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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN PHIL 3, 9 A LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The subject of this study is the response of the apostle Paul found in Phil 3, 9: “[...] not having my righteousness that [coming] from the law, but that through faith in Christ – the righteousness [coming] from God and [based on] faith”. The analyzed fragment is a participial phrase, dependent on the response which precedes it “[...] that I may simply gain Christ and be found in him” (8b-9a). In the reasoning of the apostle, Phil 3, 9 constitutes an insertion or apposition. In spite of this, it throws an important searchlight, apart from Gal and Rom, on Paul’s understanding of being justified through faith in Jesus Christ. Due to this, authors pay lots of attention to this phrase.

The discussed fragment is composed of two contrasting parts (a negative and a positive), divided by the conjunction “but”. Each of the contrasting parts of the statement contains two main elements. Authors concerned with the interpretation of Phil 3, 9 perceive two principle problems: 1) how to understand “my righteousness” in the first part of the statement, and 2) which of the clauses of the two contrasting parts constitutes the essence of the statement and mutually respond to one another. The present study aims to undertake both issues. We will study them in reverse order. Determining the meaning of “my righteousness” first requires a clear definition of the relationship between the individual elements of the contrasting parts of the apostle’s statement.

Before we get to this, we will first present an overview of the opinions of the scholars about these matters. We are referring to the mutual dependen-

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cy among both parts of the apostle's statement, and authors present various viewpoints, which can be placed into four groups. The scholars most often contrast "my righteousness" with "righteousness from God" and at the same time in second place "that [coming] from the Law" with "that from faith in Christ"¹. According to others, the contrast runs between "my righteousness" and "that from faith in Christ", and next between "that [coming] from the Law" and "righteousness from God"². We will assume a position on these in point 3.1. The third group is composed of authors who maintain that in the central theme of Paul's statement is found one element, meaning "that from faith in Christ"³. The statement in Phil 3, 9 therefore has a clearly Christological character. We will discuss this opinion in point 1. The fourth group is represented by J.-N. Aletti⁴. His proposition is a variant of the second group, in which the main contrasting runs between "that [coming] from the Law" and "righteousness from God" (more in point 2). We are not taking into consideration other opinions, such as for example G. Fee⁵, since they were not based on a proper study.

A few of the above mentioned authors differ among themselves on the following issue: the dependency of particular clauses in Phil 3, 9 creates a chiasmic structure, doesn't it? Or maybe it is a concentric-chiasmic structure? We will also accommodate ourselves to this in our study.

Determining the above issues in the long run allows one to concentrate on the sense of Paul's statement – at the same time on that, which he understood by "my righteousness" in relation to righteousness from God or from faith in Christ. In this unusually important matter the scholars express similarly diverging opinions. In contemporary Bibliotics, one can isolate three

¹ M. R. V i n c e n t, *The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, ICC, Edinburgh 1985 (last edition), p. 102; I. J. L o h, E. A. N i d a, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, Stuttgart 1977, p. 101; J. R e u m a n n, "Righteousness" in the New Testament. "Righteousness" in the United States Lutheran – Roman Catholic Dialogue, Philadelphia–New York 1982, p. 62; cf. J. A. Z i e s l e r, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, Cambridge 1972, p. 149-150.

² V. K o p e r s k i, *The Knowledge of Christ Jesus My Lord. High Christology of Philippians 3:7-11*, Kampen 1996, p. 224; J. D. G. D u n n, *The New Perspective on Paul. Collected Essays*, WUNT 185, Tübingen 2005, p. 476.

³ W. S c h e n k, *Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus. Kommentar*, Stuttgart–Berlin–Köln–Mainz 1984, p. 310; P. T. O' B r i e n, *The Epistle to the Philippians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids (MI) 1991, p. 394; cf. M. S i l v a, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT, Grand Rapids (MI) 1992, p. 185.

⁴ *Saint Paul. Épître aux Philippiens*, ÉBib 55, Paris 2005, p. 240-246.

⁵ *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, Grand Rapids (MI) 1995, p. 321-322.

groups of viewpoints: 1) the contrasting of human efforts with God's gift⁶, 2) the contrasting of not accepting Christ with his acceptance⁷, 3) the contrasting of Israel's particularism with the idea of the universality of salvation⁸. We will not discuss these opinions more broadly. We will adjust ourselves to them at the end of this study.

Before entering into the essential part of this study (point 3) we will analyze two propositions of the dependency of the clauses in Phil 3, 9, previously pointed out, which in contrast to the remaining present a certain *novum*. We will attempt to evaluate their value.

