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ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S AND PHILIP MELANCHTHON'S VIEWS OF
JUSTIFICATION (ΔΙΚΑΙΩΣΙΣ) IN ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES, WITH SPECIAL
ATTENTION TO HOW THEIR RESPECTIVE INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENTS
INFLUENCED THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

by

Cameron Davis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

History

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2015

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ABSTRACT

St. John Chrysostom's and Philip Melanchthon's Views of Justification (δικαιωσις) in St. Paul's Epistles, with Special Attention to How Their Respective Intellectual Environments Influenced Their Interpretations

by

Cameron Davis, Master of Arts

Utah State University, 2015

Major Professor: Dr. Norman Jones
Department: History

This thesis compares how Christian thinkers John Chrysostom (349-407 CE) and Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560 CE) understood the theological concept of justification as found in Paul's epistle to the Romans, and how their respective intellectual environments influenced their understandings of justification. Through detailed analysis of how Chrysostom and Melanchthon defined the theological concepts underlying their views of justification, it is demonstrated that, while their descriptions of justification often seem amicable, these apparent similarities are superficial. Their primary disagreement rests in their understandings of righteousness, which, for Chrysostom, was the outcome of a synergistic process wherein the faithful Christian gradually became, in actuality, more righteous by cooperating with the will and grace of God. Furthermore,

Chrysostom viewed righteousness as a distinct stages in one's struggle for salvation that followed one's justification. Melancthon rejected the notion that human beings themselves could become righteous, instead positing that faithful Christians are justified and simultaneously declared righteous by God based solely on their trust in the saving power of Christ's atoning death.

(75 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

St. John Chrysostom's and Philip Melanchthon's Views of Justification (δικαιωσις) in St. Paul's Epistles, with Special Attention to How Their Respective Intellectual Environments Influenced Their Interpretations

Cameron Davis

The objective of this thesis is to provide insights into why John Chrysostom (349-407 CE), who was the most prolific scriptural commentator in early, Eastern Christianity, understood the core theological concept of justification differently than Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560 CE), who was the first, and one of the most influential, theologians of the Protestant Reformation. Furthermore, because of their prominent positions within their respective faith movements, their perspectives reveal broader implications regarding how Christians within their respective periods and geographical locations were interpreting Christian scripture, and how the ideological currents were influencing their interpretations.

By understanding what led Chrysostom and Melanchthon to their irreconcilable interpretations of the theological concept of justification, modern historians, theologians, and Christians in general will be better equipped to understand the history and ideas that differentiate Protestant Christianity from Eastern Christian traditions. Such an

understanding will promote and support productive, reasonable dialogue in an era often plagued by irrational, passionate religious and theological disputes.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the intellectual history of Christianity, few theologians have been as prolific or as influential as John Chrysostom (c. 349-407 CE) and Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560 CE). In his homilies Chrysostom provided some of the earliest and most extensive commentaries on the New Testament and Christian theology. Because of his contributions he is considered "...the most comprehensive commentator on the Pauline epistles from the patristic era,"¹ and his commentaries have secured him a place of honor among various denominations, including Melanchthon's Lutheranism. Melanchthon was the first systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation, and like Chrysostom provided an impressive collection of theology and Pauline commentary. Both devoted a substantial amount of thought to the Christian concept of justification² and, as a result, have influenced how it is understood as few other theologians have. However, while both rely on the Pauline epistles to construct their ideas, the summations of their respective interpretations of justification are quite distinct. Historians and theologians have yet to provide an assessment of the intellectual factors that led Chrysostom and Melanchthon to their contrasting perspectives. This thesis will analyze Chrysostom's and Melanchthon's constructions of justification in light of their respective the intellectual environments.³

¹ Margaret Mitchell, "The Archetypal Image: Chrysostom's Portraits of Paul," *The Journal of Religion* 75, no.1 (1995): 13

² In my thesis, justification refers to St. Paul's use of "δικαίωσις" and the way in which Chrysostom and Melanchthon understood St. Paul's use of the term.

³ In this thesis, intellectual environment refers to the most influential ideas and perspectives to which Chrysostom and Melanchthon were exposed.

It will be demonstrated that the way in which they understood terms central to justification theology, such as death, sin, baptism, and most importantly, justification and righteousness, led to irreconcilable views in how they understood not only justification, but also the human condition within the justification narrative. More specifically, this study will demonstrate that the crucial disparity between Chrysostom's and Melancthon's respective views on justification is rooted in their distinctive understandings of righteousness and the mechanics of justification itself.

It is my hope that this study will also provide broader insights into how early Eastern Christian understandings of justification differed from those of the Reformation's first theologians.

Scholarship on both St. John Chrysostom and Philip Melancthon is extensive and diverse and, while few scholars specifically address Chrysostom's interpretation of justification, there is a treasury of works related to this topic that are invaluable for understanding their respective intellectual environments, resources, and educations. However, since there has been little scholarly conversation about Chrysostom's views of justification, his own words will be assessed to discover his perspectives. That said, there are select works that detail patristic interpretations of justification. For instance, Chapter 7 of Maurice Wiles's *The Divine Apostle*⁴ comes nearest to offering a published study of Chrysostom's view of justification by focusing on how exegetes in the early Church understood the relationship between faith and works. This chapter surveys both Western thinkers like St. Augustine, Alexandrian scholars such as Origen, and notable

⁴ Maurice Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretations of St. Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

Antiochenes Theodore of Mopsuesta and St. John Chrysostom. Bradley R. Cochran's article, "The Superiority of Faith: John Chrysostom's Eastern Theology of Justification"⁵ argues that Chrysostom's view of justification was a decidedly Eastern interpretation, and thus provides invaluable insights for this thesis. Likewise, Vasilios Nanos' *Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification According to His Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans*⁶ provides a crucial, systematic exposition of John Chrysostom's homilies on justification. Margaret Mitchell has written extensively on how Chrysostom saw St. Paul as a person. Her book, *The Heavenly Trumpet*,⁷ details the praise and descriptions Chrysostom sketched of his favorite saint, revealing the ways in which Chrysostom's love for St. Paul the author influenced his interpretations of St. Paul's epistles.

