

## PAULINE MIDRASH: THE EXEGETICAL BACKGROUND OF GAL 3:19b

TERRANCE CALLAN

3849 LEDGEWOOD DRIVE, CINCINNATI, OH 45207

**A**S is well known, the argument that Gentile Christians should not keep the Jewish law is a major theme of the letters of Paul. He makes this argument in a variety of ways, but only twice does he use the circumstances in which the law was given as part of the argument. In 2 Cor 3:7-18 Paul makes Moses' veiling of his face after coming down from the mountain with the law (Exod 34:29-35) an argument against the law. He does so by proposing that Moses veiled his face to hide the fading of the glory upon it (2 Cor 3:13), thus giving a typically negative twist to something which originally exalted Moses and the law.

Paul's other reference to the giving of the law in an argument against it, in Gal 3:19b-20, is more laconic and more obscure. Having argued in Gal 3:1-18 that the Galatians should not keep the law, in 3:19-4:7 Paul addresses the question of why, if that is the case, the law was given at all. In v 19a he raises this question and answers that the law "was added for the sake of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was given," a twofold answer, the first part of which seems to be elaborated in vv 21-22 and the second in vv 23-24. In vv 19b-20 Paul interrupts his more direct statement of the purpose of the law to remark that it was "ordained through the angels by the hand of a mediator. And the mediator is not of one, but God is one." The general intent of these rather parenthetical remarks seems to be to disparage the law and so support Paul's statement that its purpose was negative and it provisional. Exactly what is in view here is not immediately obvious, but it seems clear that Paul understands the circumstances of the law's bestowal as an argument against it.

Within this parenthesis it is v 19b which actually mentions those features of the giving of the law in which Paul finds support for his argument, i.e., that it was "ordained through the angels by the hand of a mediator." V 20 seems intended to explain why the presence of a mediator tells against the law, but does so in a strikingly inscrutable way. This verse is one of the most obscure in the letters of Paul. The history of its interpretation shows that the verse has resisted any widely

acceptable interpretation,<sup>1</sup> and it may well continue to do so, thwarting any complete explanation of this short passage. But it does not seem that the obscurity of v 20 makes it completely impossible to see more clearly how Paul understands the giving of the law here. This is supported by the observation that, at least at first glance, v 20 seems to comment only on the second phrase of v 19b. But even if v 20 comments on both phrases of v 19b, Paul may be making explicit in v 20 only part of what he implies in v 19b. Thus it is reasonable to expect that investigation of v 19b in itself may clarify Paul's view of the giving of the law here and may even shed light on the meaning of v 20.

The studies of N. A. Dahl<sup>2</sup> have suggested that the compact, elliptical style of Gal 3:1-4:7 arises partly because throughout the passage Paul refers to midrashic interpretations of scripture, knowledge of which he apparently presupposes and which, therefore, he does not make explicit. It is clear that Paul has such midrash in mind in v 19b because scripture itself makes no reference to angelic participation in the giving of the law, nor is Moses ever called "mediator" in scripture. In what follows I will attempt to clarify v 19b by placing the interpretations of scripture presupposed there in the context of contemporary exegesis, revealing to what extent Paul is adopting common exegetical traditions and to what extent he adapts them to his purposes. Even if this does not solve the riddle of v 20 and so leaves vv 19b-20 only partly explicated, a more exact knowledge of how Paul viewed the giving of the law and how that view functioned in his radical re-interpretation of the law will have its own value.

### I. *diatageis di' aggelōn*

As has been mentioned above, it is immediately obvious from this phrase that Paul is drawing upon a midrashic interpretation of the scriptural account of the bestowal of the law, since the scriptural account itself makes no reference to angels. This detail was often added to the story;<sup>3</sup> most of the evidence for this is post-Pauline, but it is clear that the tradition antedated Paul. However, as is often true of

<sup>1</sup>The most complete survey of interpretations of Gal 3:20a available is found in the first chapter of my unpublished Yale dissertation *The Law and the Mediator: Gal 3:19b-20* (1976). The fourth chapter of the dissertation gives a fuller treatment of many points discussed in this essay.

<sup>2</sup>See the discussion of Gal 3:13-14 in "The Atonement—An Adequate Reward for the Akedah?" *The Crucified Messiah* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974) 153-54, and the general discussion of Gal 3:1-4:7 in "Contradictions in Scripture," *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 169-74.

<sup>3</sup>Such traditions are collected in Str-B 3. 554-56 and H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (MeyerK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951) 109-12. What follows is largely a discussion of the material which they have collected.

Paul's use of exegetical traditions, he uses this tradition in a distinctive way.

Though angels are not mentioned in the scriptural account of the giving of the law, it is mentioned that various natural phenomena accompanied it: lightning, thunder, cloud, fire, in fact, the usual concomitants of a theophany. There are indications that such natural phenomena were interpreted as angels (cf. for example Ps 104:4) or the work of angels (cf. *Jub.* 2:2 and *1 Enoch* 60:11-24). Re-interpretation of the natural phenomena which accompany an appearance of God as angels may have given rise to the general idea that angels accompany God as his court and thus would have been with him at Sinai in particular.<sup>4</sup> An early instance of this is the LXX version of Deut 33:2. The verse is obscure in Hebrew, perhaps meaning that from the right hand of God a fire blazed forth (*mymynw 'šdt lmw*). The LXX says that on his right hand angels were with him (*ek dexiōn autou aggeloi met' autou*). If the LXX is an interpretation of the Hebrew, this would seem to be an example of the interpretation of the natural phenomena which accompany a theophany as angels, i. e., fire understood as angels. Though it is not certain that the appearance of God to give the law is in view here, the context suggests that it is (cf. v 4), and the verse was so understood by later interpreters.<sup>5</sup>

For the view that angels accompanied God as his court when he gave the law at Sinai, Ps 68:18 (LXX 67:18) is even more important than Deut 33:2 in later interpretation. According to this verse the chariotry of God is "twice ten-thousand, thousands upon thousands" (*rbtym 'lpy šn'n*). This is regularly understood as a reference to a large number of angels accompanying God at Sinai. In a series of rabbinic interpretations dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, these angels are variously understood as the angelic princes of the peoples of the world,<sup>6</sup> or as ones present to destroy those who would not accept the law,<sup>7</sup> or to help Israel to endure the giving of the law,<sup>8</sup> or to honor the

<sup>4</sup>If Paul has this type of understanding of angels fairly immediately in mind, it would explain why he seems to associate being under the law with being under the *stoicheia tou kosmou* (Gal 4:3, 9; cf. Col 2:8, 20). Of course, this association presupposes a more intimate connection between the law and the angels than simply that the law was ordained through the angels. Perhaps Paul is thinking that much of the law calls for observance of days, months and seasons, i. e., of things governed by the angelic *stoicheia* (cf. Gal 4:10).