1. W. SCHENK'S PROPOSITION

The proposition of the above author is based on the theological assumption that Paul's statement in Phil 3, 9 has a clearly Christological character. The statement is the unshakable truth, but the conclusion that is drawn from this message, that in the center of the statement there must be found the formulation "that from faith in Christ", is no longer so obvious. In this way, the author admits that not the whole statement has to an equal degree a Christological character. Schenk proposes the following structure of the text⁹:

not having my
righteousness
that [coming] from the Law
but that from faith in Christ
that [coming] from God
righteousness
[based] on faith

⁶ I. e. R. B u l t m a n n, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 1, NTG, Tübingen 1948, p. 280; P. S t u h l m a c h e r, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus*, FRLANT 87, Göttingen 1965, p. 99-101; Z i e s l e r, *Meaning of Righteousness*, p. 148-151.

⁷ I. e. E. P. S a n d e r s, *Paul and the Palestinian Judaism. A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, London 1977, chapter V; also, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, Philadelphia 1983; S c h e n k, *Philippenerbriefe*, p. 44-45, 280-281; H. R ä i s ä n e n, *Paul's Conversion and the Development of his View of the Law*, NTS 33:1987, p. 404-419; cf. K o p e r s k i, *Knowledge of Christ*, p. 236.

⁸ J. D. G. D u n n, *The New Perspective on Paul*, BJRL 65: 1983, p. 94-122; also, *Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3: 10-14)*, NTS 31:1985, p. 523-542; also, *The Theology of Paul the Apostles*, London-New York 2003, p. 334 ff.

⁹ *Philippenerbriefe*, p. 310.

The first thing that raises doubt is that Schenk calls the above text structure a chiasm. Koperski¹⁰ notices this and precisely states that the text has a rather concentric-chiasmic structure. At its center is found the central element, which has no parallel. If we were even to ignore this element, then six clauses remain, mutually contrasting each other, which only with difficulty can create a chiasmic structure. The essence of the chiasm is that the two clauses in the first part of the statement have equivalents in the second part, but in reversed order. When we draw a line between them, pointing out mutual dependencies, then they form an “X” sign, meaning the Greek letter “chi” from which comes the name chiasm. Due to this, Koperski is also not right, that the form of the text proposed by Schenk has a structure of a concentric chiasm. In its present form it is not – in our opinion – a chiasm at all, but a concentric structure with a central element¹¹. In such a structure the number of mutually corresponding to each other or contrasting clauses is not limited, as is the case in a chiasm.

The weakest side of Schenk’s proposition constitutes the isolation of the central element: “but that from faith in Christ”. “But” in itself opposes both parts of the apostle’s statement. That is why the part “that from faith in Christ” ought to have a contrasted element in the previous statement: it is contrasted with what was said earlier. The conjunction “but” clearly divides the statement into two parts, the negative and positive, and excludes the central clause. The central element can be “but” – however, without greater significance for the construction of the text and its interpretation.

Schenk also separates the possessive pronoun “my” from righteousness and relates it with the introductory “not having” in order to obtain a parallel between both terms “righteousness” – even though they have distinct meanings. O’Brien¹² notices this and that is why he separates the possessive pronoun from “not having”. However, he does not relate it with the term righteousness, but makes it an independent element in the structure, which has its parallel in the “[based] on faith”. In this way he disrupts the eventual concentric structure of the text: the first part of the statement has four elements, the second three. The attempt to work out Schenk’s proposition introduces new difficulties, which confirms that the direction Schenk takes is not appropriate.

¹⁰ *Knowledge of Christ*, p. 223.

¹¹ According to Aletti (*Philippians*, p. 242, p. 100) this is a *reversio*, meaning simple a reversal of the previous construction of the statement.

¹² *Philippians*, p. 394.

2. J.-N. ALETTI'S PROPOSITION

Aletti's proposition in recent times introduces a new viewpoint on the relation between the negative and positive clauses of Paul's statement in Phil 3, 9 and on the interpretation of this text. In the first negative part of the apostle's statement, Aletti draws attention to the fact that after the participle "not having" follow two objects: the first ("my righteousness") does not have an article; the second object has an article ("the one from the Law"). The presence of the article in the second case makes one accept – in his words – that this clause constitutes the direct object of the verb; on the other hand, the clause without an article is, according to him, the predicative and that is why it ought to be preceded by the preposition "as". The sense is therefore the following: "Not having as my righteousness, that [coming] from the Law"¹³.