Several works describe both St. John Chrysostom's classical and Christian educations and intellectual environments. Raffaella Cribiore's monograph, *The School of Libanius*,⁸ describes the rhetorical institution at which Chrysostom received his early education in classics and oration under the famous sophist Libanius. D.S. Wallace-Hadrill's *Christian Antioch*⁹ adumbrates the thought currents that were present in the

⁵ Bradley R. Cochran, "The Superiority of Faith: John Chrysostom's Eastern Theology of Justification," accessed February 4, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/5610613/The_Superiority_of_Faith_John_Chrysostoms_Eastern_Theology_of_Justification.

⁶ Archimandrite Vasilios (Christophoros) Nanos, "Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification According to His Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans" (Durham: Durham University Press, 1991), Accessed November 21, 2014, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/6061/1/6061_3412.PDF?UkUDh:CyT.

⁷ Margaret Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

⁸ Raffaella Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁹ D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Christian School of Antioch from the second through eighth centuries CE. Especially relevant is chapter 2 in which Wallace-Hadrill explains the exegetical tradition in the Antiochene School. Both of these texts reveal how indebted Chrysostom's oratorical methods and theological ideas were to his education and intellectual environment, despite his outspoken denunciation of Libanius following his baptism.

During the advent of the Reformation, the humanist scholar Philip Melanchthon rose as both Martin Luther's right hand and his theologian. Luther, however, plays a minor role in this thesis in order to dispel the notion that Melanchthon was disproportionately dependent on Luther for his theology. While Luther undoubtedly affected Melanchthon's Reformation theology, it is likewise the case that Melanchthon affected Luther's. Thus focus is instead placed on the role Melanchthon's intellectual environment apart from Luther had in shaping his ideas.

Melanchthon's theological positions are derived from his *Loci Communes Theologici*, published in 1521. In addition to Philip Melanchthon's own work on the subject of justification, explained most fully in his treatise *Loci Communes Theologici*, there is extensive commentary on his ideas. Lowell C. Green's article, "Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development Under Luther and Melanchthon"¹⁰ demonstrates how central the ideas of Martin Luther and Melanchthon were to the Reformation's conception of justification, and the ways in which the scholars and ideas of their era shaped their ideas. These articles explain the discourse surrounding justification and reveal the diverse perspectives surrounding the concept during the

¹⁰ Lowell C. Green, "Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development Under Luther and Melanchthon." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 4, 1 (April 1973).

sixteenth century CE. Heiko Oberman's *Masters of the Reformation* surveys the academic thought of the Late Middle Ages, peering into both German universities and the thought of notable individuals such as the Roman Catholic humanist Desiderius Erasmus and Philip Melanchthon, and highlighting the education and ideas Melanchthon was incorporating and reacting against. Manfred Hoffman's *Rhetoric and Theology* focuses on Erasmus's hermeneutic methods, which are relevant because Erasmus was both one of the most influential and widely circulated intellectuals of the sixteenth century and was chief among Melanchthon's ideological influences. Together, these works provide a complementary and substantial picture of Melanchthon's intellectual world.

John Chrysostom is selected for this study above other commentators in the Early Church because he is the most prolific scriptural commentator among the eight Great Church Fathers.¹¹ Further, the Eastern proximity of his intellectual environment, which Melanchthon himself, at one point, thought would reflect their scriptural interpretations and theological formulas, provides an interesting comparison to Philip Melanchthon's Reformation Christian perspective. Chrysostom's theological and rhetorical reputations are exemplified by his very title, which means "golden mouth," and his scriptural and theological homilies are still widely available today thanks to the efforts of Sir Henry Saville (1549-1622) upon whose translation of Chrysostom the widely-used *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*¹² volumes rely. These volumes will be the primary sources used in this thesis for Chrysostom's scriptural homilies.

¹¹ The other seven Great Church fathers are: Ambrose, Athanasius, Augustine, Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory the Great, and Jerome.

¹² Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996).

Philip Melanchthon is selected for his unmatched contribution to the Reformation's initial theology, and because he was the first systematic theologian of the Reformation. His friendship with Luther provided him recognition and prestige beyond what was already afforded by his inherited social status. As Luther's second-in-command, Melanchthon became one of his two most successors following Luther's death. His mastery of the Greek language and scripture made him the obvious theologian upon whom Lutheranism depended for its earliest theological formulations. Further, as a key contributor to the premier theology of the Reformation there is much biographical information about his life and scholarship on his extant theological works.

The intellectual environments that shaped Chrysostom's and Melanchthon's respective interpretations of justification are at the forefront of this study because, although the minds of both men were undoubtedly shaped by social, environmental, and economic factors, it was ultimately the ideas and the languages through which they were conveyed that influenced their perspectives on justification. Both Chrysostom and Melanchthon were recipients of rigorous educations, and their respective educations will be detailed in order to highlight important commonalities and distinctions important to shaping their respective theological understandings. A brief overview of Libanius, the famous Greek pedagogue of Sophistic rhetoric and instructor of Chrysostom, delineates Chrysostom's educational pedigree. Libanius's autobiography and secondary works on him, such as Rafaella Cribiore's *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch*, portray Chrysostom's early education and intellectual environment. D.S. Wallace-Hadrill's *Christian Antioch* provides an overview of Chrysostom's education in the theological

School of Antioch under Diodore of Tarsus. The school was known for its literal and typological interpretations of scripture, and Diodore, Chrysostom's mentor, was a champion of Nicene orthodoxy and opponent of Emperor Julian's anti-Christian reforms. Chrysostom adopted many of the exegetical methods and ideologies of the Antiochene School, but ultimately employed a moderate, moralistic interpretive method.

An outline of Melanchthon's education and intellectual environment, will be offered by surveying the academic methodologies of the sixteenth century as explained in Manfred Hoffman's *Rhetoric and Theology* and Heiko Obermann's *Masters of the Reformation*. Textual availability, and the provenance of available texts, is essential to understanding how Melanchthon was educated and knowing the resources to which he did and did not have access. The manuscripts -and in Melanchthon's case published and circulated books- available to Chrysostom and Melanchthon are highlighted to further illumine the intellectual environments of each theologian.