<sup>5</sup>See the comments on Deut 33:2 in *Sipre Deut.* (pp. 395-97 in L. Finkelstein, *Sifre on Deuteronomy* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969]), which interpret the verse as a reference to the giving of the law.

<sup>6</sup>*Pesiq. R.* 21.8 (p. 103b in M. Friedmann, *Pesikta Rabbati: Midrasch für den Fest-Cyclus und die ausgezeichneten Sabbathe* [Vienna: Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1880]).

<sup>7</sup>*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12.22 (p. 220 in B. Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de Rav Kahana* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962]); *Midr. Pss.* 68.10; *Pesiq. R.* 21.8 (103b).

<sup>8</sup>*Mek. Bahodesh* 9 (lines 42-51 in J. Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael: A Critical*

Torah or Israel for accepting it,<sup>9</sup> or as ones who opposed God's giving the law to Moses.<sup>10</sup>

In all of these traditions the participation of the angels in the giving of the law is rather peripheral. Since Paul says that the law was ordained through (*dia*) angels, he seems to be alluding to a tradition according to which the angels participated in the actual giving of the law. One of the oldest witnesses to such a tradition is found in Josephus *Ant.* 15.136. In a speech to his army criticizing the Arabians for beheading his ambassadors, Herod emphasizes the heinousness of the crime by arguing (in part) that the Jews have learned the noblest of their doctrines and the holiest of their laws *di' aggelōn para tou theou*. It is disputed whether *aggelōn* refers to angels or to prophets or priests.<sup>11</sup>

Another early example of such a tradition is found in the NT. In Acts 7:53 Stephen tells the Jews that they have received the law *eis diatagas aggelōn*. In *Herm. Sim.* 8.3.3 the angel Michael is said to have put the law into the hearts of those who believe. And in *Pesiq. R.* 21.8 (103b) it says, "Thus it was found written in a text brought out of the Diaspora: Two myriads of angels of the kind known as 'lfe šinē'an came down with the Holy One, blessed be He, on Mount Sinai to give the Torah to Israel."<sup>12</sup> Variants of this tradition in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12.22 (219) and *Midr. Pss.* 68.10 omit the final clause.

The above mentioned traditions present the angels as participating in the giving of the law, but make no mention of Moses. It is certain that at least Josephus and Stephen in his speech in Acts regard the law as having been given through Moses, but there is no easy way to imagine how the law can have been given both through angels and through Moses. In every case where both are mentioned, it is a matter of one angel delivering the law to Moses, which can hardly be what is envisaged by the plural in Gal 3:19. The earliest example of this is found in the book of *Jubilees*. *Jubilees* is presented as something spoken by God to Moses on Sinai at the time Moses went up to

---

*Edition on the Basis of the Manuscripts and Early Editions with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933-5] 3 vols.); *b. Šabb.* 88b; *Pesiq. R.* 20.4 (98b).

<sup>9</sup>*Pesiq. R.* 21.8 (103b); *b. Šabb.* 88a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16.3 (266-7); *Pesiq. R.* 10.6 (37a); 21.7 (102b); 33.10 (154a); *Midr. Pss.* 68.10; 103.8; *Cant. Rab.* 4.4.1; *Num. Rab.* 16.24; *Tanchuma B yitw* 14.

<sup>10</sup>*b. Šabb.* 88b-89a; *Pesiq. R.* 20.4 (97a,98a); 25.3 (128a-b); 'Abot *R. Nat.* A 2; *Midr. Pss.* 8.2; *Deut. Rab.* 7.9; 8.2; *Cant. Rab.* 8.11.2; *Exod. Rab.* 51.8.

<sup>11</sup>The latter has been argued by W. D. Davies, "A Note on Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.136," *HTR* 47 (1954) 135-40; Francis R. Walton, "The Messenger of God in Hecataeus of Abdera," *HTR* 48 (1955) 255-57 and R. Marcus, *Josephus* (LCL; London/Cambridge: Heinemann/Harvard University, 1926-65) 8.66 note a.

<sup>12</sup>The translation is that of W. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths* (Yale Judaica Series, 18; New Haven: Yale University, 1968) 1.428.

receive the law. Angels play a prominent part throughout. God directs the angel of the presence to write the history for Moses (1:27), and the angel begins dictating it to Moses (2:1). In the course of the dictation the angel several times refers to what he has written for Moses in the law (6:22; 30:12, 21; 50:6, 13), presumably referring to the pentateuch. Similarly in Acts 7:38 Stephen describes Moses as being in the congregation in the desert with the angel speaking to him on Sinai. And *Apoc. Mos.* begins "This is the history and the life of the first-created Adam and Eve. It was revealed by God to his servant Moses when he received the tables of the law from the hand of the Lord. It was transmitted to him by the archangel Michael."<sup>13</sup>

Thus far we have seen that Paul's view that the law was given through angels is one that is known to Paul's contemporaries, though when Moses is mentioned, it is invariably the case that he is said to have received the law from a single angel. Paul is unique in explicitly linking the mediation of Moses with that of a multiplicity of angels. (How he envisages this concretely is not clear.) A more important deviation from the tradition to which he alludes, however, is Paul's use of the mediation of angels as a point against the law. He makes this idea, ordinarily viewed either neutrally or positively, part of his argument against the law. Since it was Paul's conversion to Jesus which led him to argue against the law, it is not surprising that we do not find Jewish parallels to his negative view of angelic mediation of the law.

