

τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι—What does this mean?

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## The Text

**τέλος** γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

For Christ is the **goal** of the *Torah* unto righteousness for everyone who believes.

### I. Introduction

The following is brief exegetical study with two goals in mind: (1) to elucidate the meaning of Romans 10:4, especially the word τέλος (“end”); and (2) to pique the interest of the reader toward engaging the book *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goal in Yeshua*.<sup>1</sup> This author, during his usual annual reading of the original, has always understood this text to mean: “For Christ is the end (τέλος) of the Law unto righteousness for everyone who believes.” Due to this author’s proclivity generally to eschew commentary when reading a text, there was great surprise when, upon reading the aforementioned book, that there is another understanding of the word τέλος, as its title intimates, viz., “goal.”

The definition and explanation of τέλος (“end”/“goal”) will be undertaken. Time will also be given for how to understand νόμος (“law”) in this verse and context. Finally, select portions of *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus* will be given that hopefully fit with what is offered in the discussions of τέλος and νόμος. Before that, however, various translations of Romans 10:4 will be compared. Romans 10:4 will be compared first in so-called “mainline” translations (e.g., ESB, NIV) as well as translations that occur in various commentaries on Romans. Finally, further commentary on Romans 10:4 in general will be given. Thus, this paper’s outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. The Text in “Mainline” Translations
- III. The Text in Commentary Translations
- IV. τέλος—The Word Defined and Explained
- V. νόμος—The Word Defined and Explained
- VI. Further Commentary on Romans 10:4 in General
- VII. *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goal in Yeshua*
- VIII. Conclusion

To summarize in another way, this paper is a slight review and promotion of *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goal in Yeshua*, which serves as the opportunity to have such an exegetical paper on Romans 10:4 as this, since a need for such exegetical paper

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<sup>1</sup> Seth Postell, Eitan Bar, and Erez Soref, *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goal in Yeshua* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017). As of printing (November 30, 2023), this book is available only available on Amazon in Kindle Edition. A paperback version can be found at various online outlets.

was not realized until this author engaged that book, which in turn serves to be an opportunity to discuss the book: *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*.

## II. The Text in “Mainline” Translations

You see, Christ is the **end** of the **Law** to give righteousness to everyone who believes. (AAT)<sup>2</sup>

For to everyone who believes, Christ is the **end** of the **law**, resulting in righteousness. (EHV)<sup>3</sup>

For Christ is the **end** of the **law** for righteousness to everyone who believes. (ESV)

For Christ is the **end** of the **law** for righteousness to every one that believeth. (KJV)

For Christ is the **end** of the **law** for righteousness to everyone who believes. (NKJV)

*Denn Christus ist des Gesetzes Ende; wer an den glaubt, der ist gerecht.* (Luther 1545)

For Christ is the **end** of the **law**; whoever believes in Him is righteous.<sup>4</sup>

Christ is the **end** of the **law** so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. (NIV)

*Finis enim legis, Christus, ad justitiam omni credenti.* (*Vulgata Clementina*)

For Christ is the **end** of the **Law** unto righteousness for everyone who believes.<sup>5</sup>

## III. The Text in Commentary Translations

Christ **ends** the **law** and brings righteousness for everyone who has faith. (Bruce/NEB)<sup>6</sup>

*Finis enim Legis Christus in justitiam omni credenti.* (Calvin)<sup>7</sup>

For Christ is the **end** of the **Law** into righteousness for everyone who believes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: An American Translation* (AAT), trans. William Beck (New Haven, MO: Leader Publishing Company, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version* (EHV) (Wartburg Project, Inc., 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>5</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>6</sup> After citing the KJV translation, Bruce cites the New English Bible (NEB) as a translation of Romans 10:4 (F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 203).

<sup>7</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Epistle of Paul the Apostles to the Romans*, trans. John Owen, in *Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol. XIX: Acts 14–28; Romans 1–16* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 381

<sup>8</sup> Author’s translation.

For Christ is the **end** of the law, that everyone who has faith may be justified. (Franzmann)<sup>9</sup>

For the **goal** of Torah is Christ, unto righteousness for everyone who believes. (Grothe)<sup>10</sup>

For an **end** of law (is) Christ for righteousness to everyone believing. (Lenski)<sup>11</sup>

For Christ is the **end** of the Law... (Melanchthon)<sup>12</sup>

#### IV. **τέλος**—The Word Defined and Explained

If such an option is tenable (that **τέλος** can mean “goal”), we must be further enlightened from the lexical sources. This enlightenment shall shine brightest if we consider the lexical data from sources in and around the time of St. Paul. The definitions and usage from the earliest sources, while interesting, will have less bearing on the usage that existed in the era and cultural milieu of the New Testament. Much like the usage of “let” or “prevent” in the King James versus their usage today. Thus, we shall endeavor to gain insight, in the following order, from: 1) *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG),<sup>13</sup> 2) *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (LEH),<sup>14</sup> and 3) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT).<sup>15</sup> Further brief comment may be offered after each insight.

