

ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ IN GALATIANS 2:16

CLARIFICATION FROM 3:1-6

Debbie Hunn

Summary

Because grammar alone is inadequate to determine the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ, whether ‘faith in Christ’ or ‘faith[fulness] of Christ’, some scholars now observe that exegesis must judge between the theories. This article is an attempt to use exegesis to determine the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16. The argument proceeds in two steps: the first is to confirm that ἀκοή πίστεως in Galatians 3:2, 5 refers to the faith of the Galatians (‘hearing with faith’), and the second is to establish the link between ἀκοή πίστεως in 3:2, 5 and πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16. The article concludes that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16 refers to human faith.

1. Introduction

Morna Hooker perceived in 1989 that the question of whether to classify the genitive in πίστις Χριστοῦ as subjective or objective is ‘one which cannot be settled on the basis of appeals to grammatical construction alone’.¹ A subjective genitive in the passages containing πίστις Χριστοῦ (Rom. 3:22, 26; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9) denotes faith Christ has in God or his faithful obedience to God, and an objective genitive the faith Christians have in Christ.²

Since Hooker wrote, scholars have continued to offer grammatical arguments, but theology more than grammar has driven the debate from

¹ Morna Hooker, ‘ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ’, *NTS* 35 (1989): 321-42, esp. 321.

² See Daniel B. Wallace (*Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996]: 113-19) for a discussion of the subjective and objective genitive. A noun in the genitive case functions as a subjective genitive if it acts as the subject of the implied verbal clause, and it functions as an objective genitive if it acts as the object.

the start. Marcus Barth, for example, rejects the objective genitive because, ‘If Christ’s own faith counted nothing, and if men were totally delivered to the sincerity, depth, certainty of their own faith – how could any man ever be saved?’³ However, Paul does unmistakably speak of people being justified on the basis of their own faith: for example, Galatians 3:6 and Romans 4:3, 5, 11. Yet it is not the depth or sincerity of their faith but the object of their faith that saves them. And there are other theological issues. Ann Jervis favours the subjective genitive on the grounds that it brings the text in line with Paul’s idea of being ‘in Christ’. David Garland sees the contrast in Galatians 2:16 as between works of law that people perform and the work that Christ accomplished in faithfully handing himself over for their sins. Richard B. Hays understands Paul’s theology as less about how we dispose ourselves to God than about what Christ did to deliver us.⁴ And there are theological issues on the side of the objective genitive. C. F. D. Moule rejects the subjective genitive because it would seriously ‘reduce necessary reference to man’s act of will in response to God’s approach’. James Dunn writes that if we assume a subjective genitive, Paul ‘seems to have avoided speaking of “faith in Christ”’.⁵ Paul does, however, use the verb πιστεύω to say that people believe in Christ. On neither side of the issue do such theological points stand or fall with the use of the genitive. But if we misinterpret πίστις Χριστοῦ, we misinterpret Paul’s arguments when he writes the phrase, whether or not our grasp of it lies within orthodoxy.

Both sides of the debate acknowledge that the problem cannot be settled by grammar alone.⁶ And it ought not be settled by theology. As

³ Markus Barth, ‘The Faith of the Messiah’, *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 363-70, esp. 368.

⁴ L. Ann Jervis, ‘Peter in the Middle: Galatians 2:11-21’, in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. Michel R. Desjardins, Peter Richardson, and S. G. Wilson (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2000): 45-62, esp. 54; David E. Garland, ‘Paul’s Defense of the Truth of the Gospel Regarding Gentiles (Galatians 2:15-3:22)’, *RevExp* 91 (1994): 165-81, esp. 168; Richard B. Hays, ‘ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake?’, *SBL Seminar Papers* 30 (1991): 714-29, esp. 715-16.

⁵ C. F. D. Moule, ‘The Biblical Conception of “Faith”’, *ExpTim* 68 (1957): 157; James D. G. Dunn, ‘Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ’, *SBL Seminar Papers* 30 (1991): 730-44, esp. 735.