A partial parallel to Paul's use of this tradition is found in Hebrews. Heb 2:2, probably referring to the law, speaks of the word spoken through the angels (*ho di' aggelōn lalētheis logos*). In the context of the argument in Heb 1-2 that the angels are inferior to Jesus, this reference is a way of disparaging the law as spoken by angels, not because of any defect in the angels themselves, but because of their deficiency in comparison with Jesus. And in *Cant. Rab.* 1.2.2 a late tradition is preserved in the name of R. Johanan (3rd century) as a comment on Cant 1:2 "He kissed me with the kisses of his mouth." According to R. Johanan an angel took each command of God to each of the Israelites and asked if he would accept it. But the rabbis said that the commandment itself went to each Israelite and asked if he would accept it. This difference of opinion may reflect a feeling on the part of the rabbis that this kind of participation of the angels in the giving of the law would somehow be a point against the law. These traditions are probably instances of the view that mediation is inferior to direct dealing, which I will discuss at greater length below. It seems likely that this idea plays some part in Paul's negative treatment of angelic mediation.

<sup>13</sup>My translation of the German version of P. Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel* (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle, 1928) 138.

There is another whole group of writings in which the angels are seen as participating in the giving of the law and in which this participation is viewed negatively, namely, the gnostic writings. Many gnostics held that cosmic powers, sometimes called angels, had devised the law as a way of holding human beings in bondage, preventing their reunion with God. From this perspective the law derives from an angel in the sense that the OT God who gave it is actually an angel. Thus Moses is literally mediator on behalf of the angel who produced the law.<sup>14</sup> However, it is clear that for Paul the God who gave the law is not an angel. However Paul conceives the simultaneous action of the angels and Moses in the giving of the law, it is unlikely that he regards the angels as authors of the law. As Dahl has pointed out, God is the logical subject of *diatageis*.<sup>15</sup> The angels are only other intermediaries. Thus Paul's idea here is not the same as that of the gnostics.

This gnostic view seems to be attributed to Simon in pseudo-Clementine *Hom.* 18.12 where Peter denies saying that two angels were sent out, one to create, the other to give the law, and clearly implies that Simon does hold this view. Cerinthus was reported to have said that the law and the prophets were given by angels and that the one who gave the law was one of the angels who made the world (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.1). Apelles speaks of four gods, the third being the one who spoke to Moses; and these he calls angels (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7.38.1). Basilides says that the law was given by the chief of the angels who made the world (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.24.5). According to Augustine (*c. Faust. Manich.* 19.13) the Manichean Faustus asserted that commandments like "You shall not kill" were in use by all people after they were proclaimed by Enoch, Seth and other righteous men, who had received them from the angels.

With the possible exception of Heb 2:2 and *Cant. Rab.* 1.2.2, the gnostics provide the closest parallel to Paul's use of the tradition that the law was given through angels. However, the gnostic view is more extreme than Paul's. While both see the participation of angels as disparaging the law, Paul does not deny that the law derives from God, while this is precisely the significance which some gnostics give to the connection of angels with the law. At this point we can only say that it seems likely that part of Paul's objection to the angels is the idea that mediation is inferior to direct dealing.

<sup>14</sup>That some gnostics had a more conventional view of the place of angels in the giving of the law is clear from the book *Baruch*, according to which the demiurge gave the law to Moses by means of the angel Baruch (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.26.24).

<sup>15</sup>Dahl, "Contradictions," 173. Because of this, being under the law is not submission to the *stoicheta* (Gal 4:3,9) because they gave the law; rather some more complex explanation such as that proposed in n. 4 above must be invoked. But this makes clear how much support, at least superficially, the gnostic view could find in Paul.

## II. *en cheiri mesitou*

Paul's designation of Moses as *mesitēs* (= *srswr*) also indicates that he is relying on a traditional interpretation of the giving of the law, since nowhere in the OT is this term applied to Moses. However, Moses clearly acts as a mediator according to the biblical account, and this portrayal is occasionally summarized in this term in extra-biblical literature. *Mesitēs* = Moses is found explicitly only in Philo *Mos.* 2.166 and *As. Mos.* 1.14 and 3.12. It is implicit in Philo *Som.* 1.142–3 where Philo is speaking about “words” as mediators, but seems to see Moses as one of this group, and in Heb 8:6 where in the course of comparing Christ and Moses, the author says that the former is mediator of a better covenant. According to S. Lieberman, *msyth* is used as a title for Moses in the Samaritan *Marqah*.<sup>16</sup> *Srswr* = Moses is more common, being found in *y. Meg.* 4.9 (‘*l ydy srswr*’); *Exod. Rab.* 3.5; 6.3; 33.1; 43.1; *Deut. Rab.* 3.12; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5.3 (83, 84); and *Tanchuma ytrw* 90a among other places. Though Paul draws upon a common tradition in calling Moses *mesitēs*, he once again gives the tradition an unexpected twist in somehow viewing the fact that it was mediated by Moses as a point against the law.

### A. *Against Mediation*

It seems likely that Paul's negative assessment of the giving of the law through Moses (and of the angelic mediation of the law) is partly an expression of the view that mediation as such is inferior to direct dealing. There are many traditions from the time of Paul and later which express such a view, but where it is applied to the giving of the law it is usually used as the basis for commendation of God's direct dealing with Moses or Israel. Even where this idea is used to elevate God's direct communication over what is mediated through Moses, the point is never to disparage the latter. Only Paul and other Christians made this view an argument against the law itself.

In *Deus* 109–10 Philo elevates Moses above Noah on the grounds that while Noah was pleasing to the powers which attended upon God, Moses was pleasing to God himself. A similar denigration of God's action through his subordinate powers is reflected in *Decal.* 176–8 where Philo says that the ten commandments include no sanctions because punishment, as an evil, is at variance with the goodness of God and so is left to a subordinate power, justice (*dikē*).

<sup>16</sup>S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century BCE–IV Century CE* (Texts and Studies 18, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962) 81–82.