BDAG thus offers the following definitions for **τέλος**: “τέλος, ους, τό (Hom.+) 1. a point of time marking the end of a duration, *end, termination, cessation*. 2. the last part of a process, *close, conclusion*. 3. the goal toward which a movement is being directed, *end, goal, outcome*.<sup>16</sup> Besides guidance in definition, BDAG comments briefly on Romans 10:4. While BDAG includes Romans 10:4 under definition 1, thereunder commenting parenthetically “perh. 3 below,”<sup>17</sup> under definition 3 BDAG states:

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<sup>9</sup> Martin Franzmann, *Concordia Commentary: Romans* (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1968), 184.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan F. Grothe, *The Justification of the Ungodly: An Interpretation of Romans* (Canada, 2005), 507.

<sup>11</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, OH: Warburg Press, 1945), 645.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1992), 195.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint, Revised Edition*, complied by J. Lust, E. Eynikel, K. Hauppie (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003). (Hereafter LEF)

<sup>15</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 Volumes*, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006).

<sup>16</sup> BDAG, 3rd Ed., s.v., “τέλος.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

“Perh. this is the place for **Ro 10:4**, in the sense that Christ is the goal and the termination of the law at the same time, somewhat in the sense of Gal 3:24f. (schol. on PLa., Leg. 625d τέλος τῶν νόμων=goal of the laws; Plut., Mor. 780e δίκη … νόμου τέλος ἔστι; FFlückiger, TZ 11, ’55, 153–57; difft. RJewett, Int 39, ’85, 341–56, Christ as goal but without repudiation of the law; cp. SBechtler, CBQ 56, ’94, 288–308).”<sup>18</sup>

BDAG’s track is similar to what Melanchthon says, “The meaning is: ‘Christ is the end of the Law,’ that is, its fulfillment or consummation.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, also Calvin: “The word *completion* [*complementum*], seems not to me unsuitable in this place; and *Erasmus* has rendered it *perfection* : but as the other reading is almost universally approved, and is not inappropriate, readers, for my part, may retain it.”<sup>20</sup>

LEF, simply gives the following definition: “*end* Jgs 11,39; *conclusion* Eccl 12,13; *completion* 3 Mc 1,26; *totality* Lv 27,23.”<sup>21</sup> As far as the examples cited by LEF, τέλος translates the following Hebrew words: “end,” יְצָרָה (Jg 11:39); “end,” תְּסִלָּל (Ecc 12:13);<sup>22</sup> and “amount,” תְּסִבָּה (Lev 27:23).

Obviously, the most in-depth treatment of the word is given in the TDNT. As stated above, we shall limit ourselves to the most pertinent sources that occur close to the time of the New Testament. Thus the TDNT:

1. To understand τέλος and especially τελέω it is important to keep in view the originally dynamic character of the noun. The sense attested [above] underlies Lk. 22:37. What concerns me must actually be “carried out, fulfilled.”<sup>23</sup>

2. a. As the “goal” of the instruction imparted to the community active loved is mentioned in 1 Tm. 1:5. … b. In Mt. 26:58 (no par.) τέλος can mean “issue” in an ambivalent sense.... c. The sense “end” as conclusion in antithesis to commencement.<sup>24</sup>

[2.] d. τέλος means “cessation” (→ 50, 26 ff. perhaps also 1 Pt. 4:7), of ζωή (Hb. 7:3 → 1, 482, 27 ff.), of δόξα on the face of Moses (2 C. 3:13 → VI, 776, 6 ff. and n. 42), of the dominion of the Messiah (Lk. 1:33), cf. also τέλος ἔχει “it is up” with him, with Satan or his power (Mk. 3:26 → 50, 28 f.). For the believer the Law is set aside as a way of

<sup>18</sup> BDAG, s.v., “τέλος.”

<sup>19</sup> Melanchthon, *Romans*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 383–4.

<sup>21</sup> LEF, s.v., “τέλος,” formatting original.

<sup>22</sup> This is a “late synonym of γένεσις” (BDB, s.v., “תְּסִלָּל”).

<sup>23</sup> TDNT 8, s.v., “τέλος,” 54.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 54–55.

salvation by the Christ event — Χριστός means especially the crucifixion and resurrection, R. 7:4; 10:4 → IV, 1075, 37 ff.[\*]

The narrower context esp. supports this interpretation of R. 10:4. Here νόμος corresponds to man's own righteousness, which the pious Jew seeks, v. 3; God's righteousness stands in contrast with the νόμος; this is the righteousness which God creates, His justifying work. In R. 10:4 νόμος is esp. the Law by keeping which one is just before God. This possibility of justification before God is abolished by Christ's cross. νόμος and δίκαιοσύνη in R. 10:4 denote the Jewish way of salvation which is set aside in Christ. The two are mutually exclusive for Paul. Cf. on this antithesis Gl. 3:21; 2:21.<sup>25</sup>

Delling further notes at the asterisk (\*) included above:

H. Hellbhardt, "Christus das Telos d. Gesetzes," *Ev. Theol.* 3 (1936), 331-346 takes τέλος in R. 10:4 as at once "end," "purpose," and "goal", 345f. "Final goal" is suggested by R. Bring, "Die Erfüllung d. Gesetzes durch Christus," *Kerygma u. Dogma*, 5 (1959), 1-22, esp. 19f., cf. already F. Flückiger, "Christus des Gesetzes τέλος," *ThZ* 11 (1955), 153-7. For bibl. on Paul's understanding of the Law cf. Schlier G1.<sup>12</sup>, 176 f., n. 2, cf. the exc. 176-188.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, we will engage further on how to understand τέλος with Grothe below.