Accepting such an interpretation means that in Paul's statement, it does not mean that righteousness from the Law does not exist, but that this righteousness is not "mine" – meaning the apostle's. If righteousness from the Law is not his righteousness, then it is the other one. The contrasting between one righteousness "as not mine" and the other "as mine" led Aletti to fill in the second part of the statement with this same expression, but in the affirmative form. In this way, after the contrasting "but" he introduces the words: "having as my righteousness". As a result of such an intervention the text according to Aletti looks as follows¹⁴:

not having as my righteousness	but [having as my righteousness]
that [coming] from the Law	that through faith in Christ
	righteousness [coming] from God

From the proposed reconstruction of the text Aletti concludes that placing in contrast an accent on "my", i.e. that obtained by one's own efforts, loses meaning, since Christians also have "their" righteousness. "My" is no longer righteousness understood in the sense of one's own efforts, and he shares Sander's and Dunn's views on this. Since "not my..." and "my..." correspond to each other mutually (a parallel expression), the contrast does not rest on "my righteousness" and "God's righteousness" but on two sources of right-

¹³ Here, Aletti owes this to Vincent (*Philippians and Philemon*, p. 102).

¹⁴ *Philippians*, p. 244.

eousness, i.e. “the one from the Law” and “righteousness from God”. The first of these does not disappear, but continues to exist along with the second.

It ought to be said that Aletti’s proposition does not throw some new light on simply understanding the text. Let us begin from his final conclusions. The statement that the difference between one and the other righteousness does not rely on their excluding one another and that “my” no longer means “achieved by my own efforts” was already pointed out by Sanders¹⁵ and Dunn¹⁶. Translation of one of the objects as the predicative and preceding it with “as” only supports that, which was already pointed out by others, i.e. that “not mine” does not accent someone’s own contribution, but only the fact of its existence together with righteousness from God. The apostle stresses the adherence to one and not the other. Aletti arrives at a similar understanding of the text as Sanders or Dunn, who do not disturb its structure in this way. Completing the text by the repeated clause is not therefore necessary. Let us, however, take a look to see if the completion of the text is appropriate.

The proposed arrangement of the clauses does not at all prove that they are in the contrast as Aletti says. If the contrast does not rest on “my righteousness” and “God’s righteousness” then it ought to rest on the other two remaining clauses, meaning on “that from the Law” and “that from faith in Christ”. In the proposed by him arrangement they form a parallel in relation to each other – similar to “not my righteousness” and “my righteousness”. Meanwhile he contrasts “that of the Law” with “righteousness from God”, which does not have a correlation in the arrangement proposed by him (see the above). He notices and clarifies it by stating that the text wants to stress that one true righteousness, coming from God, is righteousness by faith. Nevertheless, immediately he asks the question how Paul can state that righteousness from the Law does not come from God, which is confirmed by Scripture, and he explains this by pointing out that the apostle’s statement is unusually brief¹⁷. His argumentation is entangling. On the level of the apostle’s motivation one contradicts the other: either Paul is silent about the fact that righteousness from the Law also comes from God with the goal of trans-

¹⁵ See the already cited studies: *Paul and the Palestinian Judaism* and *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*.

¹⁶ See *New Perspective on Paul*.

¹⁷ *Philippians*, p. 245.

mitting a certain message, or he does it on account of the conciseness of the statement: in order not to overload the text.

The filling up of the text by Aletti is not an error in itself, since the thought introduced by him is implied in it: not having one kind of righteousness, the apostle has another. The completion of the text however breaks the structure of the statement and leads Aletti to such a contrasting of the main pair of statements that it introduces ambiguity, and even a contradiction, which he does not know how to explain: righteousness from the Law has been contrasted with God's righteousness, even though both of them come from God. Avoiding the introduced completion of the text causes that the statement obtains a balance for the clauses¹⁸, which leads to the conclusion that not only is it not essential, but, on the contrary, makes the text unclear:

not having my righteousness	but that through faith in Christ
that [coming] from the Law	righteousness [coming] from God

In the column on the right, in the omitted text fragment by Aletti should also be added “[based] on faith” which undertakes and stresses the contents of the first clause of the column on the right. In the case of the above author's proposition, we have a complete disproportion: in the left column two clauses, in the right we have as many as four. Such an expression of thought is not impossible, but does not allow mentioning the parallel structure of the statement.

Since the completion of Paul's statement in Phil 3, 9 is not at all necessary, and even disrupts the parallelism of the clauses, we will still take a look to see if Aletti appropriately interprets “not my righteousness” as a predicative, and “the one [coming] from the Law” as the direct object. According to him, the reason is the lack, then the presence of the article. First of all, the article τῆν before the second clause in the left column relates to the righteousness from the first clause. The second clause in the left column is grammatically dependent on the first. That is why the accent rests on “not my righteousness” and therefore not on “the one [coming] from the Law”. The later is only an addition and clarification for “not my righteousness”. Second, the apostle in stating that he does not have his own righteousness makes reference to something that is not present, which does not exist for him. At the moment when he says these words, he did not yet clarify that it

¹⁸ The pairs can be composed of the members: a – b, a' – b' or a – b', a' – b. This requires further consideration.

is about the righteousness from the Law (the second clause). Therefore, in referring to something which does not exist for him as righteousness in the face of God, and which still remains unidentified, he does not use the article. The apostle is dealing with something that does not really exist in the sense of getting to true righteousness – for himself (he is not seeking righteousness there), as well as for the Jews (they are erroneously seeking righteousness there).