In *QG* 1.55 Philo says that God did not use any intermediary (*mesitēs*) to urge him or exhort him to give others a share of incorruptibility. This suggests that for God to make use of an intermediary would be a less perfect way of acting than to act directly. This point of view can also be applied to God's communication with Israel. Commenting on Exod 19:9b, which seems to refer to a communication of the people to God through Moses which is not explicit in the text, the *Mekilta* offers several explanations of what the people said. The third explanation is quoted from Rabbi (b. 135):

They said: It is our wish to hear directly from the mouth of our king. To hear from the attendant (*prgwd* = *paragōdēs*) is not like hearing from the mouth of the king. God then said: Give them what they ask for: 'That the people may hear when I speak' (Exod 19:9) (*Bahodesh* 2.119–21).<sup>17</sup>

This point of view can also be applied to the eschatological prophet of Deut 18:15–22. Commenting on Deut 18:18 "And he [the prophet] shall speak to them," *Sipre Deut.* (221) says that he will not appoint a turgeman, i.e., he will speak to Israel directly, not through an interpreter as was the practice of speakers in the synagogue.<sup>18</sup> This seems to presuppose the preferability of direct communication. A number of even later rabbinic traditions make the same point in various ways.<sup>19</sup>

An important group of passages which present this point of view are those which make use of the formula "not by means of an angel (*mlyš, ml'k*), not by means of a messenger (*krwz, šrp, šlyh*)." This formula is used in several ways to emphasize that something is done directly rather than through intermediaries, which seems to imply that the latter is inferior to the former.

The earliest instances of this formula are found in the LXX and QL. The LXX version of Isa 63:9 reads *ou presbys oude aggelos, all' autos kyrios esōsen autous*, which seems to reverse the MT according to which the Lord saved them by an angel.<sup>20</sup> God's direct dealing with Israel is emphasized in a similar way in 1QH 6:13–14. The text is fragmentary, but G. Vermes<sup>21</sup> and M. Mansoor<sup>22</sup> reconstruct it to say

<sup>17</sup>The translation is that of Lauterbach, *Mekilta*, 2. 209. According to Lauterbach's apparatus, *srswr* appears as a variant for *prgwd* in one text.

<sup>18</sup>Str-B 1. 579 notes that it was the custom for speakers at the divine service to whisper what they had to say to an Amora or Turgeman, who would speak it aloud to the assembled congregation.

<sup>19</sup>See the comments on Exod 23:10 in *Exod. Rab.* 32.1–3, 5, 8; and *Lev. Rab.* 1.9.

<sup>20</sup>Irenaeus, in *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 94, perhaps depending upon Isa 63:9, uses a very similar formula to speak of God's direct dealing with the church. He says that "it is no more by an intercessor, Moses, or by an angel, Elijah, that we are saved, but by the Lord himself." Cf. also the prophecy attributed to Montanus: "Neither angel, nor ambassador, but I, the Lord God the Father, am come" (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.11.9).

<sup>21</sup>Vermes's translation in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962) 170, which is quoted here, apparently presupposes the following reconstruction:

that in the future among those who are saved, there "shall be no mediator to [invoke Thee]/and no messenger [to make] reply." Like all instances of the formula, these passages underline God's direct dealing by pointing to the absence of intermediaries and imply that direct dealing is superior to mediation.

J. Goldin discusses the occurrences of this formula in Tannaitic literature.<sup>23</sup> There it is used to make the point that Moses spoke to the people directly, that God himself smote the first-born of the Egyptians and that God himself sends rain and exacts vengeance. The formula is applied to God's direct dealing with Moses in 'Abot R. Nat. B 1 where the midrash says that Moses received the Torah not from an angel or a seraph, but from the Holy One. In *Sipre Zuta* on Num 12:8 half of the formula is used to make the point that God spoke with Moses directly, not by means of an angel.<sup>24</sup>

This idea that direct dealing is superior to mediation seems to underlie several passages where the law mediated by Moses is contrasted with law revealed directly by God. In *Ant.* 3.89, Josephus says that just before the giving of the ten commandments Moses made the people advance to hear God speak to them so that "the excellence of the things said might not be impaired, being feebly transmitted to their knowledge by human tongue." This suggests that the mere fact of Moses' mediation diminishes the power of the words he speaks. This same idea is found in *Cant. Rab.* 1.2.4 where R. Judah (2nd century) is reported to have said that when God spoke the ten commandments to Israel, their knowledge of the Torah was firm. But after Moses became their mediator, they were liable to forget what they learned; just as Moses, as a human being, is transitory, so is his teaching transitory. Similarly in *Yalkut* to Jer 31:32 (2.317) and to Isa 54:13 (2.479) the midrash says, "In this world Israel learned the Torah from flesh and

---

13 . . . w'yn mlyš bny m lq[r'kh wy]šyb  
14 krw[z] . . . .

<sup>22</sup>Partial support for what I suppose to be Vermes's reconstruction of the passage is found in M. Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns* (STDJ 3; Leiden: Brill, 1961) 143. In nn. 2-4 he gives the following reconstruction:

13 . . . w'yn mlyš bny m lq[dwšykh m]šyb  
14 krw[z] . . . .

Since this reconstruction does not make it possible to connect the last two words with the foregoing, Vermes's is preferable.

<sup>23</sup>J. Goldin, "Not by Means of an Angel and Not by Means of a Messenger," *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. J. Neusner; Studies in the History of Religion, 14; Leiden: Brill, 1968) 412-24.

<sup>24</sup>H. S. Horovitz, *Sipre d'Be Rab.* Fasciculus Primus: *Sipre ad Numeros adjecto Siphre zutta* (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1917) 276. This passage is not discussed by Goldin.

blood; therefore they forgot that which was given through Moses who was flesh and blood. Even as flesh and blood pass away, so also do its teachings." This idea is paralleled by the view that because in the past Israel has been redeemed by flesh and blood, it has always been enslaved again. Flesh and blood are transitory and so redemption wrought through men such as Moses is transitory. This view is expressed in *Midr. Pss.* 31.2; 50.3 and *Tanchuma* B 'hry 36a. The idea that Moses' revelation was transitory because he was flesh and blood is denied in *b. Šabb.* 30a where Moses' decrees revelation to Moses, has become obsolete and with it Moses' which endure forever are contrasted with those of a prince of flesh and blood whose decree may not be obeyed at all, and if it is, only during his lifetime. This may testify indirectly to the currency of the opposite view and to the danger which it presented.