⁶ E.g. Hooker, ‘ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ’: 321; L. Ann Jervis, *Galatians* (NIBCNT 9; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999): 21; R. Barry Matlock, “‘Even the Demons Believe’”: Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ’, *CBQ* 64 (2002): 300-18, esp. 302; J. H. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. J. H. Moulton

Hooker has well said, ‘This issue can be settled only by exegesis, and because New Testament scholars approach the texts with widely differing presuppositions, they are likely to interpret the phrase in very different ways’.⁷ The ‘widely differing presuppositions’ have fed the fires of the debate to this day, resulting in a large body of scholarship on the many issues that have surfaced in Galatians 2–3. But because the problem of πίστις Χριστοῦ is independent of most of the other problems in the text, including the meaning of ἔργα νόμου (‘works of law’), it is unnecessary to discuss them here. The most convincing exegesis will require the fewest presuppositions. To this end, then, the argument in this paper will proceed in two stages: the first is to determine the meaning of ἀκοή πίστεως (RSV: ‘hearing with faith’) in 3:2, 5; and the second is to show that ἀκοή πίστεως in 3:2, 5 corresponds to πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16. A consecutive reading of Galatians will show that Paul continues the topic of πίστις Χριστοῦ in chapter 3 with the term ἀκοή πίστεως. We can thus establish the meaning of the more difficult term by the meaning of the one more easily determined.

2. Ἀκοή Πίστεως

When Paul introduces the Spirit in 3:2 he asks: had they received the Spirit by works of law or by ἀκοή πίστεως? In verse 5 he asks again: does the one who supplies to them the Spirit and works miracles among them do so by works of law or by ἀκοή πίστεως? Although scholars usually understand ἀκοή πίστεως in Galatians 3:2, 5 to mean ‘hearing of faith’ or ‘hearing with faith’, some now join Richard B. Hays and J. Louis Martyn in taking it to mean ‘the message that evokes faith’ or ‘the gospel-message’ (Hays) or ‘the message that elicits faith’ (Martyn).⁸ Both defend their position with two basic arguments:

(Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908): 72. Moulton makes a general statement about the genitive.

⁷ Hooker, ‘ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ’: 321.

⁸ Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (The Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 131; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997): 288. Scholars who interpret ἀκοή πίστεως to mean ‘hearing with faith’ or ‘believing what you heard’ include Ernest De Witt Burton (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* [ICC: Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921]: 147); F. F. Bruce (*The Epistle to the*

(1) Romans 10:16 is parallel to Galatians 3:2, 5 and (2) Paul contrasts an exclusively human activity (works of law) with a divine (ἄκοή πίστεως).

Hays and Martyn find evidence that ἄκοή means ‘message’ in Galatians 3:2, 5 from its use in Romans 10:16 since conversion is the theme of both passages. In Romans Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1 where ἄκοή naturally means ‘report’ or ‘proclamation’.⁹ From this Martyn asserts and Hays offers his primary evidence that Paul has the same intention in Galatians 3:2.¹⁰ However, the meaning in Galatians 3: 2, 5 does not rest on the meaning of ἄκοή in Romans 10:16. Paul emphasizes in Romans 10 the need people have to receive the message so that they might believe it; this is not his point in Galatians 3. He does not quote Isaiah 53:1 in Galatians 3 and does not use the phrase ἄκοή πίστεως in Romans 10. The context of Galatians must determine the meaning of the phrase.

For their second point, that the contrast in Galatians 3:2, 5 is between human and divine activity, Martyn and Hays use different arguments. After quoting from Jewish-Christian tradition that justification is an act of God, Martyn cites contrasts in both Romans 10 and Galatians 1–2 between human and divine action. He finds in Romans 10 God’s own act in giving the gospel message by noting that ἄκοή ‘had become, by the time of Second Isaiah, a technical term for Yahweh’s message’.¹¹ Romans 10:14, however, makes a point of the need for a preacher to give the message when it asks how people would hear without a preacher. God’s action in giving the message is not at issue. What we have in Romans 10:14 is that the human activity of preaching the message of God’s act of redemption precedes the human response of faith.

