiative of the person, a free act of Christian faith for spiritual motives. The public character of early penance should be understood as prayerful participation and support given by the community to a sinner, and not as public humiliation.[19]

3rd century canonical penance

"Multiple discussions began in the 3rd century, time of many persecutions, on how to exercise Church penance regarding grave sinners, e.g. lapsed Catholics, idolaters, adulterers, murderers. A controversy first resulted over Montanism, whose main supporter was Tertullian.

"There were arguments between Novatian and Pope Cornelius, and between St. Cyprian and Pope Stephen I.

"Hippolytus of Rome criticised the popes, condemning them for being too easy to accept grave sinners back to the communion of the Church.[20]

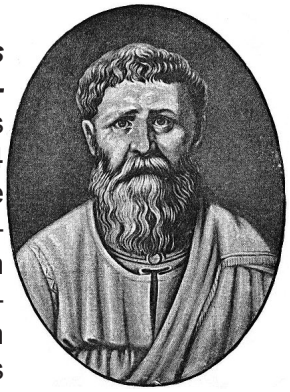
Canonical penance between 4th and 6th centuries

"The primary source of information on the *canonical penance* in this period are sermons of Augustine of Hippo and of Caesarius of Arles. Special canons were issued by regional, local Church councils on how to deal with the public penance. Because of that it is called canonical penance.

"Acts of ancient councils of this period show that no one who belonged to the order of penitents had access to Eucharistic communion – until the bishop reconciled him with the community of the Church. Canon 29 of the Council of Epaone (517) in Gaul says, that from among penitents only apostates had to leave Sunday assembly together with catechumens, before the Eucharistic part commenced. Other penitents were present until the end but were denied communion in the table of the Lord.[21]"

["Sacrament of Penance (Roman Catholic)," wikipedia.org]

privately committed sins were confessed privately to the priest, while publicly committed sin were confessed before the entire congregation. But in the eleventh century AD everything was shifted to private confession to the priest.[140]



Stage two: Augustine's contribution to the Introspective Conscience. Known also as Augustine of Hippo (13 Nov. 354 - 28 Aug. 430), he was one of the most influential of the church fathers, and not just upon Roman Catholic thinking but upon Protestants as well.[141] But in Eastern Orthodox Christianity most of his teachings are rejected. The better part of his career (391-430) was spent in North Africa at Hippo Regius (Annaba, Algeria today).[142] His two primary writings in English translation are the City of God (ca. early 400s) and Confessions [143](ca. 397-401). The first defended the Catholic Church as distinct from the declining Roman Empire and the second is a religious biography up to his early 40s when the book was written. It is in this writing that he spends substantial time reflecting upon his very rebellious and sinful life up to conversion in 387 AD.

In his *Confessions*, we come to understand the Augustine whose sense of worthlessness before God haunted him all his Christian life.[144] And with the re-

[140]"In the early Church, publicly known sins were often confessed openly or publicly in church.[17] However, private confession was still used for private sins.[17] Also, penance was often done before absolution rather than after absolution.[17] Penances were and are assigned to expiate what is called the temporal punishment that remains due to sins even when the sins are forgiven, namely 'an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory'.[27] In the early Church, the assigned penances were much more harsh. For example, it would not have been unusual for someone to receive a 10-year penance[17] for committing the sin of abortion which the Catholic Church considers to be a grave or mortal sin.[28] With more of an emphasis later placed on the Church's ability to expiate temporal effects of sin (by prayer, sacramentals and indulgences and most especially by The Sacrifice of the Mass) penances began to be lessened or mitigated." ["Sacrament of Penance (Roman Catholic)," wikipedia.org]

[141]"Augustine of Hippo (/ɔːˈgʌstɪn/[1][2] or /ˈɔːgəstɪn/;[2] Latin: Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis;[3] 13 November 354 – 28 August 430), also known as Saint Augustine or Saint Austin,[4] was an early Christian theologian and philosopher[5] whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. He was the bishop of Hippo Regius (modern-day Annaba, Algeria), located in Numidia (Roman province of Africa). He is viewed as one of the most important Church Fathers in the Western Christianity for his writings in the Patristic Era. Among his most important works are *City of God* and *Confessions*." ["Augustine of Hippo, wikipedia.org]