Chrysostom's ideas will be abstracted by comparing his views on justification as expressed in his homilies on the Pauline epistles with his beliefs about the relationship between faith and works as expressed in his commentaries on the Four Gospels. Melanchthon's understanding of justification is drawn from his *Loci Communes Theologici*.¹³ Because the Four Gospels and the Pauline Epistles were initially written and circulated in Greek, understanding how Chrysostom and Melanchthon learned, interpreted, and used the Greek terms essential to this study is crucial. Chrysostom was familiar with the upper-class Attic Greek popularized by Alexander the Great from his

¹³ Wilhelm Pauck's English translation found in *Melanchthon and Bucer* will be used.

literary education under Libanius. Because Greek was his native language, and because his exposure to Greek literature was likely more extensive than Melanchthon's, it is probable that Chrysostom had a fuller understanding of the Greek term δικαίωσις. This will be determined by comparing his interpretation of Paul's use of δικαίωσις with the employment of δικη-root terms in Greek literature predating Christianity, such as in Demosthenes' orations, and assessing whether Chrysostom's interpretation better conforms to traditional use of the Greek terms. It is difficult to determine with certainty from where Melanchthon acquired his knowledge of Greek, but clarity is achieved by surveying the Greek texts and resources available in the first half of the 16th century.

In summary, this thesis will detail John Chrysostom's and Philip Melanchthon's distinct interpretations of justification (δικαίωσις) by understanding how they understood the terms central to the doctrine, and by studying how their respective educations and intellectual environments influenced these definitions. This will be accomplished through studying their own words, secondary descriptions of the worlds in which they learned, and by assessing how closely their respective interpretations of relevant Greek terms conformed to their use in Greek literature predating Christianity. Ultimately, it will be shown that, at the root of their conflicting views, particularly of justification and righteousness, is what problem they believed justification solved and, more importantly, how they viewed humanity itself.

CHAPTER II

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S INTERPRETATION OF JUSTIFICATION

And the Intellectual Factors That Shaped His Perspective

Part I

In order to properly understand the theological positions Chrysostom adopted and detailed in his homilies, one must know the aspects of his early life and intellectual environment, especially those ideas and attitudes that lend understanding to the formation of his conceptions of justification. An exploration of his early life and social status as a Greek-speaking Syrian in Antioch, followed by a more exhaustive account of his rhetorical training under the famous sophist Libanius, reveal the source of Chrysostom's oratorical eloquence. It was also from Libanius that Chrysostom learned to focus on the moral, pedagogical aspects of a text. The theological formation Chrysostom received at the famous School of Antioch under Diodore of Tarsus sheds some on his understanding of death's significance in the Christian narrative and on his Christology. However, Chrysostom did not incorporate the Nestorian Christology of Diodore and many of his Antiochene peers into his own theological framework. A contrast with the School of Alexandria reveals the broader Christian intellectual tradition in which Chrysostom was operating, and adumbrates the ideological currents to which the Antiochene School was responding. Finally, Chrysostom's view of accepted scripture and the evangelist St. Paul, whose epistles are most relevant to this thesis, conclude this section. These factors will

provide crucial insights into the moral and intellectual aspects of Chrysostom's view of justification which were influenced by his respective education.

Chrysostom was born in 349 CE¹ in Antioch to parents of high social status in the city. Besides his mother's name, Anthusa, and his father's occupation, military officer, little is known about his parents. Based on the extant information that is available, historians generally agree that Anthusa was a Christian, and was widowed at a young age.² As a result of his mother's social status, Chrysostom received the education standard for upper-class Greek males, who began learning to read, write, and perform basic arithmetic at age seven. Following this elementary education, most often accomplished at home under the direction of a personal tutor, Greek boys were grounded in the major classical works of notable poets, such as Demosthenes and Homer, and philosophers like Plato. This educational stage would last until approximately age fourteen when young men entered schools of rhetoric. As J.N.D. Kelly highlights, this Hellenistic, pagan-rooted education may have been seen as objectionable to Christians like Chrysostom's mother, but, in most cases would have been the only option for parents who wished for their child to receive the education necessary for prestige and economic security in Hellenistic society.³

Chrysostom received his rhetorical education from the renowned sophist and teacher of rhetoric, Libanius. Born in 314 CE, Libanius trained in Athens, where the

¹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 4. Most scholars place the date of Chrysostom's birth between 344 and 349 CE. Kelly favors 349 CE as he believes it best fits other evidences pertaining to Chrysostom's life, such as the point at which he entered into rhetorical school, likely at age 14.

² This claim is supported by most contemporary scholarship, including Kelly's *Golden Mouth* (p. 5) and Allen's and Mayer's *John Chrysostom* (p. 5).

³ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 6.

finest rhetorical schools of his time were found. He excelled in the rhetorical art and, as a result, in 354 CE was appointed the official sophist of Antioch, and headed its municipal school of rhetoric. Unlike his two most famous pupils, Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia, Libanius was committed to Hellenistic pagan religion, recognizing that it was in this faith that the classical tradition he loved was rooted, and he saw the relationship between the two as inseparable.⁴ His school, however, was open to students from various religious traditions and he supported them equally in their educational endeavors regardless of their convictions.⁵

Libanius's was the only municipal school of rhetoric in Antioch, although his institution was required to compete with well-known private instructors who lectured in temples or the homes of Antioch's elite.⁶ Only male students, typically of high socioeconomic status who could afford enrollment, attended the institution as it was socially unacceptable for women of this period, within Hellenistic society, to receive a formal education.⁷ Unlike modern schools that emphasize an interdisciplinary curriculum, Libanius's focused only on rhetoric, which he held to be the most superior art.⁸ The curriculum consisted primarily of the works of classical authors like Homer and Demosthenes, considered the best of all orators.⁹ When necessary, Libanius would supplement his own compositions to provide a fuller curriculum for his students. In

⁴ Raffaella Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 2. Although never officially enrolled in Libanius's rhetorical school, Emperor Julian was also among those devoted to Libanius and his pedagogy.

⁵ Libanius, *Autobiography and Select Letters I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 5.

⁶ Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch*, 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 30-31: Women given the opportunity to receive an education relied on private tutors for their instruction.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

addition to the school's academic emphases, it promoted the sheltered lifestyle to which the majority of pupils had grown accustomed in their upper class environments. This reinforcement entailed an emphasis on moral behavior and other virtues as espoused by the great poets and philosophers, which Libanius saw as essential to a good life and proper education.¹⁰ It is also reminiscent of Chrysostom's homiletic style which sought to convey the moral tenets of scripture to laity.