In Galatians 1–2 Martyn finds three sets of antinomies between a human and a divine action (i.e. 1:1; 1:11-12; and 2:16), and he expects the recipients of the letter to interpret the contrast between works of law and ἄκοή πίστεως in 3:2, 5 in light of them.¹² However, the

Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982]: 149; Richard N. Longenecker (*Galatians* [WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990]: 103, 105); and James D. G. Dunn (*The Epistle to the Galatians* [Black’s New Testament Commentary; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993]: 154).

⁹ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*: 124-32; Martyn, *Galatians*: 288-89.

¹⁰ Martyn, *Galatians*: 288; Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*: 129.

¹¹ Martyn, *Galatians*: 266, 270, 288.

¹² Martyn, *Galatians*: 287.

antinomy in 1:1 refers, not to Paul's message, but to his apostleship: it was of God not men. The antinomy in 1:11-12 concerns the source of Paul's message: it was of God not men. And the source of a message says nothing about its content: a message from God may still call for a response from its hearers.

Martyn's third antimony, the one in 2:16, is more complex. Here he deals with the contrast between works of law and πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 by comparing 2:16 with 2:21. Verse 2:21 says, 'if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing' (NRSV). Just as Paul contrasted works of law and πίστις Χριστοῦ as means of justification in 2:16, so he contrasts the law and Christ's death to the same end in 2:21. Martyn observes that if 2:16 corresponds to 2:21, then 'law' in the first verse corresponds to 'law' in the second and πίστις Χριστοῦ in the first to the death of Christ in the second. He concludes that πίστις Χριστοῦ means the faithfulness of Christ in going to the cross.¹³

Martyn has indeed noted a correspondence between 2:16 and 2:21 that pairs πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 with the death of Christ in 2:21. However, the other pairing is not between 'law' in 2:16 and 'law' in 2:21 but between 'works of law' (ἔργα νόμου) and 'law', respectively. The use of 'law' in 2:19, 'For through the law I died to the law' (NRSV), shows that the correspondence between terms in 2:16 and 2:21 is not the equation Martyn asserts. To attempt the exegesis of 2:19 would be to introduce unnecessary debatable points into the controversy about πίστις Χριστοῦ. It is sufficient to note that whether or not death to the law through the law means one is placed outside the sphere of the law because of the penalty for sin imposed by the law (and borne by Christ), it would not mean death to works of the law through works of the law. Martyn himself takes 'through the law' in 2:19 to refer to the curse the law pronounced on Christ at his death, and not to works of the law.¹⁴ Therefore, 'law' in 2:21, because Paul picks up the term from 2:19, does not mean 'works of the law'.

Rather than simply restating the contrast from 2:16, verse 2:21 advances the argument – or rather summarizes the advances made in verses 17-20 – by contrasting the law, which lies behind the works of the law that people do, with the deed of God that lies behind πίστις

¹³ Martyn, *Galatians*: 271.

¹⁴ Martyn, *Galatians*: 257.

Χριστοῦ. Verse 2:21 shows the folly of choosing works of law over πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 by showing the superiority of the work of Christ to the law. But the correspondence between the terms in these verses is not an equality and does not prove that πίστις Χριστοῦ is the deed of Christ's death as opposed to faith in the deed. Therefore, the antinomies in Galatians 1:1 and 1:11-12, although clearly between a human and a divine activity are unrelated to the antinomy in 3:2, 5; and the antinomy in 2:16 has not been shown to be between a human and a divine activity.