[142]"Valerius was the elderly bishop of Hippo who recognized the newly converted Augustine s talent and used group pressure to coerce Augustine into becoming a priest. When he saw Augustine in the congregation one day, he began preaching about the urgent need for priests. The congregation mobbed Augustine, and ordained him by force. For the next five years, Valerius nurtured Augustine in the ministry. Augustine soon took over the preaching, and in 395 was made cobishop with Valerius. He died in 396, and Augustine succeeded him as bishop." [*Christian History Magazine*-Issue 15: St. Augustine of Hippo (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1987).]

[143]"A confession, by nature, brings an indictment against oneself before God. Appropriately, Augustine's Confessions takes the form of a prayer. Thus it is not merely a recital of his life story, nor does he melodramatically embellish the good in his life or deemphasize the evil. When we confess in prayer to God, who knows us better than we know ourselves, we are honest. And Augustine is painstakingly honest as he describes the profundities of the human heart. Sensitive readers will find, in his confession, a confession of their own.

"The long prayer of St. Augustine consists of 13 books, or chapters, which may be divided into three major sections. Books 1–9 tell the story of Augustine's life up to his conversion and just afterward. Book 10 is a philosophical discussion of time and memory. Books 11–13 turn to the early verses of Genesis to explore the nature of God and creation and what it means to be human. Throughout each section, Augustine weaves together three major themes: the restlessness of human beings; the mystery of God; and human affection."

[*Christian History Magazine*-Issue 15: St. Augustine of Hippo (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1987).]

[144]"In the most-famous quotation from the Confessions, Augustine states his grand themes:

"'And man wants to praise you, man who is only a small portion of what you have created and who goes about carrying with him his own mortality, the evidence of his own sin and evidence that you resist the proud …. Yet still man, this small portion of creation, wants to praise you. You stimulate him to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.'

"Augustine begins his own story in the context of the restlessness endemic to human experience. Although he cannot relate from memory anything about his infancy, he knows these are important years. He observes the behavior of other infants, assuming that his own experience was similar. Like the psalmist, he describes himself as 'conceived in iniquity,' and in need of God's mercy. Only custom and reason prevent adults from holding restless infants accountable for their self-centeredness, tempers, and jealousies. At the earliest ages, human beings crave what they cannot provide for themselves.

"From his early educational experiences, Augustine discovers another aspect of restlessness, the false joy of receiving unearned awards. Like many students, he says he would not study unless driven to it. Reading, writing, and arithmetic he found boring. The only educational ventures he pursued with enthusiasm were those from which he could derive pleasure without having to work for it. He was swept away by vanity, lost in the darkness of his affections.

"An even deeper restlessness emerges in Augustine's 16th year. He and some friends rob pears from a pear tree; the theft lives in the bishop's mind years later as if it had happened just the day before. For Augustine, the theft opens a window into the soul. Why did he steal? Why does anyone steal? As Augustine examines the common justifications for such an act, he realizes that they do not apply. He is not starving; he is not even hungry; and the food is not particularly tasty. He does note that, without the approval of his companions, he probably would not have done it. So why did he?

lease of these writings he has managed to influence a large segment of formal Christianity with the feeling that genuine piety is defined by a sense of utter worthlessness before God. Clearly such belief does not come out of scripture, but out of a combination of Augustine's warped personality and the framework of doing penance as prescribed inside the Roman Catholic Church of his day.[145] His self portrayal seems 'pious' but careful examination reveals a personality disorder of serious proportions coupled with a profound misunderstanding of scriptural principles.[146] His twisting of Paul's depiction of his experience as a Pharisee with the Law in Romans seven is but one example of his serious perversion of scripture. Paul had no intention of asserting that Torah obedience equals religious legalism whatsoever, but Augustine's twisting of it to mean this has corrupted Christian experience of the grace of God for century upon century, due to the influence of Augustine's teachings.[147]