Libanius's program of study was very rigorous and he refused any alterations to what he saw as a tested and proven methodology. To succeed, students were often required to devote time outside of lessons, and even during summers when school was not in session, to mastering the classics and privately reciting orations. Through this trying period, spanning two or more years, it was Libanius's hope that students would acquire the skills of logic, language, and oration essential to the rhetorical art. This could not be completed, though, by a mechanical process of memorization and recitation. Students had to be able to carefully assess each unique situation and devise persuasive arguments without prior preparation.¹¹ Libanius insured their success by personally providing a regular diagnosis of their abilities in these categories. Libanius recognized that the best form of advertisement for his school was the students he sent into society and thus he did everything in his power to ensure their excellence.¹²

In his youth, Chrysostom grew to love the entertainments of Antioch,¹³ which, as a cultural hub of the eastern Roman Empire, offered various diversions to the city's

¹⁰ Ibid., 31.

¹¹ Ibid., 153-155.

¹² Ibid., 121.

¹³ Ibid., 28.

inhabitants. From Libanius he acquired a great love for the classics and the Attic Greek language as well as the rhetorical art which would remain visible in his homilies and writings throughout his life. Eventually, like his fellow Christian St. Gregory of Nazianzus, who referred to rhetoric as “sophistic mania,”¹⁴ Chrysostom, following his baptism, denounced the amusements of his youth. In *On Babylas* he criticized his once beloved teacher Libanius’s methods, referring to classical rhetoric as prideful self-promotion and vanity of words.¹⁵ This denunciation is all the more tragic since Chrysostom had been hailed as an almost pure Atticist comparable to the great Demosthenes. Libanius supposedly stated that his successor “ought to have been John had not the Christians stolen him from us.”¹⁶

Chrysostom received a robust and invaluable education under Libanius and, despite his outspoken renunciation of Libanius and his rhetorical education, relics of his classical education are apparent in his textual interpretation, homiletic style, and the oratory methods. For instance, although not opposed to occasional socialization and merriment, Libanius favored an austere life of virtue and moderation. He did not tolerate slackness and saw the entertainments offered in Antioch as detrimental both to the study of rhetoric and the virtuous life.¹⁷ After his conversion to Christianity, Chrysostom adopted an ascetic life that likewise involved denunciation of Antioch’s frivolities, condemned idleness, and emphasized moral behavior. Furthermore, Libanius emphasized the virtues and moral lessons exemplified in classical texts such as Homer’s poetry.

¹⁴ Ibid., 166.

¹⁵ Ibid., 230.

¹⁶ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 7.

¹⁷ Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch*, 28.

Chrysostom, in a similar fashion, was concerned with the moral aspects of scripture which he saw as more applicable to those whom he addressed in his homilies. This moralistic method of interpretation is significant because it distinguished Chrysostom from his peers in the Christian School of Antioch who focused on literal and historical exegesis.

St. John Chrysostom completed his rhetorical education in 367 CE¹⁸ at age eighteen and intended to pursue a career as a clerk in the *sacra scrinia*, a wing of the Roman bureaucracy. Due perhaps to his relationship with St. Meletius of Antioch¹⁹, Chrysostom received a Christian baptism around age twenty and he committed himself fully to the Church. From this event onward Chrysostom devoted himself completely to his Christian vocation and even persuaded his friends Theodore of Mopsuestia and Maximos of Seleukia to join him on his ascetic path.²⁰

St. John Chrysostom soon after began study under Diodore of Tarsus at the Christian School of Antioch.²¹ While he is perhaps known best as the mentor of Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodore gained notoriety also for his opposition to Emperor Julian's anti-Christian policies, and for his support of Nicene orthodoxy and the literal interpretive method characteristic of the fourth century School of Antioch. A few of his theological and exegetical views, such as his commitment to Nicene orthodoxy in opposition to Arianism, were accepted by Chrysostom.²² Most

¹⁸ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 14.

¹⁹ St. Meletius of Antioch, called Meletius the Confessor by JND Kelly, was the Patriarch of Antioch from 360 CE until his death in 381 CE. (New Advent).

²⁰ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 16-18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

²² Like Chrysostom, Diodore of Tarsus was from an upper class family in Antioch that provided for a formal, classical education similar to the one Chrysostom received under Libanius.

relevant was the Antiochene view of justification, as expressed by Theodore of Mopsuestia, which identifies death as the primary problem which justification means to correct.²³

By comparing the exegetical methods of the Antiochene and Alexandrian Schools, one better understands the prevalent intellectual currents of fourth century Christianity and the ideological opponents with whom Chrysostom's Antiochene peers were engaged. Whereas affiliates of the Alexandrian school, namely Origen and Clement, sought the allegorical and spiritual aspects present in scriptural passages, the School of Antioch practiced a historical, literal method of exegesis.²⁴ This literal approach, however, ought not to be understood as a crude, thoughtless method, but rather as an attempt to decipher scripture by understanding the historical contexts in which respective events were recorded in order to grasp the author's intended message. The Antiochene exegetical method was rooted primarily in a rabbinical approach that was designed specifically to protect the literary tradition by preventing excessive speculation.²⁵ For instance, while students in the Alexandrian school readily interpreted a myriad of verses in the Hebrew Bible as referents or precursors to Christ, Antiochenes, namely Diodore of Tarsus and his disciple Theodore of Mopsuestia, took such liberties only when they deemed that such a conclusion could be clearly demonstrated from the literal construction and historical context of the text.²⁶ Adherents to the Antiochene method of exegesis were

²³ Maurice Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 121-123.

²⁴ D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 35. Theodore of Mopsuestia perhaps took the strict Antiochene method of exegesis too far by denying that the suffering servant mentioned in Isaiah 53 is not Jesus Christ. This and other denials led to his being declared a heretic at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553CE.

not strictly opposed to interpreting events in the Hebrew Bible as types or precursors of New Testament events, but insisted that exegetes be conservative in their application of such types.²⁷

Debates regarding which exegetical method ought to be employed were of utmost importance to members of each respective school during the fourth century because they were concerned with humanity's salvation and believed correct interpretations of scripture would better aid one in this process.²⁸ While Chrysostom adhered more closely to the Antiochene method of interpretation throughout his life, he ultimately forged a moderate paradigm. His scriptural commentaries took the form of homilies, as opposed to the erudite scriptural commentators from the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools, and he saw exegetical debates as unavailing. Instead, much like Libanius, he emphasized the moral archetypes and lessons present in scripture in order to promote proper moral formation among the laity who he oversaw.²⁹ Because he was less concerned with exegesis and interpretive debates, Chrysostom's contributions to the Antiochene School were minimal compared to the contributions of Diodore and Theodore.³⁰ However, his homilies would ultimately win the hearts of Christendom, whereas the ideas of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia would ultimately lead to anathemas against them.