Hays's approach to showing that Paul contrasts a human activity with a divine in Galatians 3:2, 5 is to note that in 3:5 God is the one supplying the Spirit, that is, doing the activity. He says of 3:5 that

the syntax of the sentence, though elliptical, makes it clear that the prepositional phrases are intended as modifiers of God's action: 'He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you – (does he do it) ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως?' Paul's formulation here has a facetious tone; it would be ridiculous to say that God supplies the Spirit and works miracles ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. That is precisely the point, but it would be equally ridiculous to say (as the *RSV* does) that God works miracles 'through hearing with faith.' Thus, ἀκοή πίστεως in Gal 3:5 is best understood as a designation for the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁵

Sam K. Williams understands Hays to mean that it is ridiculous to think God supplies the Spirit through hearing with faith because hearing with faith is a human activity.¹⁶ I believe, however, that Williams misunderstands Hays, and I include the long quote to allow the reader to decide. Hays appears to hold that the prepositional phrases, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, in order to modify God's action must themselves be God's actions. Since it would be truly ridiculous to say that God works miracles when he hears with faith, Hays takes ἀκοή πίστεως to mean 'proclamation of the gospel'. Verse 3:5 would then ask whether God gives the Galatians the Spirit and works miracles among them when he does the works of the law or when he proclaims the message. Now if Paul's point in 3:2 is to compare a human work (keeping the law) with a divine (proclaiming

¹⁵ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*: 130.

¹⁶ For a detailed refutation of the view that ἀκοή in 3:2, 5 means 'message' and of the view that God would not supply the Spirit through a human activity, see Sam K. Williams, 'The Hearing of Faith: Ακοη Πιστεως in Galatians 3', *NTS* 35 (1989): 82-93, esp. 86-89.

the gospel), as Hays also says,¹⁷ what would Paul accomplish by making both divine activities in 3:5? It does not help Paul's case to make any human activity sound ridiculous by speaking of God as doing it. By such an argument people ought not seek justification at all (*contra* 2:17) since it would be ridiculous for God to do so.

It is this same bias against human response that leads Hays to conclude that 3:5-6 does not draw a parallel between the faith of Christians and that of Abraham. Instead, Hays sees Abraham's faith as a 'foreshadowing of Christ's' even to the point that Gentiles 'are included [in God's blessing of Abraham] not on the ground of their own faith, but on the ground of Abraham's faith, which is deemed to have a vicarious soteriological effect'.¹⁸ In downplaying the faith of Christians because it is human faith, Hays elevates human faith (Abraham's) virtually to the level of the work of Christ. Such a conclusion is itself enough to destroy his argument. Aside from Abraham, the only subject Paul uses with the verb πιστεύω in Galatians 2-3 is Christians, the group to whose faith ἀκοή πίστεως simply cannot refer in the view of Hays.

Paul's argument, however, is straightforward. In 3:6 he quotes Genesis 15:6, which says that Abraham believed the promise God spoke to him and was counted righteous because of it. This is 'just like' (καθώς) ἀκοή πίστεως at the end of 3:5.¹⁹ The comparison to Abraham's faith limits πίστις in Galatians 3:2, 5 to human faith, in particular, the faith of the Galatian Christians.

Romans 4 makes a similar point and thus corroborates Paul's willingness to speak of the role of human faith in justification. Romans 4:3, like Galatians 3:6, quotes from Genesis 15:6 that 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (NRSV).

¹⁷ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*: 130.

¹⁸ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*: 173, 176.

¹⁹ Although he disagrees with this interpretation, Longenecker notes that most commentators take καθώς as an abbreviated form of καθώς γέγραπται (as it is written), having the purpose of introducing Scripture (*Galatians*: 112). Hans Dieter Betz assumes this abbreviated formula but gives evidence against his own position by noting that it does not occur elsewhere in Paul or in the Qumran texts (*Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979]: 140 n. 13). He offers no example of anyplace it does occur. Other commentators see καθώς in its more usual capacity of creating a link, e.g. 'between receiving the Spirit and being justified' (Bruce, *Galatians*: 152) or 'between the situation of the Galatians and that of Abraham' (Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* [SP 9; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992]: 113).

Romans 4:5 then draws a parallel between the Christian and Abraham: ‘But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness’ (NRSV). The parallel between Romans 4:3 and 4:5 should dispel any confusion about Paul’s intent: Abraham and his faith are a model for Christians and theirs.