Stage three: Medieval and Protestant Contributions to the Introspective Conscience. Augustine has been labeled 'the architect of the middle ages' for Christian tradition in the west.[148] The emerging image of Christian piety set by Augustine coupled with the renewal of emphasis upon confession of sins through the sacrament of penance established the perceived meaning of being Christian in western Christianity for well over a thousand years after Augustine. And yet the hypocrisy that came out of this in western Christianity is astounding. On the one side, true Christians were supposed to be lowly and utterly committed to Christ with

"Eventually Augustine decides that his theft was a perverse imitation of God. It was not the pears he desired, but, in an arrogant spirit of truncated liberty, he tried to produce a darkened image of omnipotence.

"The next decade of his life witnessed a flurry of frustrated affections, as he rehearses them in the Confessions. He sought the love of a woman, of the theater, of philosophy, and of a rational religion. It was a cauldron of at least four unholy loves, about which he tersely explains: 'I was not yet in love, but I loved the idea of love.'

"Augustine gives us little historical information about the first unholy love, his relationship with his concubine. We do not even know her name. We do know they had a son, Adeodatus, and that they were together for several years. We also know that Augustine did not find this love satisfactory. When it came time to marry, he sent her away, and became engaged to another woman, one more suitable for his social standing. But before he could marry, Augustine was required to demonstrate his chastity for two years. He even failed at this. '… since I was not so much a lover of marriage as a slave to lust, I found another woman for myself—not, of course, as a wife.' How does one live with oneself when intentionality is so weak?

"This is a deep and persistent restlessness. Even years later, the bishop is still wrestling with his sexuality. While he is able to escape the temptation to be with a woman, he is unable to escape its influence in his mind and body. In addition, he learns that continence requires not only abstinence, but also appropriate devotion to one's neighbor.

"Augustine's love of the theater, another in his cauldron of shameful loves, seems short-lived. At first, he loved to see the misery of others. But the inconsistency of rejoicing in others' misfortunes, which he would detest if they were his own, eventually drove him away. The theater was a life of fantasy which threatened to usurp the enjoyment of real life.

"In what he calls 'the lust of the mind,' Augustine began to search for truth in reason. This led him to his third and fourth unholy loves—the fables of the Manichaeans and the skepticism of some philosophers. In all of these lusts, as Augustine recalls it, he despised the authority of the church and the teaching of Scripture.

"Yet, by the grace of God, Augustine heard the gospel. He approached the truth in stages. First he learned to read the Old Testament symbolically rather than literally. Then he learned to think of evil as a privation of good rather than a substance in its own right. Finally, he learned, from Ambrose and others, the limitations of human reason. Faith and authority, he found, are necessary for true understanding."

[*Christian History Magazine*-Issue 15: St. Augustine of Hippo (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1987).]

[145]Although later on Augustine came to deny the Manichean teachings, the notion of the mystical remained a part of his thinking which provided much of the framework for his understanding of God and the individual's relationship with God.

[146]Not the least of troubles was the loss in rapid succession of his mother, his son, and one of his closest friends in his trip from Milan to his home town in North Africa, Thagaste: Deep emotional scars remained with him from this.

> By the time he reached his home town (a journey lengthened by political turmoil), he had lost his mother, his son, and one of his closest friends. These losses propelled Augustine into a deeper, more vigorous commitment: he and friends established a lay ascetic community in Thagaste to spend time in prayer and the study of the Scriptures.

[Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, "Introduction," *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 22.]

Also playing some role in all of this is Augustine's struggles in moving from a sexual profligate to celibacy. It is Augustine's legacy that sexual activity, even inside marriage, is based upon lust or concupiscence, and thus of questionable nature. This was a part of the 'curse' placed on Adam and Eve in the fall, so taught Augustine.