## V. νόμος—The Word Defined and Explained

There is more to say on the usage of νόμος (Law) within the book of Romans specifically rather than just the bare lexical definition generally. This discussion will take place below, as guided by Grothe's commentary on Romans. The conclusions of that discussion do color the comments here—thus, an encouragement to press on! Nevertheless, it is good to engage briefly the same sources used for τέλος above (BDAG, LEH, and TDNT) as they also define νόμος, specifically if they define νόμος as Torah, as given in the translation above by this author, by Grothe, and by the authors of *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*.

Summarily, BDAG defines νόμος: "1. a procedure or practice that has taken hold, *a custom, rule, principle, norm*. 2. constitutional or statutory legal system, *law*. 3. a collection of holy writings precious to God's people, *sacred ordinance*."<sup>27</sup> It is striking that throughout BDAG's treatment of νόμος, νόμος is tied to the "the Law of Moses" or the Pentateuch secondarily ("b") under the aforementioned second (2.) definition or under the third (3.)

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<sup>25</sup> TDNT 8, s.v., "τέλος," 55.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 55n51.

<sup>27</sup> BDAG, s.v., "νόμος."

definition.<sup>28</sup> In fact, there is only one scant clear and direct linkage between *vόμος* and Torah (תּוֹרָה) secondarily (“b.”) under the third (3.) definition, even though *vόμος* is the chosen translation for Torah in the Old Testament. Thus BDAG: “The Sacred Scriptures (OT) referred to as a whole in the phrase ὁ ν. καὶ οἱ προφῆται (Orig., C. Cels. 2, 6, 4; cp. Hippol., Ref. 8, 19, 1) the law (תּוֹרָה) and the prophets (הָנָבִיאִים).”<sup>29</sup> In fact, as far as BDAG is concerned, the Greek sources are the only important ones, the Old Testament, the clear inspired background for much of the New Testament, is only cited when a listed New Testament source quotes or illudes to an Old Testament passage.<sup>30</sup>

LEH thus defines *vόμος*: “*law, ordinance* 2 Mc 7,2; (*the*) *law* Ex 12,49; *law* (of God given by Moses) *Dt* 33,4.”<sup>31</sup> It then defines *vόμος* in various general senses. LEH then comes around to define *vόμος* further: “ἐν τῷ βίβλῳ τοῦ νόμου *in the book of the law* *Dt* 28,61... \*Am 4,5 νόμον *the law* -תּוֹרָה for MT תּוֹדָה *thank(-offering)*; \*Ps 129(130),5 τοῦ νόμου σου *of your law* -תּוֹרָה for MT Ps 129(130),4 תּוֹרָא *that you may be revered*.”<sup>32</sup> The two cases of errors in textual transmission between the Greek and Hebrew, marked by the asterisk (\*), are as close as LEH comes to defining *vόμος* clearly as Torah.<sup>33</sup>

The TDNT discussion on *vόμος* is far reaching—63 pages worth!—and could, in fact, be an entire paper unto itself! The treatment of *vόμος* is divided under four sections, by two separate authors.<sup>34</sup> The usage of *vόμος* as it relates to the New Testament is discussed by both authors.

When Kleinknecht finishes the first section (“A. *vόμος* in the Greek and Hellenistic World”), discussing “the Greek Concept of *vόμος* and the New Testament, he says, “With its understanding of the concept of law the Greek world missed the true meaning of law from the NT standpoint. For, to the Greek, law is never that which, rightly understood, crushes him and reduces him to despair by making him aware that he cannot keep it.”<sup>35</sup>

Gutbrod, who also discusses derivative words, has the far lengthier section. Therein he covers:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> LEF, s.v., “*vόμος*,” formatting original.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., formatting original.

<sup>33</sup> “The **asterisk (\*)** indicates that the following case deals with a passage in which the Greek differs from the Hebrew and in which the difference can be explained on the level of the transmission of the Greek text or on the level of writing, reading, or hearing of the Hebrew word” (LEF, cii, formatting original).

<sup>34</sup> TDNT 4, s.v., “*vόμος*,” 1035.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

A. The Law in the Old Testament:

1. The Law in Ancient Israel;
2. The Understanding of the Law in the Older Historical Books;
3. The Attitude of the Prophets towards the Law;
4. The Deuteronomic Understanding of the Law;
5. The Understanding of the Law in the Priestly Writing and Related Works;
6. The Law in the Post-Exilic Period;
7. The Meaning of תֹּרַה;
8. *vόμος* in the LXX.

C. The Law in Judaism:

1. The Law in the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha ;
2. Josephus;
3. Philo;
4. The Law in Rabbinic Judaism.

D. The Law in the New Testament:

I. Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Gospels:

1. The Occurrence of the Word *vόμος*;
2. Jesus' Negation of the Law;
3. Jesus' Affirmation of the Law;
4. The Interrelation of Negation and Affirmation of the Law.

II. The Conflict concerning the Law:

1. The Primitive Community;
2. The Usage of Paul;
3. The Material Understanding of the Law in Paul;

III. The Period after the Conflict:

1. Hebrews;
2. James;
3. John's Gospel.<sup>36</sup>

As can be seen, there are many higher-critical assumptions and talking points. Nevertheless, there is a desire by Gutbrod to place *vόμος* within its complete biblical context, something which Kleinknecht does by finally stating that the Hellenistic worldview misunderstands the New Testament. While following Gutbrod to his greater depth would be beneficial, it would be deeper and lengthier and more involved than the stated goals of this paper. Nevertheless, the following discussion about and insights from “A.7. The Meaning of תֹּרַה,” “A.8. *vόμος* in the LXX”, “D.II.2. The Usage of Paul, and “D.II.3. The Material Understanding of the Law in Paul” are given for summary and sample.