The text following Galatians 3:6 offers additional evidence that the parallel in Romans holds also in Galatians 3. After comparing ἀκοή πίστεως with the faith of Abraham in 3:5-6, Paul concludes in 3:7 that those who are ‘of faith’ (ἐκ πίστεως) are sons of Abraham and states in 3:8 that God justifies the Gentiles ‘by faith’ (ἐκ πίστεως). Paul uses the verb πιστεύω for Abraham in 3:6 and the cognate noun for Gentiles in 3:7-8. He rarely uses the verb (including the participle) in Galatians 2–3, but aside from the statement in 2:7 that the gospel message was entrusted (πεπίστευμαι) to him, he uses it four times: twice to refer to Abraham as believing (3:6, 9) and twice to Christians (2:16; 3:22). A switch from verb to noun should not obscure Paul’s point: he says in 3:6 that God justified Abraham by faith and in 3:8 that he justifies Gentiles the same way. The alternative views examined in this section have not given us good reason to understand ἀκοή πίστεως as anything other than faith Christians exercise in the message about Christ.

3. The Correspondence between 2:16 and 3:2, 5

Paul first brings up πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 in order to contrast it with ἔργα νόμου as a means of justification. Whatever the two terms mean, Paul says that a person is justified διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ or ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ but not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.²⁰ To see that πίστις

²⁰ Paul uses the preposition ἐκ (‘from’, ‘by’) in 2:16 when he speaks of justification by works of law. With πίστις Χριστοῦ, however, he uses διὰ and then ἐκ. Commentators on both sides of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate generally see little difference between ἐκ and διὰ as used here. Bruce, for example, who translates πίστις Χριστοῦ as ‘faith in Christ’, says that ‘the variation is purely stylistic’ (*Galatians*: 139-40); and Longenecker, taking πίστις Χριστοῦ as the faith/faithfulness of Christ, says the two prepositions are ‘used interchangeably throughout v 16’ (*Galatians*: 88). Martyn discusses possible fine points of meaning in the two prepositions, but he, like the others, seems not to consider these possibilities as impacting the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ (*Galatians*: 251, n. 125).

Χριστοῦ refers to the faith of Christians, we establish the link between πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 and ἀκοή πίστεως in 3:2, 5.²¹

From 2:16 Paul carries his discourse on justification across the boundary of his speech to Peter and well into chapter 3.²² In 3:6, for example, he notes that Abraham believed God and was counted righteous (i.e. justified), in 3:8 that Gentiles would be justified by faith, and in 3:11 that no one is justified by the law. In the midst of his argument is Galatians 3:1-5. In 3:2 he asks the Galatians how they received the Spirit. The introduction of the Spirit is not a movement away from justification. Instead Paul ties it to the Galatians' experience of the Spirit by equating the justification of Gentiles with the blessing of Abraham in 3:8, and the blessing of Abraham with the sending of the Spirit in 3:14.²³

In 3:2 Paul begins to open the eyes of the Galatians to their experience of the Spirit. He does not ask, 'How were you justified?' to people now uncertain about how justification takes place. He asks instead how they received the Spirit because the miracles told them they had received the Spirit and because receiving the Spirit was proof of justification.²⁴ Therefore, with the introduction of the Spirit in 3:2 Paul continues his theme from chapter 2, and this places both 2:16 and 3:2, 5 in the context of justification.

Paul embarks upon justification in 2:16 by contrasting works of law with πίστις Χριστοῦ. As noted previously, he develops his argument by contrasting the law with the work of Christ in 2:17-21 because the law is the basis for works of the law and the crucifixion for πίστις Χριστοῦ. Thus Paul drives home to Jewish Christians the folly of returning to law-works.

²¹ Bruce connects ἔργα νόμου in 2:16 with the same phrase in 3:2, 5, but does not link πίστις Χριστοῦ and ἀκοή πίστεως in the same verses (*Galatians*: 137). Matera connects the latter pair of terms, but by reading his prior interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ into ἀκοή πίστεως, he comes to the opposite conclusion of this paper (*Galatians*: 116).