> "The lines ["To Carthage then I came, Burning, burning, burning, burning..."] were written by T. S. Eliot in his apocalyptic poem, *The Waste Land*. Partly famous because they were written by Eliot, they are also famous because of who and what they allude to: the sexual fires that burned in the youthful Augustine. From adolescence to the age of 32, as he later detailed in the Confessions, Augustine was a frequent loser in the battle with lustful passions.

[*Christian History Magazine*-Issue 15: St. Augustine of Hippo (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1987).]

[147]"In the summer of 429, the Vandals invaded North Africa, meeting almost no resistance along the way. Hippo, one of the few fortified cities, was overwhelmed with refugees. In the third month of the siege, the 76-year-old Augustine died, not from an arrow but from a fever. Miraculously, his writings survived the Vandal takeover, and his theology became one of the main pillars on which the church of the next 1,000 years was built." [Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, "Introduction," *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 23.]

[148]Galli, Mark, and Ted Olsen. *131 Christians Everyone Should Know.* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 20.

the most pious being the clergy in their vows of poverty. But on the other side, the Church had accumulated vast power and control over the lives of the people under its dominance from the Italian peninsula westward as well as North Africa from Alexandra Egypt westward. The Roman Empire in the western Mediterranean had managed to survive in the form of the Roman Catholic Church.[149] This religious / political control aspect increasingly became the dominating side among the elite of the church from the pope down to the cardinals who lived in luxury in Rome. But the laity and the parish priests were expected to conform to the images of piety and lowliness taught by the church.[150] Gradually such hypocrisy brought extensive corruption to both the church and to the idea of Christianity itself.

The Protestant Reformation that began in the 1500s in central Europe was the outcome of this corruption. And yet the efforts to 'clean out the corruption' of the church by Martin Luther and John Calvin along with others was only partially successful. In a very real sense it only meant a shifting of ecclesiastical power and control from the Vatican in Rome to regional centers of Protestant power in central Europe. Most of the enduring changes came in the area of theological thinking about church and salvation. It was the continuing protests of the Radical Reformers mostly in Switzerland who felt that Luther and Calvin had failed to truly 'reform' Christianity that pushed Christianity toward a more biblical centered orientation.

But vestiges of Roman Catholic thinking remained firmly in place among all of the reformers. For Luther, the Augustinian monk converted to Christ, the image of piety inherited from his Roman Catholic background continued through his adoration of the teachings of Augustine. John Calvin also continued to value Augustine's *Confessions* as an important model of piety. To a lesser degree this was true of Menno Simons a radical reformer from Holland, and others of the Anabaptists, as they came to be called.

But the one continuing view inherited from Roman Catholic thinking was the essential image of being pious that reached all the way back to Augustine. Although the system of penance was rejected from the Catholic background, in its place came the 'introspective conscience' of continually probing one's life in search of sinful failures that needed confessing to God. Martin Luther stands as the most influential source of this shift among the early reformers, in part due to his Augustinian background and continued admiration for Augustine and his teachings. The failure of all of these reformers to break free of the twisted image of piety in Augustine has then been past into Protestant Christianity down to the present day. The continuing popularity of Augustine's *Confessions* helps reinforce this image all across the religious spectrum of modern Christianity.

As Stendahl correctly pointed out in his article, Luther's influence upon western culture stands along side his religious influence. Especially through his impact on some of the founders of modern psychology in western culture,[151] the impact of introspection, viewed as either healthy or unhealthy activity, is seen as necessary to achieving mental health and acceptable social behavior. More importantly in the background of virtually every exploration of supposed 'spiritual health' stands the model of Luther's introspective conscience to some extent.