For Chrysostom, as has been the case for Christians throughout the centuries, scripture was central to his Christian faith,³¹ and while he recognized the human and

²⁷ Ibid., 33.

²⁸ Ibid., 55.

²⁹ Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 40.

³⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, 164.

³¹ Theodore Stylianopoulos, "Comments on Chrysostom, Patristic Interpretation, and Contemporary Biblical Scholarship," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 54, no. 1-4 (2009): 193.

contextual influences upon the texts emphasized by his Antiochene peers, he maintained that Christ was the true author of scripture, including Paul's epistles.³² Conforming to the Christian church to which he pledged his allegiance, he also viewed scripture as an organ of the Church, and it was absurd to speak of its authority apart from the institution that determined what would and would not be included in the scriptural canon. However, this reality did not grant the Church unchecked liberty, for it could not diverge from or contradict the doctrines that had been established in the scriptural canon. This organic view of the relationship between scripture and the institutional Church is central to Chrysostom's interpretations and is evident throughout his homilies. Because Chrysostom revered scripture, and because he studied at the Antiochene School, one may safely assume that he would not have taken excessive liberties in his interpretations and would not have intentionally diverged from what he saw as the meaning of scripture.

When commenting on St. Paul's epistles, Chrysostom often focused on St. Paul the person, presenting him as an example of what Christians can become if they live fully the Christian life.³³ Chrysostom was outspoken about his love for Paul, and even identified him as favorite, stating "I love all the saints, but I love most the blessed Paul." By the second century CE Paul's epistles were accepted as authoritative scripture throughout Christendom, and Pauline commentary soon after became a common practice in Chrysostom's Antiochene School.³⁴ Both Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia wrote extensively on the apostle, but, as was the custom of the Antiochene

³² Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 15.

³³ Chrysostom's view of St. Paul as an exemplar of Christian virtue provides an interesting contrast with St. Augustine's view of St. Paul as a warrior constantly battling his fallen nature.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

School, wrote exegetical commentaries rather than the moralistic homilies of Chrysostom.³⁵ In the end, the commentaries of Chrysostom's fellow Antiochenes, and fellow Christians in general failed to acquire the reputation and circulation of his own. "Chrysostom was the most comprehensive commentator on the Pauline epistles from the patristic era,"³⁶ and his works on Paul have been used and commended by Christians throughout the centuries, including figures of the Reformation era, Luther, Erasmus, and Calvin.³⁷ Chrysostom's love for Paul was further expressed in legends surrounding his life. According to an acquaintance of Chrysostom, he once saw Paul in Chrysostom's quarters dictating to him the things he should write,³⁸ and Chrysostom himself similarly claimed that Paul would "take possession" of him when he wrote his homilies on the evangelist.³⁹

Whether Chrysostom's love for Paul makes his interpretations of the epistles more or less representative of Paul's intended messages is a question worthy of consideration and debate. Since writers and scholars seldom address topics for which they are not passionate. Chrysostom emulated the characteristics of Paul's epistles, writing out of concern for the everyday well-being, both spiritual and otherwise, of the flock to which his messages were addressed.⁴⁰ As such the systematic and exegetical fruits of the theological principles with which they were dealing were a secondary

³⁵ Margaret M. Mitchell, "The Archetypal Image: John Chrysostom's Portraits of Paul," *Journal of Religion* 75, no.1 (1995): 42.

³⁶ Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

³⁹ Mitchell, "The Archetypal Image," 28.

⁴⁰ Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet*, 29.

concern and are therefore less apparent. Nevertheless, Chrysostom's homilies consistently reveal his mastery of and perspectives on Christian theology, including the way in which he frames and understands justification.

Part II

This section offers a preliminary summary of St. John Chrysostom's view of Christianity's salvation narrative and justification's role within it, which will then segue into more detailed examinations of each part of his formulation considered in the summary. This brief overview relies primarily on Chrysostom's own interpretation of the subject as found in his homilies on Paul's epistle to the Romans. Section one examines the ideas central to Chrysostom's perspective on justification, being the Fall of Adam as recounted in Genesis, the Hebrew law followed by the Jewish faith, and Jesus of Nazareth's fulfillment of the demands of this law. Section two examines Chrysostom's ideas in light of his educational and cultural background, specifically by comparing Chrysostom's interpretation of $\delta\iota\kappa\eta$ -root verbs with their use in the classical Greek texts of authors central to his education under Libanius. Justification as found in Paul's epistle to the Romans was understood by Melancthon and many other sixteenth century reformers as a legal, forensic concept. Whether or not such a paradigm does justice to Chrysostom's perspective will first be considered. This forensic analysis will include a brief description of the relationship Chrysostom sees between faith and works. The section will conclude by analyzing the place of Chrysostom's understanding of

justification within the entirety of fourth century Christendom by comparing his views to other fourth century Christian commentators who addressed the subject of justification.

Chrysostom's peer at the School of Antioch, Theodore of Mopsuestia, argued that the root of the problems humanity faces is mortality, resulting from the Fall of Adam. It is from here that all other problems arise, and Theodore's entire view of faith and justification is shaped by this understanding of death as the problem which Jesus of Nazareth solves.⁴¹ Chrysostom, commenting on Romans 5:12⁴², similarly identifies death as a central element of the Christian narrative:

How then did death come in and prevail? "Through the sin of one." But what means, "for that all have sinned?" This; he having once fallen, even they that had not eaten of the tree did from him, all of them, become mortal.⁴³

Chrysostom's focus is on death, a plight resulting from the sin of Adam, the father of humanity. Further, Chrysostom interprets Paul's claim that "all have sinned" not as a claim about an act that has been committed by all of humanity, but as mortality, an ailment that has been inherited. This idea is further expounded in his commentary on Romans 5:19,⁴⁴ wherein he states:

⁴¹ Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 121-123.