As I have noted above, only Christian writings provide a parallel to Paul's use of this disparagement of mediation as an argument against the law. But in the NT passages which do so, comparison between Moses and Jesus is much more prominent than it is in Gal 3:19b. Several NT passages present Moses as inadequate by comparison with Jesus. Two passages in Hebrews reflect this point of view. In Heb 8:5-6, Exod 25:40 "See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain" is understood to mean that Moses was shown a heavenly tabernacle of which the tabernacle and appurtenances which he constructed were only copies. Since Christ now ministers in the heavenly tabernacle, the copy, constructed on the basis of the revelation to Moses, has become obsolete and with it, Moses' revelation itself. Thus the law, insofar as it deals with temple and cult, which is the aspect of it which interests the author of Hebrews, comes to an end with the advent of Christ because in it Moses was able to make available only shadows of the heavenly realities in which Christ ministers. In Heb 3:1-6, Num 12:6-8 "... my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth . . .," which praises Moses as the greatest of prophets, is interpreted to mean that Moses was only a servant in the house of God and thus inferior to Christ as the son of the house. Moses' face to face conversation with God is that of a servant, inferior to the things to be spoken later (in Christ), to which it is a witness. In both of these passages Moses is seen as ultimately inadequate precisely because he was only a mediator. His mediation passes away when that which he mediated itself becomes available.

There is a similar passage in John. John 1:17-18 understands Exod 33-4 to mean that although the law came through Moses, he did not see God, who is characterized by grace and truth (Exod 34:6). It is Jesus, the son of God, who has made him known, bringing God's grace and truth to human beings. Here, as in the passages in Hebrews,

Moses is seen as inadequate simply because he was a mediator. He must stand aside when what he mediated becomes available itself.

Though the idea that mediation is inferior to direct dealing is part of what Paul has in mind here, he probably also has something more specific in mind. The term *mesitēs/srswr* is especially associated with two incidents in Moses' career: the occasion when the people of Israel asked Moses to be their mediator after they had heard the ten commandments directly from God and were afraid (Exod 20:19; Deut 5:22–24 [LXX 25–27]; 18:16) and the incident of the golden calf when Moses broke the tables of the law because he found the people worshipping the calf, then interceded for them with God and obtained a new set of tables (Exod 32–34; Deut 9:7–10:11). Of the passages mentioned above where Moses is called *mesitēs/srswr*, the term is used in the context of the first incident in Philo *Som.* 1.143 and in the context of the second in Philo *Mos.* 2.166; *Exod. Rab.* 33.1; 43.1; *Deut. Rab.* 3.12; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5.3 (83, 84); and *Tanchuma ytrw* 90a.

#### B. Moses' Mediation Deriving from the Weakness of the People

The idea that Moses became mediator at the people's request is not always regarded as a defect in the giving of the law. It can be referred to without evaluation in discussions of how many commandments God gave directly. *Pesiq. R.* 22.3 (111a) and *Cant. Rab.* 1.2.2 record a discussion between R. Joshua b. Levi (c. 250) who maintained that God gave only two commandments directly, and the rabbis who argued that he gave ten, citing Exod 20:19. It can also be used as a demonstration of Israel's merit since God explicitly approves the people's request in the Deuteronomy passages. Commenting on Exod 20:19 in the light of Deut 18:16–18, the *Mekilta* says that by their request the Israelites merited that prophets be raised up for them (*Bahodesh* 9.62–74). This same interpretation is found in the parallel passage in *Mek. Rab Šimon*<sup>25</sup> and in *Sipre Deut.* on Deut 18:16 (221). In *Midr. Pss.* 68.5, Exod 20:19 is also interpreted as a virtuous act on the part of Israel. Since it is here interpreted in the light of Deut 5:22–4, there is no reference to meriting prophets, but only to God's approval (so also *Pirke R. El.* 41).

Most often, however, the idea that the people requested a mediator is seen as a defect. In *Her.* 19 Philo says "Now wise men take God for their guide and teacher, but the less perfect take the wise man; and therefore the Children of Israel say 'Talk thou to us and let not God talk to us lest we die' (Exod 20:19)."<sup>26</sup> Here Philo takes the people's

<sup>25</sup>D. Hoffmann, *Mechilta de-Rabbi Šimon b. Joĥai* (Frankfurt: Kaufmann, 1905) 114.

<sup>26</sup>The translation is that of F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker in *Philo* (LCL; London/Cambridge: Heinemann/Harvard University, 1929–62) 4. 293.

request that Moses be their mediator as a symbol of the less perfect who are guided by the wise man rather than by God himself. This may imply that Philo regards the giving of the law through a mediator as an inferior way for the law to be given, necessitated by the deficiency of the people. The *Mekilta* says that Exod 20:19 teaches that the people had no strength to receive more than ten commandments (*Bahodesh* 9.63–4). A passage in *Cant. Rab.* 1.2.4 (discussed above) sees the people's request that Moses be their mediator as a defect because of the insufficiency of Moses.

The idea that Moses' mediation of the law derives from the weakness of the people can be put to various uses. Several passages use it to glorify God who mercifully takes account of the weakness of human beings. In *Post.* 143 Philo takes Exod 20:19 as an admission that the oracles of God are too great for any powers of hearing and says that God imparts divine communications "not corresponding to the greatness of his perfections, but to the capacity of those whom he would benefit." Similarly in *Som.* 1.143 Philo says "We once besought one of the mediators saying: 'Speak thou to us etc.' (Exod 20:19). For we are incapable of receiving even benefits unless he employ ministers." Likewise in *Exod. Rab.* 34.1 it says:

We will never find God's strength [fully] displayed toward any of His creatures, for He does not visit His creatures with burdensome laws, but comes to each one according to his strength. For know thou, that if God had come upon Israel with the full might of His strength when He gave them the Torah, they would not have been able to withstand it, as it says *If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die* (Deut 5:22).<sup>27</sup>

In all of these passages, mediation of the law through Moses is seen as necessitated by the weakness of the people, and God's accommodation of himself to their weakness is seen as a special grace.