Stage four: The Modern Western Maze of Understandings about the Introspective Conscience. Therefore in light of this very colored background of the 'introspective conscience' any attempt to make intelligible sense of it from a religious perspective is well nigh impossible. The many differing and often conflictive definitions of just 'introspection' create huge barriers to clear understanding. Essentially the idea is a focus inwardly upon one's thoughts and feelings. But the religious introspective conscience generally means such inward reflection upon one's thoughts and outward behavior in regard to sinful actions. It has connections to

[149]"The Donation of Constantine was a document of great importance in the Middle Ages. It was used by the Church to support its claim of supreme rule over even earthly powers. It supposedly was given by the Emperor Constantine to Pope Sylvester I in the 4th century, when Constantine relocated his capital in Constantinople, granting the pope (therefore the Roman Church) dominion over all Italy, as well as over Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Alexandria. It also claimed that Constantine had bestowed upon the papacy supreme control over all clergy, and, more significantly, a great deal of political power (though Sylvester had, apparently, humbly refused to accept from Constantine the Imperial Crown!).

"For centuries the Donation was accepted by all, giving the popes great political clout. However, in the 15th century it was proven by Nicholas of Cusa, a German cardinal and scholar, to be a forgery."

[*Christian History Magazine*-Issue 22: Waldensians: Medieval "Evangelicals" (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1989).]

[150]It is no accident that the 'saints' in medieval Catholic art began to be painted with halos around their heads symbolizing the achievement of superior piety during their earthly life. Such achievement qualified them for their special 'status' in Heaven. This served to reinforce the church's teaching on piety to a largely illiterate laity.

[151]The distinction 'modern psychology' underscores the unique twists in human understanding of behavior from the Age of Reason to the present. Individuals have probed human behavior as a discipline of study since the period of Greek culture before Christ.

The emergence of psychiatry as distinct from psychology that focuses in mental disorders represents another off shoot of this field of study as well as Behaviorism etc. represents the extensive attention that modern western culture has given to human behavior.

religious meditation and contemplation. In the present day, the popularity of such activities is quite large, even in Christian circles. One must remember, however, that even though such practices existed in primitive fashion during the first century Greco-Roman world, the New Testament never uses the available terminology nor advocates any Christian version of such practices. It is not until some centuries later when Christian thinking began to be dominated by Greco-Roman thinking rather than by clear biblical understanding that such practices surface inside Christianity. The corrupting impact on authentic Christian spirituality that continues is major.

Much as modern psychology views excessive introspection as harmful to both mental health and productive social behavior, the religious counterpart should be likewise viewed as potentially destructive to spiritual health. This is additionally the case in view of the multitude of differing religious teachings on how to handle the resulting feelings of guilt coming out of such introspection.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the reasons for coming at this topic in the above manner is to provide sharp definitions of the key terms from a modern secular and pop perspective over against the biblical perspectives.

Why do it this way? The primary reason is to clarify distinctly what comes from the Bible and what doesn't. Most of the time the lines of demarcation between these two sources of understanding are not clearly marked off. The result is a blurring of what is biblical and what is secular. Many, many Christians assume certain understandings of conscience, guilt, and forgiveness are biblical, when in reality they mostly, if not completely, come out of the culture of the world around them. The only way I know to clarify this problem is to put the two ways of thinking side by side in order to clearly distinguish between the two.

Out of this reasonably in depth study, I would propose some guidelines for seeking to cultivate unconditional commitment to Christ as the foundation for spiritual health.

1) Get away from allowing your feelings to determine your relationship to Christ. As the above study reveals, no where in the entire Bible is our relationship to God through Christ connected to how we feel. Just, the opposite is the case. Relationship with God is solely based on an unconditional faith commitment that is lived out in actively obeying Christ. Biblical faith is a volitional commitment to do, not to feel.

2) Clear out of your thinking the false idea about conscience. Modern society has adopted a fictitious idea of conscience that is contrary to what is found inside the Bible. Our conscience, Paul's συνείδησις, is not some kind of moral thermostat that distinguishes right and wrong. To the contrary, Paul's limited use of the idea -- and he is virtually the only biblical writer to employ the idea -- followed the prevailing Greco-Roman definition of the human ability to make decisions of every kind based on external information made available to the individual. No where is a source for such ability ever mentioned; it is accepted via observation of people making decisions over against the rest of the animal world. But, in contrast to the Greco-Roman view, Paul knows that our ability to decide things comes from the leadership given us by the Spirit of God. The more consistently we follow that guidance, the greater our spiritual health before God. Without that guidance, the pagan world consistently makes the wrong decision about virtually everything in life.