Gutbord's discussion of Torah (תֹּרַה) and Law (*vόμος*) in A.7 and A.8 is more difficult and problematic than it is helpful. His entire search for how to define Torah (תֹּרַה) properly is

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<sup>36</sup> TDNT 4, s.v., “*vόμος*,” 1022–23, formatting added by this author to clarify the original’s inline paragraph.

dependent upon higher critical assumptions about the age of the Old Testament source material, and every nuance he describes under “*vόμος* in the LXX” is dependent upon what he says under “A.7. The Meaning of **תּוֹרָה**.” Therein (“A.7”) He says, “The only possibility is to explain the content of **תּוֹרָה** in terms of the oldest literary sources and then to work backwards and forwards from this pt.”<sup>37</sup> He rejects an etymological discussion first by stating “The etym., even if this were secure, could make no very solid contribution towards an understanding of the term”<sup>38</sup> and second by noting about this statement, “The customary derivation from , ‘to throw,’ ‘to cast an oracle,’ is contested by Begrich 68f., 69, n. 1, though he has no explicit alternative to suggest.”<sup>39</sup> He does, however, also state, “It can take on in *Prv.* the general sense of instruction.”<sup>40</sup>

At this juncture, it is, then, more appropriate to cede the discussion to Hebrew Lexicography. Thus, Brown Driver Briggs (BDB), the quintessential Hebrew Lexicon, places Torah (**תּוֹרָה**) under the heading of “**תּוֹרָה**” which means “throw, shoot” (Qal, G-stem) but also “direct, teach, instruct” (Hiphil, H-stem).<sup>41</sup> Thus, Torah (**תּוֹרָה**) means, “direction, instruction, law (prop. direction).”<sup>42</sup> Finally, as far as it is helpful, we can thus summarize the insights from *The Jewish Study Bible*:

THE TERM TORAH, “TEACHINGS, INSTRUCTION,” derives from the root *y-r-h*, “to shoot (an arrow),” and thus etymologically refers to that which “hits the mark.” Jewish tradition, from the late biblical period on, uses “Torah” to refer to first section of the Bible, the books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are also called “The Five Books of Moses” or the “Pentateuch.”<sup>43</sup>

The terms *torah* and *torat moshe* (“the Torah of Moses”), already in use in late biblical literature to describe what is later called the Torah, offer a better clue to the nature and unity of these books. *Torah* is often understood as “law,” and indeed this is one of its frequent meanings in the Bible, as in Exod. 12.49, “There shall be on law [Heb *torah*] for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> TDNT 4, s.v., “*vόμος*,” 1045.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., n86.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> BDB, s.v., “**תּוֹרָה**.”

<sup>42</sup> BDB, s.v., “**תּוֹרָה**.”

<sup>43</sup> *The Jewish Study Bible*, The Jewish Publication Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1. (Unless otherwise indicated, when it is quoted, all formatting is original to *The Jewish Study Bible*.)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1–2.

Yet “law” is not the only possible translation of *torah*, and the Torah should not be typified as a book of law. The Heb term *torah* also means “instruction” or “teaching,” as in Prov 1:8... Teaching is not confined to law; indeed narratives or stories are as effective a medium of instruction. Given the predominance of narrative in significant portions of the Torah, especially in Genesis, the beginning of Exodus, and Numbers, it is best to understand the biblical term *torat moshe*, the earliest extant term for these five or books, as “the instruction of Moses.” This instruction was realized through narratives and laws, which together elucidate the proper norms of living and the relationship between God and the world. That the Torah is more than a set of laws is made explicit in the comments of Rashi, the great Jewish medieval interpreter, who, quoting earlier sources, defends the fact that Torah begins with the stories of Genesis rather than with the laws of Exodus.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, “Teaching,” is by far the most common translation of Torah in the JSB.<sup>46</sup>

When it comes to Paul’s use of *vόμος*, Gutbrod states that Paul’s usage “is not wholly uniform, for he can sometimes employ the term when he does not have the OT Law in view. Nevertheless, he does not start with a general sense which is then predominantly used for the Mosaic Law. His starting point is the traditional use of *vόμος* for the specific OT Law. Hence it is self-evident what *vόμος* means, and usually no more precise definition is given.”<sup>47</sup> Here may we summarize Gutbrod’s insights as follows: Paul makes no basic distinction between the Decalogue and other OT laws,<sup>48</sup> “*vόμος* is supremely what demands action from man, a specific will,”<sup>49</sup> “the Law is the living will of God,”<sup>50</sup> whether that is recorded in the Law or on the hearts of man,<sup>51</sup> “the Law is one, the revealed will of God,”<sup>52</sup> “God’s demanding will is also expressed” by Paul personifying it,<sup>53</sup> he uses *vόμος* to refer to the Pentateuch,<sup>54</sup> and finally Paul uses *vόμος* figuratively as contrasted with, e.g., “law of works” vs. “law of faith” (Rom 3:27).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>46</sup> E.g., “The teaching of the LORD is his delight, and he studies that teaching day and night.” (Ps 1:2)

<sup>47</sup> TDNT 4, s.v., “*vόμος*,” 1069.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 1070.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1070–71.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 1071.