An analysis of Aletti’s proposition leads us to the conclusion that the first part of the statement, in the negative form, has as its main object “not my righteousness” which is next clarified in the form of the addition “the one [coming] from the Law”. It is the reason we have in the second instance the article τῆν alone, referring to the term of righteousness from the previous clause (the previously mentioned dependency). If the second clause of the negative part of the statement was the main object, it would contain a noun with an article, not just the article alone. The sentence would then read: “Not having as mine, righteousness [coming] from the Law”. The present expression of thought: “not having as my righteousness, the one [coming] from the Law” causes that Aletti’s proposition is to be rejected from the grammatical point of view.

Most of all the discussion on the arrangement of the clauses and their mutual dependency, as Aletti proposes, seems to be useless for one basic reason: the apostle does not express himself in the way he proposes.

3. THE PROPOSITION FOR INTERPRETING PHIL 3, 9

At this point we will first deal with describing the dependency between particular clauses of Paul’s statement and next its theological significance.

3.1. *The Structure of the Statement*

As we stated, Schenk’s and Aletti’s propositions awaken serious doubts. The latter’s proposition disrupts the parallel structure of Paul’s statement: the first part counts two clauses, the second – four. In further examining the problem, we will refer to the two remaining propositions. Let us begin with Paul’s statement, which in full sounds as follows:

not having my righteousness	but that from faith in Christ
that [coming] from the Law	righteousness [coming] from God
	[based] on faith

The third clause of the second column, i.e. “[based] on faith” does not disrupt the parallel structure of the apostle’s statement – and it constitutes a brief conclusion. To some degree it serves as a clarification: it ties righteousness from God with faith in Jesus Christ in the first clause of the second column. The apostle wanted to give the statement a unequivocal character and that is why the phrase in the third clause, unusually short, is the solution to all doubts as to the nature of righteousness coming from God. In the climate of the discussion held on this topic and the pressure put on the part of the so-called Judaizers, it is completely understandable.

We cannot exclude that the clause “[based] on faith” has a counterpart in the introduction of the statement “not having”. This does not mean they are thematically corresponding elements, but only two elements which do not create in the text its parallel structure. Neither in fact contain correspondents, which in the case of “not having” led Aletti to fill the second part of the statement with the same expression in the positive form, i.e. “having...”. In this case the structure of Paul’s statement in Phil 3, 9 appears as follows:

<i>not having</i>	
my righteousness	but that through faith in Christ
that [coming] from the Law	righteousness [coming] from God
	<i>[based] on faith</i>

When we omit the introductory element and the end statement (cursive text), the above construction can be presented as below. We do this for a greater clarity of further analyses, in which we will refer to the particular elements of the text¹⁹.

A	B
A’	B’

Aletti contrasts “righteousness from God” with “that from the Law”, i.e. he puts together the element A’ with B’. Both elements must compose the essence of Paul’s statement. Paradoxically, for such an arrangement of the clauses, the present structure of the text speaks more strongly than the one proposed by him, in which B’ is in fact the third clause, i.e. B’²⁰. We pre-

¹⁹ The included diagram does not yet resolve the dependency between the parts of the statement. This will be the subject of our study.

²⁰ The clause “the one through faith in Christ” (B) does not have a corresponding element.

viously rejected such a possibility, even though intriguing, on account of several important reasons.

In keeping to this structure, the one where there is no interference in the text (included above), there exist two possible layouts of the contrasting clauses: pairs A – B and A' – B', as well as pairs A – B' and A' – B. The first thing which ought to be determined is the dependency or the subordination of the elements within the same part of the statement. It concerns whether the main accent in the first negative part of the statement rests on A or on A', and in the second positive part on B or on B'.

What concerns the first negative part of the statement was already determined in point 2, where we adjusted to Aletti's proposition. There we said that the main object of this part of the statement is "not my righteousness" which is next clarified in the form of the addition "that from the Law". This was determined on the basis of the grammar and the logic of the statement.

There is great difficulty present in determining the main element of the positive part of the statement, i.e. the one which constitutes the opposing pair to "not my righteousness" (A). Paul could with equal success contrast it with righteousness through faith in Christ (B), as well as the righteousness coming from God (B'). It seems that in resolving the problem, starting from the subordinate element of the negative part of the statement can help, meaning from A'. As we stated above, the one corresponding to clause A can be to an equal degree clause B, as well as B'. The situation does not look the same when in the text we search for the correspondence to clause A'. Its subordinate grammatical character, due to the use of the article *th.n*, which relates to righteousness in clause A, lets us understand that the main term of the negative part of the statement, joining clauses A and A', is the noun "righteousness". Using this term in the first clause (A) confirms only its precedent character.