²² I take Gal. 2:14-21 as Paul's rebuke to Peter, but the argument in this paper does not depend upon it.

²³ My goal is not to explain how Paul connects justification, Abraham, blessing, and the Spirit but simply to note that he does connect them.

²⁴ Longenecker points to ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι (having begun in the Spirit) in 3:3 to show that the Galatian believers received the Spirit at conversion since their 'beginning' would have been their beginning in Christ (*Galatians*: 102). Bruce notes that καθώς in 3:6 creates 'the closest possible link between receiving the Spirit and being justified' (*Galatians*: 152). See Dunn for the connection between the Spirit and justification elsewhere in Paul and the NT (*Galatians*: 152-53).

The context of justification allows Paul to apply the argument from 2:14-21 to the Galatians in 3:1-5. He ends chapter 2 with his declaration that Christ died for nothing if righteousness (i.e. justification) comes through the law. Then in 3:1 he turns immediately from recapping his argument with Peter to address the Galatians directly. Picking up where he ends in chapter 2, on the death of Christ, he rebukes them for their newfound blindness to the crucifixion (3:1). In other words, they should have understood that the death of Christ was sufficient to justify them, even as Paul has just explained.

As he extends the topic of justification into chapter 3, Paul continues to expand upon the subtopics of πίστις and works of the law.²⁵ Galatians 3:2, 5 use πίστις to mean the faith of the Galatian Christians, and 3:6 cites Genesis 15:6 to show Abraham believed God. Verse 7 says that the ones ἐκ πίστεως are sons of Abraham, verse 8 that God justifies the Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως, and verse 9 that the ones ἐκ πίστεως are blessed with Abraham, the man of faith. Πίστις in verses 7-9 must refer to the faith of Christians, as human faith is the only possibility the context offers. Paul contrasts this faith with works of law in 3:2, 5 and once again in 3:9-10. In other words, in chapter 3 Paul contrasts human works with human faith three times in ten verses.

Some observations about the flow of Paul's argument, as described above, should clarify his use of πίστις Χριστοῦ. In 2:15-21 Paul examines two contending means of justification, ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ, and concludes that for any human being only πίστις Χριστοῦ justifies. In 3:1-5 he turns to the Galatians to ask them how they were justified. He offers them two possibilities: ἔργα νόμου and ἀκοή πίστεως. Ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3:2, 5 corresponds identically to ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 2:16 in both form and meaning. If πίστις Χριστοῦ means the faith/faithfulness of Christ in 2:16, then Paul argues in chapter 2 by comparing a human activity with a divine. He then applies this argument to the Galatians by comparing two human responses in terms nearly identical to those with which he compared the human and divine activity in his first argument. If his intention in chapter 2 were to contrast the deed of God with works of people, he certainly obscures his point by dropping it as soon as he applies it to his readers and by pressing forward with a comparison of two human responses. I would

²⁵ This is commonly recognized. See, e.g. Betz, *Galatians*: 141-42.

suggest instead that, in conformity with Paul's application to the Gentiles of his argument with the Jews, πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 becomes ἀκοή πίστεως in 3:2, 5 where Paul affirms that because of the power of the sacrifice of Christ to justify them, the Spirit came upon those who simply believed what they heard.

4. Conclusion

In other words, in chapter 3 Paul does not relinquish the theme he developed in chapter 2. Instead, immediately after clarifying the respective roles of πίστις Χριστοῦ and ἔργα νόμου in chapter 2 and still in the context of justification at the beginning of chapter 3, Paul drops these same two elements on the table of the Galatian Christians to make the same contrast in their experience. He does not restate the object of their faith with ἀκοή πίστεως – they could hardly have missed it after 2:15-3:1. Ἀκοή πίστεως refers to the faith of the people in 3:2, 5, and therefore so must the corresponding phrase, πίστις Χριστοῦ, in 2:16. Thus πίστις Χριστοῦ means 'faith in Christ', and the genitive in Galatians 2:16 is objective.