Gutbrod's "The Material Understanding of the Law in Paul" goes too far afield for the sake of this paper. There is one tidbit in here that is germane. While he never taking up Romans 10:4 directly, he thus echoes it:

"The Law's sentence of condemnation on sin is thus fulfilled in the cross of Christ, R. 5:6 ff. Moreover, even if Paul does not explicitly say so, it is logically implied in the matter itself that the cross of Christ is also a fulfilling of the Law in so far as the central purpose of the Law is fulfilled herein. The cross is the full achievement of obedience to God (Phil. 2:5 ff.), and at the same time it is perfect love for men (R. 8:34 ff.). **This is, however, the true goal of the Law.** Hence it is disobedience to the Law to desire it other than in this fulfilment. [sic] To emphasise [sic] expressly that the Law is fulfilled here is not in Paul's interest, since it would suggest the primacy of the Law. His concern is the very different one of showing how the Law comes to fulfilment [sic] in believers with faith in Christ.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, Gutbrod sees that the fulfillment or purpose or goal of the Law is the crucifixion and death of Christ, in the way of obedience to the Law and also punishment under its sentence. While this fits with the understanding of *τέλος* outlined above, his statement is also based on a view of "Law" (*νόμος*) that differs from *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, Grothe, and the translation given at the start of the paper. Grothe will help us to make heads or tails of this, before we turn our attention to *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*.

## VI. Grothe: *The Justification of the Ungodly*

Jonathan Grothe's *The Justification of the Ungodly: An Interpretation of Romans*, was intended and slated to be the Romans Commentary for the Concordia Commentary Series. It was rejected on doctrinal review grounds. Of this, Grothe states in his preface, "For reasons not worth rehearsing here, the manuscript which I prepared for the Concordia Commentary was found unacceptable. After my resignation from the editorial committee of that project, the newly constituted committee expressed no further interest in my manuscript."<sup>57</sup> If James Kellerman's review is accurate, it had to do with Grothe's treatment both of the Third Use of the Law, stemming from his argument that Paul uses *νόμος* in the sense of Torah throughout all Romans, and of church fellowship, stemming from the implications of reevaluating our current thoughts and practice in the shadows of the ecumenical movement.<sup>58</sup> As far I as recall, another issue was that he takes *Iouviāv* in Romans 16:7 to be referring to a woman (*Iouvīāv*), rather than to a man

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<sup>56</sup> TDNT 4, s.v., "νόμος," 1076, emphasis added.

<sup>57</sup> Jonathan F. Grothe, *The Justification of the Ungodly: An Interpretation of Romans, Vol. I* (Canada: self-pub., 2005), iv.

<sup>58</sup> James Kellerman, "Fully Justified," *Pastor Jame Kellerman's musings* [sic] (blog), October 26, 2012, <https://pastorjameskellerman.blogspot.com/2012/10/fully-justified.html>.

(Ιούνιαν), raising questions about Grothe's stance on women's ordination.<sup>59</sup> To summarize Kellerman's thoughts and my addition, Grothe has a habit of giving ideas without firm doctrinal comment or stance or rejection in areas involving historical or current LCMS (also LCC) theological controversy. That said, we shall let Kellerman's final assessment serve as our guide for taking up Grothe: "All in all, Grothe's commentary is worth reading, even where it challenges us most. I understand why Concordia Publish House could not in truth say *nihil obstat*. However, I am glad to give it an *imprimatur*, even with a caution or two."<sup>60</sup>

#### Commentary on Romans 10:4

When it comes to how to interpret τέλος, Grothe states, "Both the narrower and the broader context lead to taking τέλος as 'goal.'"<sup>61</sup> He further notes, "After considerable discussion, also C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:519, comes to this conclusion. BAGD vacillates between 'end ... termination, cessation' (1 a) and "goal toward which movement is being directed' (1 c, citing also Mt 26:58; 'preaching as love as its aim,' 1 Tim 1:5; and James 5:11)."<sup>62</sup> Grothe concludes that Paul is here again arguing the entire hermeneutical thesis of Romans: "that the fulfillment of the real intent of the OT is in the Gospel of Christ crucified as Paul preaches it —Law-free, from faithfulness to trust, *unto* salvation for everyone who believes, Jew and Gentile."<sup>63</sup> To say that the time of Law's demands in the hands of Sin has ended in the age of Christ and His Gospel is "a consequence or entailment of what is said here. It is not wrong to say that Christ is the 'termination of Law' in that sense of a relationship and outlook which is ever demanding more works, ever chiding under *opinio legis*. (Paul expresses this in Eph 2:15.)"<sup>64</sup> But to limit the meaning of Rom 10:4 to that is to miss the point in the flow of the argument. The Jews had Torah, aspired to the righteousness which Torah has to give, but did not attain to it because they did not read it as a Torah which points to and testifies to Jesus Christ."<sup>65</sup> While he makes no further comment on the verse, simply taking up what τέλος means, Grothe's argument here is dependent upon what he says earlier in his commentary about "Law" (νόμος).