The same idea can be put to other uses. In *Exod. Rab.* 29.4 it is used to glorify the Torah. The midrash understands Deut 5:22 to mean that Israel had no strength to endure the Sinai revelation "for when they came to Sinai and God revealed himself to them, their souls fled because he spoke with them." The midrash goes on to say that the Torah brought them back to life. In this passage the weakness of the people which necessitated Moses' mediation is used to glorify the Torah. It can also be used to glorify Moses. In *Lev. Rab.* 1.1 and 1.4 and in a slightly different form in *Midr. Pss.* 103.17, R. Tanḥum b. Ḥanilai (3rd century) is quoted as pointing out that while all of Israel before Sinai declared that they would die if they listened any more to the voice of the Lord (Deut 5:22), Moses heard by himself and

<sup>27</sup>The translation is that of *Midrash Rabbah*, trans. ed. by H. Freedman and M. Simon (London: Soncino, 1939) 3. 425.

remained alive. This contradicts the ordinary expectation that what is too heavy for many will be too heavy for one.

Finally, the inability of the people to bear the Sinai revelation can be turned against the revelation itself. Heb 12:18–19 says: “You have not come to what may be touched and to blazing fire and darkness and gloom and tempest and sound of trumpet and to an utterance of words whose hearers begged that no oracle be given them.” Here various features of the Sinai revelation, including the fact that the people could not bear it and asked Moses to mediate for them, are regarded as defects by comparison with the revelation which has come in Jesus. This and the other traditions discussed above present Moses’ mediation of the law as deriving from the weakness of the people and presuppose that the necessity of this mediation is a defect in the revelation.

The use of the word *mesitēs* is not the only thing which points to the specific view of Moses’ mediation which underlies Gal 3:19b. The expression *en cheiri* is also highly suggestive. The phrase seems to correspond to *byd* and is found nowhere else in the writings of Paul or the rest of the NT. It is possible that it is merely a biblical phrase adopted by Paul, but its single occurrence and the fact that it is the most striking Semitism in Paul’s Greek suggest strongly that Paul uses the phrase here because he is alluding to a particular passage in which it is found.

### C. Moses’ Mediation and the Incident of the Golden Calf

In view of the likelihood that *en cheiri* is an allusion to some particular passage, it is striking that the phrase *byd mšh* is found in Exod 34:29 in the context of the incident of the golden calf, the other context in which Moses is often called *mesitēs/srswr*. After Israel’s sin with the golden calf and the breaking of the tablets of the law, Moses ascends the mountain to receive a second set of tables. Exod 34:29 begins to speak of what happened “when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and the two tables of the testimony were in the hand of Moses when he came down from the mountain.” If his use of *en cheiri* does mean that Paul has some particular passage in view in Gal 3:19b, it is most likely that this is the passage. If so, then Paul understands *byd mšh* as instrumental rather than local, and interprets Exod 34:29 as speaking about what happened “when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai (along with) the two tables of the testimony (given) through Moses when he came down from the mountain.”

The LXX does not translate *byd* with *en cheiri* in Exod 34:29; rather it gives *epi tōn cheirōn*. This may be tendentious, reflecting difficulty perceived in the idea that Moses was carrying the tables of the law in one hand. In any case, if Paul is alluding to Exod 34:29 here, he

is thinking of the Hebrew text. Though Paul usually quotes the LXX, at various points it is necessary to presume that he has the Hebrew text in mind. For example, Dahl has argued that "until the seed shall come to whom the promise was given" in Gal 3:19 depends on the Hebrew text of Gen 49:10.<sup>28</sup>

The possibility that *en cheiri mesitou* is an allusion to Exod 34:29 and to the restoration of the tables of the law spoken about there, is strengthened by the observation that in 2 Cor 3:7-18 Paul simply equates this incident with the giving of the law; in the 2 Corinthians passage he discusses Moses' mediation of the law solely in terms of this occasion, making it plausible that he is thinking of this occasion in Gal 3:19 as well. There are other significant similarities between Gal 3 and 2 Cor 3 which support this supposition. According to 2 Cor 3 the letter (of the law) kills (v 6) and was a ministry of death (v 7) and condemnation (v 9); according to Gal 3 the law was for the sake of transgressions (v 19) and cannot make alive (v 21). Both 2 Cor 3 and Gal 3 contrast the law with the spirit. If Paul is thinking of the restoration of the law after the incident of the golden calf in Gal 3:19, he may also have in mind certain traditional interpretations of this incident,<sup>29</sup> which he is, characteristically, turning against the law. In their full form such traditions are not attested for the time of Paul, but could already have been current in his day.

One thing which has attracted the attention of interpreters is Moses' breaking of the first set of tables, which he seems to have done on his own initiative. For whatever reason, a number of different explanations of this act were advanced.<sup>30</sup> The explanation which is of interest here is that Moses broke the tables when he saw Israel sinning with the golden calf in order to avoid condemning the people as transgressors of the law he was bringing them. According to 'Abot R. Nat. 2 when Moses, bringing the tables of the law to Israel, saw them sinning, he asked himself how he could give them the tables,

<sup>28</sup>Dahl, "Contradictions," 172.

<sup>29</sup>See L. Smolar and M. Aberbach, "The Golden Calf Episode in Postbiblical Literature," *HUCA* 39 (1968) 91-116.

<sup>30</sup>In addition to the reason discussed below, two other explanations of Moses' breaking of the first set of tables are frequently given. The first is that he broke them because the writing on the tables flew off when he came down from the mountain and saw the people's sin with the golden calf. This explanation is found in *Bib. Ant.* 12.5; 'Abot R. Nat. 2; *Exod. Rab.* 46.1 and elsewhere. The second explanation is that Moses broke the tables because the Israelites had made themselves unworthy to receive them by their sin. This explanation is found in *b. Šabb.* 87a; *b. Yebam.* 61b-62a; *Exod. Rab.* 19.3; 46.3; *y. Ta'an.* 4.5; *Deut. Rab.* 5.13 and *b. Menah.* 99 among other places. In the first four passages of this latter group, the breaking of the tables is one of three things which Moses did on his own initiative and were later approved by God. The breaking of the tables is also included in this list in 'Abod R. Nat. 2, but here the reason is the one discussed below.