⁴² Romans 5:12 (NRSV): Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned.

⁴³ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 11, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 722. It is interesting that Chrysostom refers to a "sin of one" since it was both Adam and Eve, two sinners, that were responsible for humanity's fall. Further, Chrysostom himself indicates in the same passage that it was both who ate from the tree.

⁴⁴ Romans 5:19 (NRSV): For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

It is the saying that through the offence of one many were made sinners. For the fact that when he had sinned and become mortal, those who were of him should be so also, is nothing unlikely. But how would it follow that from his disobedience another would become a sinner? For at this rate a man of this sort will not even deserve punishment, if, that is, it was not from his own self that he became a sinner. What then does the word “sinners” mean here? To me it seems to mean liable to punishment and condemned to death.⁴⁵

Once again, the blame for humanity’s plight falls on Adam, and because we are, in Chrysostom’s view, the descendants of Adam, we necessarily share his mortality much like progeny often inherit the traits and ailments of their parents. For Chrysostom, the sin that is inherited from Adam by humanity is not personal guilt or a stain to be removed, but mortality, an opinion he expounds further in his *Homilia ad Neophytos*: “We baptize even infants, though they are not defiled with sin, in order that there may be given to them holiness, justice, adoption, inheritance, and the brotherhood of Christ, that they may be His members.”⁴⁶ Chrysostom does stress, however, that the death humanity faces refers not only to physical entropy, and ultimately physical death, but a complete disconnect and distortion that extends to how we perceive reality and act in the world. Humanity’s minds have been distorted, and those who rely on their own senses and

⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans,” 726.

⁴⁶ Augustine, “Against Julian,” *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 35 (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 25. Baptism, which both Paul and Chrysostom recognize as a ritual that cleanses the receiver of sin, is identified by Chrysostom as the means through which one is initiated into the Church, making it necessary whether or not one requires cleansing of personal sins.

reason rather than relying on God are subject to sin.⁴⁷ Humanity, as descendants of Adam, consequently inherit both his mortal existence and his estrangement from God.

What St. Paul identifies as the law (νόμος) in his epistle to the Romans is the law of conduct and worship given to the Hebrews, as is inferred from Romans 2:17-23,⁴⁸ and throughout his epistle it is the moral tenets of the Jewish law with which he is concerned as these verses make evident. Because human estrangement from God resulted from disobedience, a law by which the faithful can demonstrate their faithfulness to God, and thus reestablish communion with Him, is given to the Hebrew nation as a solution to humanity's plight. Chrysostom, commenting on Romans 2:21, identifies the law as a gift to the Jews that guides them towards virtuous behavior, stating that "...the Jew was not wearied with going about to seek what was to be done, but had on easy terms the Law pointing the way leading to virtue."⁴⁹ Thus God, having chosen the Hebrews as his people gave to them as a gift this law as a means to becoming righteous and honoring the covenant that existed between God and his people.

However, this law is shown to be insufficient for the salvation of humanity, for as St. Paul states, "...it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the

⁴⁷ Archimandrite Vasilios Nanos, "Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification According to His Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans" (Master's thesis, Durham University, 1991.), accessed November 21, 2014, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/6061/1/6061_3412.PDF?UkUDh:CyT, 30.

⁴⁸ Romans 2:17-23 (NRSV): ¹⁷ But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God ¹⁸ and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, ¹⁹ and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, ²¹ you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You that boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?

⁴⁹ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 667.

doers of the law who will be justified,”⁵⁰ yet “as it is written: “There is no one who is righteous, not even one.”⁵¹ While the law had the potential for being the saving power of humanity, there were none who observed its statutes. Further, Chrysostom identifies that “...not only is it possible without hearing to be a doer, but even with hearing not to be so,”⁵² emphasizing that the power of the law lies not in its possession, but in obedience to it. Further, Chrysostom states that the gentiles who through natural reason follow the law, even though seen as inferior by some Jews for having not received the law through revelation, are in a better state than Jews who have the law but do not follow it:

...he (Paul) shows that others are better than they, and, what is more better for this, that they have not received the Law, and have not that wherein the Jews seem to have an advantage over them. For on this ground he means they are to be admired, because they required not a law, and yet exhibited all the doings of the Law, having the works, not the letters, graven upon their minds.⁵³

Chrysostom, in agreement with Paul, recognizes that the power of the law lies in obedience to it, but recognizes that because it has not been observed, and thus not fulfilled by anyone, humanity remains subject to death. The Law is not in and of itself insufficient, but humanity’s inability to adhere to the Law makes it an insufficient remedy. “For what was the object of the Law? To make man righteous. But it had not the power, for no one fulfilled it.”⁵⁴ As Vasilios Nanos explains, because the Jews were

⁵⁰ Romans 2:13 (NRSV)

⁵¹ Romans 3:10 (NRSV)

⁵² Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans,” 660.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 842.

unable to fulfill its demands, the Law was temporary because it could not save, and instead prepared the way for that which would save humanity.⁵⁵

Unable to realize humanity's salvation, the law takes on a new purpose, "... for through the law comes the knowledge of sin."⁵⁶ Chrysostom offers his interpretation of Paul's intended message, stating that "...the Law accomplished the disclosure of sin to you, but it was your duty then to flee it. Since then you have not fled you have pulled the punishment more sorely on yourself, and the good deed of the Law has been made to you a supply of greater vengeance."⁵⁷ The very law that was once seen as an instrument of salvation becomes that which condemns those who having the law fail to follow it.⁵⁸ This condemnation, though is not the end of things, but prepares the way for humanity's redemption.

Chrysostom introduces Jesus of Nazareth, the individual upon whom Christianity is focused and identifies as the Messiah, as the solution to humanity's fallen condition. Paul states that "... apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."⁵⁹ The question of how a single person alone overcomes the problem of humanity's fallen nature is cryptic even when relying on the explanations offered by bulwarks of the Christian faith like Paul and Chrysostom. However, a close analysis of Chrysostom's homilies on these verses demonstrates his understanding of

⁵⁵ Nanos, "Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification," 24-25.

⁵⁶ Romans 3:20 (NRSV)

⁵⁷ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 680.