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<sup>59</sup> This is what I recall a professor commenting when I bought this commentary while attending Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario. Grothe's eventual conclusion is this: "It is better to let philology [Ιούνιον instead of Ιούνιαν] carry the day, to read the name as Ιούνιον, translate it as 'Junia,' and see this [Ἄνδρονίκον καὶ Ιούνιαν] as (most likely) a reference to a married couple, perhaps a "missionary couple" like Prisca and Aquila (15:3–5)" (cf. Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly*, Vol II, 815; cp. Ibid., 813–5).

<sup>60</sup> Kellerman, "Fully Justified?."

<sup>61</sup> Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly*, Vol. II, 510.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 510n18.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 510.

<sup>64</sup> "By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace." (ESV)

<sup>65</sup> Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly*, Vol. II, 510–11. Here Grothe cites Romans 1:2; 3:21 and John 5:39 to support his view (Ibid., 511n19).

## What Does “Law” (νόμος) mean?

As from the above discussion from TDNT shows, how Paul uses “Law” (νόμος) is not a cut and dry matter. Sad to say, there is a range of meaning here, which even *The Jewish Study Bible* noted above, and yet there is not such a range of meaning as to be confusing, although Paul’s inspired rhetoric can make it so to our fallen reason: “For the Torah of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you [singular] from the law of Sin and Death.”<sup>66</sup> “It would be most convenient,” Grothe states, “to identify one English (or Hebrew!) terms, such as ‘Law,’ or ‘Torah,’ as the constant substitute for νόμος throughout Romans and be done with it. But one cannot dispense with the interpretive challenge so easily. Any single lexeme always has its meaning in context, and several various specific referents lurk as possibilities for νόμος.”<sup>67</sup> While listing several passages where the task is either more difficult or has caused some debate among translators, Grothe elucidates that there are two distinct yet connected uses of νόμος: 1) the “revealed and written Torah of the OT” and 2) “something which that Torah embodies as the truth about the relationship/communion (‘knowledge’) between God and man.”<sup>68</sup>

Grothe also takes up putting this twofold reality into Pauling theology and biblical revelation, covering: “From Eternity, Before the Fall,” “The Eternal Plan,” “The Commandment,” “After the Fall,” “‘Law’ and ‘Gospel,’” and “Relevance of Law to a Christian in the World.”<sup>69</sup> Grothe states several consequences of his treatment, but the most germane to our discussion is his first, viz., “This reading of Torah-νόμος supports the absolute unity of the OT and the NT as divine revelation. There is one will of God, one Torah, one plan of salvation, one promise, one Way, one people of God.”<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, tying Paul’s usage of νόμος to the Torah and Old Testament, thus unifying both Testaments for the entire people of God, as far as this author is concerned, has this following benefit and clarification. Paul being “Apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom 11:13) does not mean that his language and usage always corresponds to Hellenistic terms. While in his daily comportment he “became all things to all people” (1 Cor 9), Paul was adamant that he never taught or did anything contrary to the Law of the Jews (Acts 25; Rom 3:21). In fact, “Apostle to the Gentiles” means that Paul, “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5) and educated “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3), was delivering to the Gentiles “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Which means, if anything, in his preaching and teaching, he would be “renewing the Gentiles in the spirit of their minds” (Eph 4:23) by teaching them what the true meaning of the Old Testament, the Torah was, and what it means for Gentiles. As he says in Galatians 3:26–29: “For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized

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<sup>66</sup> cf., Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly*, Vol I., 138, 402, 403.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 144–5.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 145–51.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 151–2.

into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”

## **VII. Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goal in Yeshua**

Now we finally arrive at the entire genesis, purpose, and goal ( $\tau\acute{e}\lambda\omega\varsigma$ ) of this paper! The end is yet to come. At this point, generous and lengthy quotations will be given in order from *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*. The quotations were seen as the most profound, eye-opening, insightful, and helpful.

### Chapter 1: The Torah Anticipates Lawbreaking

*If the ultimate purpose of Genesis 1–11 is to both encourage and to warn Israel to keep the Law, it is difficult to see how this introduction achieves that goal. Adam and Eve live in a perfect world. Their continued presence in the garden is contingent on the keeping of only a few commandments, not 613 commandments. Under the best conditions this world has ever seen, Adam and Eve break the only “do not” law they are given and consequently die in exile. It is not at all clear how the telling of the story of Adam and Eve’s failure to keep one of only a few commandments in a perfect world is supposed to encourage Israel to keep 613 commandments in a fallen world. Actually, it offers no encouragement at all! And if we consider the principle of “deeds of the fathers as a sign to the sons” (ma’asei avot, siman l’banim), Adam’s story never was intended to warn Israel from following in Adam’s footsteps (i.e., a warning to keep the Law). Rather, Adam’s story is intended to be a prophecy that Israel will follow in Adam’s footsteps. “Israel, you will be just like Adam. You will enter the land, be tempted by the Canaanites to follow their ways, you will break the Law, and then you will be exiled!”<sup>71</sup>*

### Chapter 2: Failure of Faith Leads to Death

#### ***Sinai: Before and After***

*What does Israel’s reception of the Law produce, if not faith? It is only when we compare Israel’s Wilderness Narrative to Mount Sinai (before giving of the Law) with Israel’s Wilderness Narrative from Mount Sinai (under the Law) that we find the answer. Consider these two Wilderness Narratives, before and after the Law is given, as bookends surrounding the giving of the Law.*

*There are numerous parallels between Israel’s journey through the wilderness to Mount Sinai and their journey through the wilderness from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land:*

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<sup>71</sup> *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, 26.