obligating them to the commandments and condemning them to death at the hands of God. To avoid this he breaks the tables. R. Jose the Galilean (2nd century) illustrates this with a parable about a king who sends his steward to betroth him to a maiden. When the steward discovers that she has played the harlot, he makes the inference that if he gives her the marriage deed, she will be liable to the penalty of death.<sup>31</sup> In *Exod. Rab.* 43.1 R. Samuel bar Nachman (3rd century) explains Moses' breaking of the tables as similar to the action of the associate of a king sitting in judgment on his son. As the king is about to take up the pen to sign the verdict, the associate snatches it from him in order to appease his wrath. In *Pesiq. R.* 20.2 (96b) the Torah is compared to the daughter of a king, whose fiancé consorts with a harlot. The representatives of her family let her slip away rather than send her back to her father who would then punish the fiancé. Similarly Moses and Joshua let the tables slip from their hands at the risk of breaking them rather than return them to God who would then destroy Israel. Another tradition in *Midrash Hagadol* commenting on Exod 32:19 says that Moses shattered the tables so as not to convict Israel and illustrates this with the parable of an attendant who wrote out stipulations for the daughter of a king, but tore it up when he discovered her in unchastity.

In these traditions the law is seen as something which worsens the human situation by explicitly proscribing the sins of human beings, thus making them liable to punishment, namely death. The rabbis invoke this view to explain Moses' destruction of the first set of tables; he destroyed them to avoid this worsening of Israel's situation. But it is entirely plausible that in Gal 3:19 Paul is turning this view against the law itself by generalizing it, applying it not only to the first set of tables given at the time that Israel sinned with the golden calf, but also to the second, and thus to the law itself.<sup>32</sup> It is clear that Paul did see the law

<sup>31</sup>A similar point is made without a parable in *Tanchuma ts'* 30, and with a similar parable in *Exod. Rab.* 43.1; 46.1; *Midrash Hagadol* on Exod 32:19; and in *Tanchuma ts'* 30 with a slightly different parable. The parable in *Exod. Rab.* 43.1 is attributed to R. Samuel bar Nachman (3rd century); in it the go-between is a *srswr*.

<sup>32</sup>A view of the law like that which I am attributing to Paul here can be seen in this passage from *Pesiq. R.* 21.16 (107a):

'O Lord, Thou hast enticed me and I was enticed; Thou has shown me strength, and hast prevailed over me' (Jer 20:7). The congregation of Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He: Master of the Universe, Thou didst entice me before Thou gavest the Torah to me, and so I set the yoke of commandments upon my neck and I was punished because of my violation of them. Had I not accepted the Torah I would have been like one of the nations, getting neither reward nor punishment. (Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati* 1, 439).

Cf. also *Cant. Rab.* 2.3.4; 3.4.1; *Lev. Rab.* 1.10.

as having the effect of worsening the human situation, and this may be his exegetical starting point. This would make clear what Paul most immediately has in mind when he says that the law was given for the sake of transgression (Gal 3:19) and that scripture consigned all things to sin (v 22); cf. Rom 4:15; 5:13, 20.

A partial parallel to this view to which Paul may be alluding, can be found in Justin Martyr and the Didascalia. Both mount arguments against the greatest part, but not all, of the law, and both see Israel's sin with the golden calf as the occasion for that part of the law which is rejected. According to Justin the part of the law to be rejected was an antidote to the idolatry of worshipping the golden calf (*Dial.* 19.6; 20.4); according to the Didascalia, it was a punishment for that sin.<sup>33</sup> For both, as for Paul, the law is in some sense a salutary worsening of the human situation. However, these views are only a partial parallel because Paul rejects the entire law, not just part of it, and because Paul according to my hypothesis, regards the sin with the golden calf not as the occasion for the giving of the law, but rather as an incident in which the effect of the law on the human situation comes to light.

Dahl has analyzed Gal 3 as an attempt to resolve the contradiction between Hab 2:4 "The just man shall live by faith" and Lev 18:5 "The one who does these things shall live by them," by assigning each to the context within which it is valid, an approach to contradictions in scripture also used by Hillel and Philo.<sup>34</sup> Paul sees Hab 2:4, and thus salvation by faith, as unconditionally valid, and he is able to support this with a variety of proofs from scripture in Gal 3:13-18. The law on the other hand, about which Lev 18:5 speaks, was never intended to bring about righteousness, but rather consigned all things to sin (vv 21-2). For this Paul gives no explicit scriptural proof. But if *en cheiri mesitou* is an allusion to Exod 34:29 and the incident of the golden calf, we may see in it an oblique reference to a scriptural proof for the purpose of the law as Paul sees it: the incident of the golden calf reveals that the effect, and therefore the purpose, of the law is to consign all things to sin.

### III. Conclusion

I have tried to show that in Gal 3:19b Paul presupposes a midrashic interpretation of the giving of the law which has much in common with contemporary exegetical traditions, but which Paul has turned against the law in a way characteristic of him. It appears that the basic idea

<sup>33</sup>R. H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version Translated and Accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929) p. 12 line 24-p. 14 line 5; 218.18-222.23; 224.16-20; 225.2-3; 230.1-3; 232.1-2, 10-12.

<sup>34</sup>Dahl, "Contradictions," 169-74.

underlying Paul's negative evaluation of the participation of the angels, and one of the basic ideas behind his negative assessment of Moses' mediation of the law, is the idea that mediation is inferior to direct dealing. In addition Paul's negative view of Moses' mediation may rest on the idea that it was necessitated by the weakness of the people.

I have also suggested that Paul is viewing the giving of the law in the light of the incident of the golden calf and that he sees Moses' breaking of the first set of tables as revealing that the effect of the law, when it is restored, is to make the situation of human beings worse by making their sins violations of law. If this is what Paul has in mind as he refers to the giving of the law in v 19b, it is an important key to Paul's view of the law both here and elsewhere. As such its contribution to the elucidation of Gal 3:19b-20 does not exhaust its significance.