⁵⁸ This idea resonates with modern notions of culpability that see individuals who, knowing how they ought to act, act contrary to ethical norms. Individuals who act contrary to ethical norms of which they are ignorant are met with a more merciful response.

⁵⁹ Romans 3:21-22 (NRSV)

Jesus, faith, and belief, and how exactly it is that these factors justify one who believes.

Chrysostom sees Jesus as a new Adam who, rather than disobeying God and severing communion with him, perfectly obeys His statutes:

Now this is why Adam is a type of Christ... as the former became to those who were sprung from him, although they had not eaten of the tree, the cause of that death which by his eating was introduced; thus also did Christ become to those sprung from Him, even though they had not wrought righteousness, the Provider of that righteousness which through His Cross He graciously bestowed on us all.⁶⁰

When Adam disobeyed God, the result was mortality not only for Adam, but all his descendants that would follow even though these descendants bear no personal culpability for Adam's disobedience. Likewise, those united to Christ, although they themselves have not lived in perfect obedience to God's will, can overcome death through this union just as Christ, in Chrysostom's view, entered death and overcame it. Christ's sacrifice is efficacious because he, being perfect, is able to offer himself up as a perfect sacrifice.⁶¹

This union with Jesus that allows humanity to overcome death comes through the baptismal ritual for those who have faith in Christ's healing power and thus submit themselves in humility rather than relying on their own abilities. Justification must now come through this submission of faith because of humanity's inability to follow the law.⁶² For Chrysostom, the initiate's submersion into the baptismal water represents one's death

⁶⁰ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 723.

⁶¹ Nanos, "Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification," 41.

⁶² Romans 8:3 (NRSV): "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,"

to their previous life of sin, and their emerging from the water represents their rebirth, or initiation into the Christian way of life ideally characterized by turning away from sin:

What does being “baptized into His Death” mean? That it is with a view to our dying as He did. For Baptism is the Cross. What the Cross then, and Burial, is to Christ, that Baptism hath been to us, even if not in the same respects. For He died Himself and was buried in the Flesh, but we have done both to sin.⁶³

According to Chrysostom, the Christian initiate must die as Christ died, but whereas Christ died physically in order to overcome physical death along with the sins that initially led to it, the one being baptized dies only to the former, but is now justified, receiving everlasting life.

In summary, when speaking of justification, Chrysostom begins with Adam’s disobedience and subsequent fall from God’s grace, the primary consequence of which is human mortality. The Mosaic Law is first given to humanity, specifically to the Hebrew Nation, to inform one as to how they ought to live to reconcile themselves with God. Because humanity is unable through its own efforts to obey this law, they remain condemned to the powers of death. Jesus of Nazareth, both God and man, lives a perfect life and thus is able to offer his life as a perfect sacrifice, fulfilling the demands of the law. By submitting oneself through faith to Christ’s saving power, an individual is united to Christ, dying his death and rising in his resurrection. This general outline of Chrysostom’s perspective on justification reads as a standard understanding of

⁶³ Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans,” 729.

justification to which Christians of various denominations would agree. However, as with these various denominations, the disagreement lies in how specific details are interpreted.

Having now established a general overview of John Chrysostom's understanding of soteriology and justification place within, this final section on Chrysostom will focus on justification alone, examining the specific way in which he understood the term and how exactly it functions within his Christian context. This will be accomplished in four parts. First examined is how the context in which Chrysostom uses *δικη*-root verbs compares to their use in pre-Christian, Greek texts to which Chrysostom would have been exposed and thus familiarized with in his classical, Hellenistic education. As Raffaella Cribiore highlights, Demosthenes (384-322 BCE), Homer (c. 8th c. BCE), and Plato (428-348 BCE) ⁶⁴ would have been the most preeminent writers studied in Libanius' school of rhetoric, and will thus be the three authors used for this comparison.⁶⁵ Following this linguistic survey is a study of the role of legal metaphor in Chrysostom's explanation of justification, and whether the forensic model provides a proper and exhaustive framework for understanding Chrysostom's view of justification. Finally, Chrysostom's perspective of justification will be placed within his Christian context, specifically the School of Antioch, and will also be compared to one of his Christian predecessors, Clement of Rome, and two of his contemporaries, Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine of Hippo, to reveal to what extent Chrysostom's theology of justification can be seen as a continuation of earlier Christian thought, and its place in the Christian world

⁶⁴ Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch*, 150.

⁶⁵ I am not, in this first consideration, concerned with the case and mood of *δικη*-root verbs since I am merely looking for instances in which they are used in a moral or legal context.

of his time.

As in most cultures, ancient Greeks held conceptions of right and wrong, just and unjust, and, in general, ideas about the way in which things ought to be. To convey these concepts, Greek authors would most often employ δικη-root verbs, which convey concepts of justice and morality. Central to Chrysostom's education under Libanius were Greek poetry and philosophy of notable Hellenists such as Demosthenes, Homer, and Plato. Libanius emphasized proper moral formation, and would thus have no doubt focused on the expressions of justice and moral imperatives within these authors.⁶⁶ An example of such expressions is found in Demosthenes' *Against Midias*, in which he states:

I lodged a plaint in the Assembly against him *as an offender* (ᾠδικοῦν) in connection with the festival, not only for his assault on my person at the Dionysia, but for many other acts of violence during the whole period when I served as chorus-master.⁶⁷

Here Demosthenes uses the infinitive “ᾠδικοῦν” in a legal context, referring to one who has caused offense to him. He then continues, in his accusation *Against Spudias*, saying “Polyeuctus having died without male issue, I am forced to go to law (δικάζεσθαι) with the defendant in regard to the property which has been left.”⁶⁸ Here Demosthenes uses “δικάζεσθαι” to refer law, or the rules of conduct themselves, further solidifying the legal

⁶⁶ Ibid., 28, 127-128.

⁶⁷ Demosthenes, *Against Midias*, Trans. A.T. Murray, Accessed January 29, 2015. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0074>.

⁶⁸ Demosthenes, *Against Spudias*, Trans. A.T. Murray, Accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0078>.

nature of δίκη-root verbs in Demosthenes' understanding. A similar understanding is revealed in Homer's *Odyssey*, which reads:

Then I saw Minos son of Zeus with his golden scepter in his hand sitting in judgment on the dead, and the ghosts were gathered sitting and standing round him in the spacious house of Hades, to learn his *sentences* (δικαίαι) upon them.⁶⁹

This passage once again reveals the legal use of δίκη-root verbs, and being used in a text written much earlier than those of Demosthenes.