2. Israel longs for the food of Egypt (Exod. 16:3; Num. 11:4-5).
3. God provides manna and quail (Exod. 16:4-26; Num. 11:6-35).
4. The Sabbath command is violated (Exod. 16:27; Num. 15:32).
5. Israel quarrels with Moses and asks why he brought them out of Egypt (Exod. 17:2-3; Num. 20:3-5, 13).
8. Israel battles against the Amalekites (Exod. 17:8-16; Num. 14:43-45).
9. The people of Israel become so burdensome for Moses that he must appoint leaders to help him bear the load (Exod. 18:18-22; Num. 11:14, 16).

*While Israel behaves in much the same way before and after the Law is given, the consequences of their actions are strikingly different:*

1. Israel is victorious over the Amalekites before receiving the Law at Mount Sinai, but is defeated by them after Israel receives the Law (Exod. 17:13; Num. 14:43-45).
2. Moses does not complain about his burdensome dealings with the Israelites until Jethro points out the problem just prior to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Exod. 18:18-22). As soon as he leaves Mount Sinai, however, when faced with the exact same problem, he asks God to kill him (Num. 11:14-15).
3. On their way to Mount Sinai, and just prior to the giving of the Law, none of the Israelites are put to death when they sin against God and/or against Moses. Many thousands, however, are put to death for the same offences once they receive the Law. For example:
  - a. Violating the Sabbath goes unpunished in Exodus 16. Sabbath violators are put to death, however, after Israel receives the Law (Num. 15:36).
  - b. Israel's longing for the delicacies of Egypt goes unpunished before the Law (Exod. 16). The Lord strikes down many Israelites with a plague for this same sin after they receive the Law (Num. 11:33; see also 14:37).
  - c. The people claim that it would have been better to die in Egypt before the Law (Exod. 10:22-3), but do not actually get their wish until the Law is given (Num. 14:2, 21-23, 32, 35).
  - d. Grumbling against Moses before the giving of the Law occasions no punishment (Exod. 16). After the Law is given, however, grumbling against Moses results in the death of about 15,000 people (Num. 16:1-3, 32-35, 16:41-42, 49). And yet again, when the people complain against the Lord and Moses, many are struck dead by fiery serpents (Num. 21:4-9).

### ***Limitations of the Law***

*When we compare the before-the-Law picture of Israel with the under-the-Law picture of Israel, the implications are quite clear. Thus Paul expresses his understanding of the Torah in his New Testament writings when he articulates that the giving of the Law results in divine wrath and death, as in Romans 4:15: "For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom. 5:20; see also Rom. 7:10; 2 Cor. 3:6). Moses' own perspective on the*

*giving of the Law at Mount Sinai is perfectly consistent with Paul's understanding of the Law in his letters.*

*Moses is not presenting righteousness through the Law as Israel's key to blessing and the enjoyment of the Promised Land. As we have seen, he prophesies their disobedience to the Law, their exile, and the curses of the covenant both in the introduction and conclusion of the Torah. "I want to bless you with the gift of a very good land. By the way, you will be just like Adam. You will disobey the Law, experience curses, and die in exile. Here is the Law. I really hope you do better than I expect you will!"*

*Likewise, if Moses were presenting the Law as the key to Israel's righteousness, why would he highlight the vital connection between faith and righteousness before the Law, and then tell the story of Israel's breakdown of faith and lack of righteousness once God gave the law? This would be akin to God saying, "I want to give you the same righteousness I gave Abraham when he believed, before I gave the Law. By the way, when I gave Israel the Law, they did not believe, and consequently I did not consider them righteous. Here is the Law. Good luck!"*<sup>72</sup>

### Chapter 3: The Torah's Remedy: The Messiah

#### ***Quantity Versus Quality***

*...We believe the messianism of the Torah might likewise be considered in light of quality over quantity. Yes, the Law appears in 62% of the story, but as we have seen, the story line anticipates that Israel will break the Law and thereby break the Sinai covenant. A major obstacle in the Torah's plot is disobedience to God's Law and the consequences of the curses that come with disobedience (exile and death). We see this problem at the beginning and at the end of the Torah's story (Gen. 3; Deut. 28). Yet God's purpose for Israel and for all of humanity is blessing, another theme that appears at the beginning and end of the Torah (Gen. 1:28; Deut. 33). If disobedience to the Law is the obstacle for receiving God's blessing, what is the Torah's remedy?*

#### ***The End Game***

*There are clues that the Torah's remedy, that is, the means through which God will accomplish his purposes to and through Israel, is the coming of the Messiah-King in the last days...*

*The Torah opens with a story about the rise and fall of Adam in the "beginning of days." The Torah's introductory story serves as a prologue to God's ultimate plan to remedy mankind's greatest problem: our separation from God, caused by unbelief and disobedience. This remedy will not come through the Law, but in spite of Israel's repeated disobedience to the Law. Instead, God will provide the only sufficient remedy for sin through the Messiah-King in "the end of days" (see Gen. 49:1, 8-12; Num. 24:14, 17-19).*<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, 34-37.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 39, 41