The noun "righteousness" constitutes a similar leading term in the B – B' pair. The same is true in the A – A' pair, where at one time it is used directly, the second time it relates indirectly to it with the help of the article *την*. The article in the B clause can refer to righteousness in the A or B' clauses. The course of the statement can imply that *την* in the B clause, similar to *την* in A', refers to righteousness in A. Between *την* in the A' and B clauses, however, appears a strong contraposition (*ἄλλα*), which divides both parts of Paul's statement. The clearly contrasted pairs A – A' and B – B' leads one to consider if the article *την* in the B clause does not rather apply to righteousness in the B' clause. Here we have a concentric structure

of the apostle's statement, typical of the Semitic way of expressing thoughts and found in other places in his letters.

Independently of whether the article τῆν in clause B refers to righteousness in clause A or B', it certainly refers to the noun "righteousness" – and at the same time has a subordinate character. Setting a subordinate character of clause B makes us see its correspondent in clause A', which has a subordinate character in the A – A' pair. The subordinate character of clause B points to the precedent character of clause B' and to the main element of the positive part of the apostle's statement. Clause B' therefore has its contrasting element in A. In A, just as in B' the noun "righteousness" appears, which constitutes the essence (the main topic) of both parts of the statement. Both clauses, i.e. A and B', constitute the periphery of the statement. When in the concentric structure there is no central element C, the accent lies on the peripheries²¹. This is in accord with that which we said earlier, i.e. that in them appears the main topic "righteousness".

We infer that clauses A and B' in both of the parts constitute the essence of the statement. The remaining two clauses, A' and B, have a subordinate character, dependent on the earlier. In this way we tend toward the most often proposed structure of the clauses in Phil 3, 9 (see the introduction). Such an arrangement of the pairs, where the whole creates the concentric structure, causes the binding of the article τῆν in clause B with righteousness in B'. For greater clarity, we present the structure of Paul's statement with the help of the outline which we have been using till now, i.e. the pairs A – A' and B – B'. With the presently proposed structure of the clauses, the dependency between B and B' changes, meaning that B now becomes B'. This is the concentric structure of Phil 3, 9:

A	
	A'
	B'
B	

For even greater clarity of the above we present the structure in Greek. In addition, we take into account the introductory and ending elements of the statement and the conjunction which contradicts the negative and positive

²¹ Cf. Rom 11, 2-10. The peripheries here form verses 2-3 and 7-11, and constitute the main theme, i.e. the issue of Israel's unfaithfulness treated in Rom 11.

parts of the text (we do not attribute meaning to the central element²²). This is the outline of the full statement of the apostle:

μη ἔχων
 ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην
 τὴν ἐκ νόμου
 ἀλλὰ
 τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ,
 τὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην
ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει

The presented structure is based on the noun “righteousness” which constitutes the essence of Paul’s statement, that is of all four clauses. *Μη ἔχων* and *ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει* constitute its introduction and ending. In the main clauses of the statement the noun *δικαιοσύνην* appears in the full sense, however in the subordinate clauses it is in the form of the article *τὴν*. In all four cases, *δικαιοσύνην* and *τὴν* appear in accusative, creating an outline and leading thread for Phil 3, 9. The main clauses, with the noun *δικαιοσύνη*, constitute the periphery of the apostle’s essential statement.

Within the structure, we have two subordinate clauses, containing the article *τὴν*, relating to the noun *δικαιοσύνην* in each of the main clauses. In the heart of this statement we find *ἀλλὰ*, which contrasts both of the parts. In the first place, *ἀλλὰ* contrasts the main element of every part of the statement, i.e. “(not) my righteousness”²³ with “righteousness from God”. The interpretation of the text ought to be based on or come from this pair. In the second place, *avlla* contrasts the clauses dependent on the main pair, that is “that from the Law” with “that through faith in Christ”.

The proposed contrast of the confronting elements of Paul’s statement find confirmation in their similar contrast in Romans. The main contrasted with each other pair in Phil 3, 9, i.e. “(not) my righteousness” with “righteousness from God”, also finds such a similar confrontation in Rom 10, 3: “my own righteousness” and “righteousness from God”. In Paul’s Letters, we do not find any other contrast of the above clauses, for example righteousness from

²² In the concentric structure with the central element, the accent rests on it. In the case of “but” it is not the carrier of any contents. That is why it can be encompassed before the first member of the second part of the apostle’s statement.