If in the light of this interpretation of v 19b we ask what the more enigmatic v 20 means, we must first notice that the passage yields fairly clear sense without v 20a. The point of the parenthetical comment in vv 19b-20 seems to be to contrast the law, ordained through the angels by the hand of a mediator, with God who is one. Paul seems to be contrasting the multiplicity of mediators, and perhaps also the complexity of the mediation, with the oneness of God, though not to the extent of saying that the law is not from God. When his argument suggests this possibility, Paul emphatically denies it (v 21). Paul uses the tension between the way the law was given and the oneness of God to support his contention that the law was a temporary measure for the sake of transgression, but he stops short of denying that it comes from God. That Paul here points to a tension between the giving of the law and the oneness of God receives some confirmation from his emphasis elsewhere in Gal 3 on the oneness of the messiah. The messiah is the one seed of Abraham (v 16) in whom all are made one (v 28). Thus the messiah conforms to the oneness of God as the mediation of the law does not.

If the point of vv 19b-20 is to contrast the way the law was given with the one God, then the function of v 20a is to make that contrast specific. Its purpose is to focus the contrast between the giving of the law and God, commenting on *mesitēs* in such a way that the tension between the mediation of the law and God becomes explicit in some way. Its function is rhetorical, and it is not necessary to suppose that it spells out completely either Paul's negative view of the giving of the law or the tension he sees between it and the oneness of God. But even if that be granted, the precise meaning of v 20a must still be sought.

We may first of all ask whether this is a statement about mediation in general or about Moses as mediator of the law in particular. Although the majority of interpreters in the 20th century have

understood v 20a as a statement about mediation in general, these interpretations prove unsatisfactory as H. Schlier has shown.<sup>35</sup> Thus v 20a must be understood as a particular statement, as most recent interpreters have seen.

If then v 20a is a particular statement, it may be understood as equivalent to "Moses is not (the mediator) of one," and there are two main possible specifications of the more than one on behalf of whom, it then implies, Moses mediated. First, v 20a may say in effect that Moses mediated on behalf of the angels. In the context of v 19b this is the most obvious meaning of v 20a, and may be seen as an attempt to clarify how both the angels and Moses mediated the law, something otherwise not clear, as we have observed above. This interpretation has recently been advanced by M. F. Lacan, F. Mussner, and C. H. Giblin.<sup>36</sup> Second, v 20a may say in effect that Moses mediated on behalf of the people. As we have seen, Moses' mediation on behalf of the people is very likely to be part of the reason that Paul regards the mediation of Moses as a point against the law. But as an explanation of the principal line of thought in Gal 3:19b-20, it must be regarded as less likely than the preceding proposal since the angels are explicitly mentioned while the people are not. Perhaps for this reason, this interpretation has not been advanced in this century. A weakness of both proposals is that according to either, v 20b "but God is one," is mainly an assertion that God is numerically one, not the many whom Moses represents and thus not the immediate authority behind Moses. But that seems a rather trivial use for an affirmation so resonant with significance for both Jews and Greeks.

Both of these interpretations take *henos* in v 20a as a subjective genitive, indicating whose mediator Moses was not. It is also possible that it should be construed as a qualitative genitive, indicating what sort of mediator Moses was not.<sup>37</sup> According to this interpretation v 20a is equivalent to "Moses is not one." This interpretation has recently been proposed by V. Stolle,<sup>38</sup> but neither he nor the others who have proposed it have explained the meaning of "Moses is not

<sup>35</sup>Schlier, *Galater*, 115. In the 1961 revision of his commentary (p. 161) Schlier abandons his critique and adopts one of the interpretations to which he earlier objected, though without answering his own objection. Schlier's later interpretation has been adopted by H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 171..

<sup>36</sup>M. F. Lacan, OSB, "Le Dieu Unique et Son Mediateur. Galates 3, 20," *L'Homme Devant Dieu. Melanges offerts au Pere Henri de Lubac* (Theologie, 56; Paris: Montaigne, 1963) 1. 113-25; F. Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief* (HTKNT 9; Freiburg: Herder, 1974) 248-50; C. H. Giblin, "Three Monotheistic Texts in Paul," *CBQ* 37 (1975) 527-47.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. BDF 91-2, §165 and A. Buttmann, *A Grammar of the NT Greek* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1873) 162-63.

<sup>38</sup>V. Stolle, "Die Eins in Gal 3:15-20," *Theokratia: Jahrbuch des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* 2 (1970-2) 204-13.

one" convincingly.<sup>39</sup> A more satisfactory form of this interpretation might understand v 20a as a denial that Moses is one in the sense of being simple. In his mediatorial role, in which he acts on behalf of the people and as the agent of the angels, he is complex rather than simple, and as such contrasts with the simplicity of God.

This interpretation can be made more concrete in the light of my proposal that in v 19b Paul is thinking of the giving of the law in terms of the incident of the golden calf. If Paul is thinking that Moses broke the first set of tables so as not to condemn the people for their sin with the golden calf, then Paul may have this in mind in denying that Moses is one. Moses is divided between the interests of Israel and those of God. For the sake of Israel he broke the first set of tables, as he also, according to Paul, veiled his face so that Israel would not see the fading of its glory (2 Cor 3:13). But ultimately he carries out the plan of God by bringing the second set of tables. The participation of such a divided mediator in the giving of the law focusses the way in which the lawgiving stands in tension with the oneness of God, and so supports Paul's idea that the law is temporary and its purpose negative. The advantage of this interpretation is that it allows for v 20b to be taken at full weight, but the use of a cardinal number as a qualitative genitive is unparalleled and somewhat unlikely.

Fortunately, whatever is the precise meaning of v 20a, the general sense of vv 19b–20 is relatively clear. Paul's ultimate point in vv 19b–20 is to set the law over against God, though not so much as to say that it was contrary to his overall plan, represented by the promises. Then v 20a, by any of the interpretations described above, is a comment on the last phrase of v 19, making explicit at least part of the tension between the law and God which is implicit in Moses' mediation of the law, in order to contrast it in v 20b with the oneness of God.

<sup>39</sup>Stolle (pp. 207–8) tries to give *heis* in v 20a the same sense it has in v 16. Though the two verses are related, it is clear that in v 16 *heis* means "one rather than many," and v 20a can hardly be a denial that Moses is one in this sense.

#### Copyright and Use:

**As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.**

**No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.**

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

#### About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.