Shedding the modern misconception of conscience is not easy, due to its being so deeply embedded into western cultural thinking. For Christians elsewhere in the world this is a much simpler task than for those in the western world.

3) Don't dare allow the modern introspective conscience misconceptions to cause you to focus on guilt rather than on sinful actions. As the above study clearly demonstrates, feelings of guilt are another phony idea created culturally, and not biblically. God is not interested in your 'feelings of guilt'! But what He is dead serious about is your sinful behavior! Forgiveness from Him pertains only to releasing you from the penalty of your misbehavior which stands as a barrier to deeper relationship with Him. This comes solely through Christ paying the penalty of your sins on the cross. Confession is not admitting to guilt! It is sincerely acknowledging to God your misbehavior and pledging yourself before God to not repeat it. Failure to do so means no forgiveness from God has been granted. And this you will then face on the Day of Judgment when the Books of Works are opened up and examined by Almighty God (Rev. 20:12). The modern introspective conscience that separates guilt from sinful deeds and then only deals with presumed guilt is a fatal error!

4) Remember always that spiritual health is always relationship, never situational. Quite interestingly, the one Bible word translated as 'spiritual' is πνευματικός, -ή, -όν (with the adverb derivative πνευματικῶς, spiritually) is derived from πνεῦμα and designates one under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, not one who has achieved some level of religious status before God. If you want to grow and mature religiously in your relationship with God, OBEY HIM! That's the only path available. Paul lays it out perfectly clear in Phil. 3:10-14. Our goal is τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν]

παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings (v. 10). And as he indicates in vv. 12-14, at the end of his earthly life this goal had not yet been fully realized in his own life. Lifelong pursuit of this objective is the obligation of every believer in Christ.

My sincere hope in doing this study is that, first of all, you can learn as much about this topic as I have in doing the study. All of my adult life I have read many times about the problems of translating the Pauline word συνείδησις as 'conscience', but until this study I never quite grasped what those problems were. Out of this study has come a brand new perspective about what it means to be a Christian, and especially to be a healthy Christian in relationship with God through Christ. What a wonderfully liberating experience this has become for me personally over the past several months.

This study comes out of some honest and provocative questions from a group of serious Bible students that meet in our apartment in Santa Ana, Costa Rica, every Wednesday evening. Members of the group ask the 'hard questions,' fully expecting a biblical based answer. This study is the product of such a session, that was provoked by their reading Stendahl's lecture article on the introspective conscience given in the 1960s. I will be eternally grateful for this group of folks who regularly raise these kinds of questions and then want to examine the answers carefully and deeply. This kind of stimulation keeps me thinking and growing in my understanding of the Bible text at 73 plus years of age.

Pastors and teachers who read this study. Don't under estimate the desire of the people, who hear you preach and teach, for learning profound insights into scripture. Most of them have questions, often time profound questions, that they want answers to. Give them the opportunity to ask such questions. It will keep you on your toes for sure.

But that's good, and not bad. You will grow more in your own understanding religiously through their questions than by any other means available to you in ministry. Such questions will drive you back to the Bible time and time again to seek answers that you may not know when the search begins. Always be open to new ways of discovering biblical truth. Don't ever assume that you know all the answers at the outset. You don't, and won't ever!

Honest efforts to find the right answers to their questions will do more for their religious life than hearing a dozen sermons you preach to them from the pulpit. Preachers live in delusion when they think they can build a deeply religious congregation just from their preaching in the pulpit. A twenty to thirty minute sermon every week is a sure fire diet for spiritual mediocrity by the congregation. For you personally it will foster false delusions of doing a good job in leading a congregation. Find a way to let the congregation ask questions and probe your thinking. Both of you will be so much better off!