²³ “No” is in parenthesis, because about “my righteousness”, contrasted with “righteousness from God”, the apostle states that it is not his.

God with righteousness from the Law, which strongly speaks to the advantage of such a contrast of the above pair in Phil 3, 9. Righteousness from the Law in his Letters is contrasted with righteousness by faith (Rom 10, 5 and 6; cf. 4, 13).

As we mentioned, Paul never contrasts righteousness from God with that from the Law, and at the same time never confronts them with one another, whereas Aletti contrasts these pairs as opposed to each other. In his view, they point to two sources of the origin of righteousness. But immediately he raises doubt, which he enigmatically explains, that righteousness through the Law, as contrasted with righteousness from God, i.e. through faith in Christ, does not come from God. Here we might have to see the reason as to why the apostle never does this. The proposed by Aletti contrast of the main clauses of Paul's statement in Phil 3, 9 becomes even more dubious. He perceives the ambiguity which his proposition introduces, but so intriguing and novel seemed to him the completion of the positive part of the statement that he went after his own discovery, not after what the text suggests.

3.2. Theological Interpretation

In the above presented concentric structure the negative equivalent of "righteousness from God" is "my righteousness". The contrast of the two main clauses confronts two positions: searching for one's own path to righteousness (A) and accepting righteousness given by God (B). The positive side of the statement does not bring up any doubt as to the nature of "righteousness from God": it is "that of faith in Christ" (B' + the addition: "[based] on faith"). But how do we understand the nature of "(not) my righteousness" in relation to "that from the Law"?

Let us return again to Aletti's proposition, that clause A be understood "as my righteousness" and not "my righteousness". "As" changes the meaning of the statement. It does not therefore concern "my" righteousness in the sense of one's own efforts, but righteousness from the Law, given by God, about which the apostle says that he does not claim it to be his own, i.e. "as my righteousness". It means that he claims his righteousness to be from God. "As" introduces a new sense to the statement: the apostle does not speak about something which does not exist objectively (one's own erroneous conception) but about something which really exists (righteousness from the Law). Such an interpretation made Aletti fill up the positive part of the statement with the introducing: "[...] but [having as my righteousness]" The

apostle states, according to Aletti, that he does not claim as his own (“as my”) righteousness from the Law, but the one from God.

The basic question arises, which Aletti also asked: could Paul have stated that he does not claim to be his righteousness that from the Law, given by God, which always finds its expression in God’s commandments? Furthermore, could he contrast it with the righteousness from God in the sense of mutually excluding each other (ἀλλὰ)? He could only do so in the case when hope for righteousness was ascribed to “that from the Law”. This implies an erroneous understanding of the role and meaning of righteousness from the Law. Claiming righteousness from the Law as “not my” implies understanding it from the point of view of the Jews²⁴. As a result the statement “not having as my righteousness, that from the Law” takes on a meaning of one’s own inquiries and efforts (cf. Rom 10, 3). “As” introduces an ambiguity: implying in clause A righteousness by the Law, given by God, it contrasts it with the righteousness from God.

Based on the above reasons, we reject the translation of clause A in the sense of righteousness achieved by obeying the Law²⁵. This means that “(not) my righteousness” should be understood in a different sense, i.e. other than “righteousness from the Law” and in contrast to “righteousness from God”.

How therefore ought we to understand “(not) my righteousness” in Phil 3, 9a? This requires previously establishing how one ought to understand the expression “that from the Law” and whether this is equal to righteousness from the Law, which is universally accepted. Let us attempt to determine this on the basis of the grammatical dependency between clauses A – A’. The article *th.n* in clause A’ relates to “my righteousness” (A). This means that in the expression “that from the Law” τῆν relates to an erroneous understanding of the way to righteousness, which the apostle does not claim as his own, and which contains the same meaning of righteousness as in the expression “my righteousness”. “That” (τῆν) in A’ refers to “my righteousness” (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην). “That” remains in relation to “Law” (ἐκ νόμου), i.e. to the Law of Moses. In this case “that (my righteousness) from the Law” is righteousness, which is based on the Law (its interpretation?), but is not “righteousness from the Law”, given by God. The phrase “that from the Law”

²⁴ In the sense of God’s commandments, it constantly remained the apostle’s righteousness.

²⁵ “As” can remain, if it does not point to righteousness from the Law.

is not equal to righteousness from the Law, but remains similar or identical in meaning to “my righteousness”.