## Chapter 4: The Creation Mandate

### ***Adam God's First King***

*The Hebrew word radah is the first of several dominion terms used in the creation mandate. "Then God said, 'Let us make man [adam] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion [radah], over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth (Gen. 1:26). This term is used to describe Solomon's rule over the land in 1 Kings 5:4 [4:24 English versions]. Remarkably, though not surprisingly, this verb also appears in three passages that are traditionally regarded as messianic:*

<i>And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion [radah] and destroy to sea, and from the the survivors of cities!" (Num. 24:19)</i>	<i>May he have dominion [radah] from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! (Ps. 72:8; *see also Zech 9:10b)</i>	<i>The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule [radah] in the midst of your enemies! (Ps. 110:2)</i>
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### ***Adam: God's First Priest***

*To appreciate Adam's priestly role, we must first recognize the extent to which creation-Eden imagery permeates the tabernacle. Scholars have long noted many thematic and verbal parallels between the creation week and the Tabernacle Narrative (Exod. 25-31, 35-40)...*

*1. As the creation week is divided into seven days (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:1), so the blueprints of the tabernacle are given in seven speeches (Exod. 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1; 12), and in both cases, the seventh day and the seventh speech focus on the Sabbath. In the former, the Sabbath is the climax of cre-ation; in the latter, the Sabbath is the sign of the covenant...*

*In addition to the many parallels between creation and the tabernacle, there are also numerous links between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle.*

- 1. We are told that God "walks" (bithalekh) in the midst of the garden. The form of this verb is also used to describe God's activity in the tabernacle (Gen. 3:8; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14).*
- 2. God stations cherubim on the eastern entrance to the garden, clearly parallel to the decorative cherubim whose presence on the veil guard the eastern entrance into the Holy of Holies (Gen. 3:24; Exod. 26:31; Num. 3:38).*
- 3. The tree-like menorah in the sanctuary is likely intended to be a replica of the tree of life in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:9; Exod. 25:32-36).*
- 4. The precious metals that are mentioned in the garden of Eden Narrative are mentioned*

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<sup>74</sup> *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, 49–50.

*elsewhere in the Torah with reference to the precious metals used in the construction of the tabernacle (Gen. 2:12; Exod. 25:7; 28:9–14; Num. 11:7)*

*Once we recognize that Eden is portrayed as the prototypical cremation-sanctuary, Adam's role as the prototypical priest over all creation comes to light. First, we are told that Adam is placed in the garden to work and to watch over it. This twofold commission over the garden is, in fact, the same twofold commission given to the Levites, namely, to work and watch over the tabernacle (Gen. 2:15; Num. 3:7-8). Moreover, having sinned, God clothes [hilbish] Adam's nakedness with a tunic [kutonit], a phrase that is used most frequently in the Torah to describe the clothing of the priests in the tabernacle (Gen. 3:21; Exod. 29:8; 28:39-40), which, significantly, is intended to cover their nakedness (Exod. 28:40-43).<sup>75</sup>*

### Chapter 7: Poem Two: Jacob Blesses His Sons

#### ***Birthright Blessings***

*A later biblical author notices and comments on the promises to Jacob in Genesis 27:29 and its connection with the tribe of Judah in Genesis 49:8. In 1 Chronicles 5:1-2 we read:*

*The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, so that he could not be enrolled as the oldest son; though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph).*

*The Chronicler's phraseology betrays his biblical sources. His comments concerning Reuben are taken from Genesis 49:3-4. The reference to the birthright blessings being given to Joseph are taken from Genesis 48:1-22; 49:22-26. What of the comment "though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him"? Remarkably, the Hebrew form of this phrase is found in only one other place in the Hebrew Bible: Genesis 27:29 ("Be lord over your brothers"). By alluding to Genesis 27:29, the writer of Chronicles makes Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Jacob's prediction concerning Judah explicit: peoples will serve Jacob, the nations will bow down to Jacob, Jacob will be lord over his brothers, and blessings will come to Israel and the nations (see Gen. 27:29) through Jacob's greatest descendant.*

*Returning to the reference to the father's sons bowing down to Judah (Gen. 49:8), one is also immediately struck by the similarity to the story of Joseph. In fact, the whole point of the Joseph Narrative is to tell the story of how Joseph's eleven brothers will bow down to him as the divinely chosen ruler (Gen. 37:7-10; 42:6; 43:26, 28; 48:12), much to their chagrin and in spite of their opposition. What is the point, therefore, of telling the Joseph story if God's purposes for world redemption will ultimately come through Judah? Ma'asei avot, siman l'banim: the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the sons. Joseph's story is intended to be an illustrative prophecy/story of*

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<sup>75</sup> *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, 50–1, 52–3.

future events. The story of Joseph's rise to power by rejection, suffering, and ultimate triumph is the dramatized version of Jacob's poetic oracle in Genesis 49:8-12.<sup>76</sup>

### VIII. Conclusion

The stated goal of this paper was to be a slight review and promotion of *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goal in Yeshua*, which serves as the opportunity to have such an exegetical paper on Romans 10:4 such as this, since a need for such exegetical paper was not realized until this author engaged that book, which in turn serves to be an opportunity to discuss the book: *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*. Having come full circle through Lexicon, Commentary, and the book, let us again see the verse that started it all:

**τέλος** γὰρ γόμον Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

For Christ is the **goal** of the Torah unto righteousness for everyone who believes.

Thus accomplishing τὸ τέλος to the best of this author's ability and schedule, you have indeed reached τὸ τέλος.

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<sup>76</sup> *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, 73–4.