The relationship between “not my righteousness” and “that from the Law” (A – A’) causes a lot of difficulties for the scholars. According to some of them, it ties an erroneous concept of the way to righteousness (“my”) with righteousness from the Law (“that from the Law”). If we understand this last in the sense of righteousness given by God, we have at the same time a negative and a positive element, which remain in a contrasting relationship to B – B’. On the thematical level it disrupts any parallel or concentric structure (this is what Aletti wanted to avoid²⁶). One of these structures requires a strong contrast (ἄλλα), which divides the text into two opposite parts. Contrasting both parts of the statement with each other causes one to see in the clause “that from the Law” a negative meaning, different from “righteousness by the Law”.

The negative sense of both clauses of the first pair (A – A’), that is in the sense of the erroneous understanding of the given Law in matters of getting to righteousness, removes the previously pointed out difficulties. Therefore, what is “(not) my righteousness,” contrasted with “righteousness from God” and not equal to “righteousness by the Law”? These two relationships in which remains “(not) my righteousness” narrow its meaning. The fact that it is contrasted with righteousness coming from God means that it comes from man. At the same time it is not in accord with God’s design, which forces a person to see in it one’s personal way to righteousness, a personal (“my”) inquiry on how to obtain it.

“My righteousness” has an exclusively erroneous meaning in understanding the way to righteousness, since it entails a path other than the one pointed out by God. The fact that erroneous inquiries/efforts have as a basis the Law of Moses specifies that personally attaining righteousness remained in close relationship with that Law. In what relationship? Light is shed here by another key occurrence, used by Paul in relation to this topic, that is “the deeds of the Law”. Fulfilling the commandments of the Law would lead to the conviction that the essential condition was fulfilled for reaching a state of righteousness in the sight of God²⁷.

²⁶ His interpretation of the text is acceptable if in itself it does not contradict righteousness by the Law with that from God. But “but” says against that.

²⁷ Here we do not understand by this the concept of self-righteousness, proposed among others by R. Bultmann, as if a man through his own efforts obtained righteousness. It remains a gift from God.

In this way we can specify the nature of “(not) my righteousness” in Phil 3, 9a. It is an erroneous understanding of righteousness from the Law, given by God. This means the conviction, that on the way to fulfilling the commandments one can reach a state of righteousness in the face of God. Meanwhile God, giving the commandments and teaching us to keep them (cf. Kg 18, 5; Deut 30, 8 ff.) did not relate them with the possibility of obtaining righteousness in the sense of being justified, but only a righteous way of life. The reward was his blessing in everyday life (cf. Kg 18, 5), not eternal life. From an analysis of the text in Phil 3, 9, we see as a result that the Jews arrived at the conviction that the gift of righteousness can be obtained only as a result of fulfilling the Law.

In relation to the above, let us yet refer to “their own” righteousness in Rom 10, 3. It appears there as an erroneous understanding of the way to righteousness, since it is in opposition to God’s righteousness, as in Phil 3, 9. “(Not) my righteousness” directly relates to “their own” righteousness in Rom 10, 3²⁸. Therefore, why does Paul, in Philippians, use the possessive pronoun “my” and does not speak of “their own” righteousness? This results from the course of the statement, in which the apostle speaks about himself all the time, that is, about that which previously was of value to him, and which currently presents itself as rubbish. In Romans, the perspective is different (Israel), that is why the apostle speaks about their own righteousness. In both cases we are dealing with the same concept of righteousness, that is one’s personal path, meaning with something erroneous, since it is in opposition to righteousness from God.

We can now specify the meaning of the expression: “That from the Law”. The expression remains in strict grammatical and thematical relation to “my righteousness”. “That from the Law” – as we stated previously – has a negative meaning, that is “that (my righteousness) from the Law”, and in no way is equal with “righteousness by the Law” given by God. “That (my righteousness) by the Law” is tied to the Law of Moses, but only through the fact of its being derived from this Law. Thus, in our conviction, the expression “that from the Law” ought to be understood as “that [erroneously derived] from the Law”. The Apostle therefore states that it does not rely on the concept of righteousness being a result of erroneously expecting that the Law of Moses will give that, which it does not promise. In other words, he does not rely on erroneous hope for righteousness as a result of fulfilling the Law

²⁸ See: D u n n, *New Perspective on Paul*, p. 367-368.

(“my righteousness”). Certainly, the Law of Moses ought to be fulfilled, but righteousness ought to be sought in turning to God and accepting Jesus Christ.

The proposed interpretation of the clauses A and A' (the negative sense) gives the logical counterbalance to the positive pair. In the presented concentric structure of the text, the main clauses of the statement are contrasted with each other, i.e. the *origin* of righteousness (coming from the person (“my”) and from God), as well as contrasting the subordinate pairs, i.e. the *way* of obtaining it (on the basis of an erroneous interpretation of the Law and through faith in Christ).

As concerns the contrasted with each other subordinate elements, in the reading of Phil 3, 9 they do not find any equivalent in the apostle's letters, while the main pair does. The answer lies in the expression “that from the Law,” which does not at all have a literary equivalent in his letters. It however does have an equivalent in meaning in the form of “works of the Law” as in Gal 3, 10 f. or Rom 9, 32, where they are ascribed hope for righteousness. “Works of the Law” are put there in contrast with righteousness through faith (in Christ). In such a situation, the subordinate pair in Phil 3, 9 functions in a similar way to other places of the apostle's writings.

We can now present Paul's statement in the full reading in the form of a concentric structure (“but” in it only fulfills a contrasting function, not the central element). Here it is:

not having
my righteousness,
the one [erroneously derived] from the Law,
but
the one through faith in Christ,
righteousness from God
[based] on faith

In the proposed interpretation of Phil 3, 9 all of the elements of the contrasted parts remain in the same relationship in respect to each other. Not only the main pair but also the subordinate pair are contrasted with each other. In some of the current propositions, the subordinate pair contrasted righteousness from the Law and from faith in Christ, i.e. two realities which complement each other, even though both parts of the statement are contrasted with each other. This posed a certain difficulty and forced finding other solutions. If “not my righteousness” was translated as Aletti does, in the sense of “as not mine,” and understood as righteousness by the Law (in

the positive sense), which the apostle does not acknowledge as his own, then “righteousness by the Law” remains in opposition to “righteousness from God”. This is not true, since both complement each other. What is more, at the same time the apostle speaks of righteousness by the Law, that he does not recognize it as his own. It is as if he were to say that God’s commandments are not his commandments. Here, it is difficult to speak about Paul doing away with righteousness by the Law for righteousness through faith. We must speak of a certain evolution: some time ago he erroneously placed his entire hope for righteousness on the first, now he places it on the second, but he still practices the first (God’s commandments), since he already knows its appropriate place in the God’s design.

Both subordinate clauses of Paul’s statement have a clarifying character. In the positive part of the statement, the subordinate clause B’ clarifies the way of obtaining righteousness from God (B). This way is believing in Jesus Christ. In turn, in the negative pair, the subordinate clause A’ clarifies that one’s own way to righteousness (A) was based on an erroneous understanding of the role of “righteousness from the Law”. Simply speaking, it was judged that the way to be acknowledged by God as righteous was to fulfill the commandments contained in the Law. Whoever fulfills them could count on being justified by God.

The proposed interpretation of Phil 3, 9 does not understand “my righteousness” in the strict sense of its exclusivity (related with Israel), as Dunn presents in his proposition. In respect to Sander’s proposition, “my righteousness” goes in the direction of being specified, since it points to the concrete error of Israel and the reason for not accepting Christ. In turn, in respect to the opinion represented by Bultmann, it ascribes a similar significance to fulfilling the Law, but transfers the weighty point from self-righteousness (relying on one’s merits and boasting of them) to expecting righteousness as a gift from God, received as a result of fulfilling the Law.

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USPRAWIEDLIWIENIE Z WIARY W Flp 3, 9
ANALIZA LITERACKO-TEOLOGICZNA

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Przedmiot studium stanowi wypowiedź apostoła Pawła z Flp 3, 9. Tekst rzuca ważne światło, obok Ga i Rz, na Pawłowe rozumienie usprawiedliwienia z wiary w Jezusa Chrystusa. Omawiani autorzy dostrzegają dwa zasadnicze problemy: 1) jak rozumieć „moją sprawiedliwość” w pierwszej części wypowiedzi, 2) które z członów każdej z dwóch przeciwstawnych części stanowią jądro wypowiedzi i odpowiadają sobie wzajemnie. W wyniku przeprowadzonego studium doszliśmy do wniosku, że trudno jest mówić o wyzbyciu się przez Pawła sprawiedliwości z Prawa dla sprawiedliwości z wiary. Obie pochodzą od Boga i się dopełniają. Wyrażenie w 3, 9a: „ta z Prawa” nie jest równoznaczne sprawiedliwości z Prawa i należy je rozumieć jako błędną interpretację tej drugiej. Ta błędna interpretacja sprawiedliwości z Prawa – to sprawiedliwość, o której Paweł mówi, że nie jest jego („nie mając mojej sprawiedliwości”). Flp 3, 9 jest świadectwem rozwoju Pawłowej świadomości: kiedyś błędnie pokładał całą nadzieję na usprawiedliwienie w sprawiedliwości z Prawa, teraz pokłada ją w wierze w Chrystusa, ale nadal praktykuje pierwszą (Boże przykazania), znając już jej właściwe przeznaczenie w zamyśle Boga.

Key words: justification by faith, The Epistle to the Philippians.

Słowa kluczowe: usprawiedliwienie z wiary, List do Filipian.