Plato's *Republic* is steeped with dialogue pertaining to how one ought to live, or what are and are not just actions. On such passage, which contains two different uses of δίκη-root verbs, reads as follows:

...with whose aid the champion of *justice* (δικαίῳ) could escape destruction, but that he would be as a man who has fallen among wild beasts, unwilling to share their *misdeeds* (συναδικεῖν) and unable to hold out singly against the savagery of all...⁷⁰

In this dialogue between Socrates and Adeimantus, a use of the δίκη-root verb first refers to justice in general, and is followed by a use indicating wrongdoing. This passage exemplifies both the versatility of δίκη-root verbs while demonstrating once again the moral and legal nature of such usage.

⁶⁹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, Trans. Samuel Butler, Accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0218:book=11:card=12&highlight=dikai>.

⁷⁰ English: Plato, *Republic*, Trans. Paul Shorey, Accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0168%3Abook%3D6%3Asection%3D496d>.

Greek: Plato, *Republic*, ed. John Burnet, Accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0167%3Abook%3D6%3Asection%3D496d>.

In each of the above cases δικη-root verbs are used both legally and morally. Demosthenes uses a negative form. The passage from Homer's *Odyssey* indicates a legal ruling from Hades, the ruler of the underworld. Finally, Plato uses δικη-root verbs to indicate concepts of justice and wrongdoing. Since the moral and legal character of δικη-root verbs found in the writings of these authors is now evident, the next question for the purposes of this thesis is whether this moral and legal sense is representative of Chrysostom's perspective.

In the New Testament, δικη-root verbs are most often used to convey ideas of justice and righteousness. For instance, Romans 5:1 reads "Therefore, since we are *justified* (δικαιωθέντες) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁷¹ Thus, at least from the plain reading of the text in light of its context, the use of δικη-root verbs one finds in classic writers such as Demosthenes and Plato is similar to the Christian use as found in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Chrysostom, in his own words, describes his understanding of justification as it applies to God:

What does the word justified mean? That, if there could be a trial and an examination of the things He had done for the Jews, and of what had been done on their part towards Him, the victory would be with God, and all the right on His side.⁷²

While Chrysostom speaks to the justification of God rather than the justification of humanity, this passage nevertheless reveals his understanding of the term and the context in which he understands the term. He employs a legal metaphor, which is fitting in a

⁷¹ English: Romans 5:1, NRSV. Greek: Romans 5:1 Novum Testamentum Graece.

⁷² Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 674.

Greco-Roman empire known for its political and legal institutions, to adumbrate his perspective. Justification, in Chrysostom's own words, means that one is legitimized, victorious, and in the right. Applied to humanity, justification indicates that one is victorious, in the right.

That Chrysostom sees justification legally and morally is not all that surprising, and, on this point, the majority of Christendom would be in agreement with him. The more interesting questions surround perspectives on how exactly justification works and what justification accomplishes for the one justified. For the purposes of this thesis, which will compare the Chrysostom's view of justification to Philip Melancthon's, it is most helpful to assess Chrysostom's view of justification through modern theological terms and concepts such as forensic justification, imputed righteousness, and synergy, which includes the role of good works in justification.

The theory of forensic justification states that the individual being declared righteous becomes righteous not by any act or choice of their own, but by having Jesus Christ's righteousness given imputed to them. In contrast to a process of becoming righteous, forensic justification declares that one's righteousness is realized immediately when one believes. Several instances throughout Chrysostom's homilies on Romans reveal his understanding of justification. First, commenting on Romans 4:25, Chrysostom states:

For the purpose of His dying was not that He might hold us liable to punishment and in condemnation, but that He might do good unto us. For this cause He both died and rose again, that He might *make* us righteous.⁷³

Chrysostom states that Jesus died and rose again not so that individuals might be declared righteous, but so that they might be made righteous. Further, Bradley Cochran, commenting on this passage from Chrysostom's homilies, argues that "Chrysostom treats the word δικαίω as making righteous, not as a declaration of forensic righteousness—it refers to a transformation from the power of sin to a life of righteousness."⁷⁴ However, this passage from Chrysostom's homilies does not by itself indicate that the two views are mutually exclusive. After all, imputing Christ's righteousness onto an individual could certainly be considered a way of making the individual righteous. Therefore, more detail concerning how Chrysostom understands God making individuals righteous is necessary, detail he offered in his homily on Romans 5:17:

All these things then Paul calls a "superabundance" of grace, showing that what we received was not a medicine only to countervail the wound, but even health, and comeliness, and honor, and glory and dignities far transcending our natural state. And of these each in itself was enough to do away with death, but when all manifestly run together in one, there is not the least vestige of it left, nor can a shadow of it be seen, so entirely is it done away.⁷⁵

⁷³ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 712.

⁷⁴ Bradley Cochran, "The Superiority of Faith: John Chrysostom's Eastern Theology of Justification," accessed February 4, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/5610613/The_Superiority_of_Faith_John_Chrysostoms_Eastern_Theology_of_Justification, 4.

⁷⁵ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 725.

and:

When then the fornicator becomes chaste, the covetous man merciful, the harsh subdued, even here a resurrection has taken place, the prelude to the other. And how is it a resurrection? Why, because sin is mortified, and righteousness hath risen again, and the old life hath been made to vanish, and this new and angelic one is being lived in.⁷⁶

Justification, for Chrysostom, grants medicinal grace that heals not only the illness of sin, but the beneficial attributes necessary for righteous living and victory over death. It involves not only being declared righteous by the Judge, but actually consists of a change in behavior. This view is quite distinct from a forensic understanding that sees justification as merely seeing the righteousness of Christ in the individual rather than actually making the individual righteous. Forensic justification, therefore, is not an adequate descriptor of Chrysostom's view of justification, which sees righteousness as something that actually transforms the individual. Or, as Bradley Cochran states, "while the origin of justifying righteousness is God, justifying righteousness itself resides within the justified."⁷⁷

This actualization of righteousness in the faithful takes place through a process of synergy which, as it applies to the subject of justification, is the idea that one's justification requires the free cooperation of human individuals, and is not solely God's prerogative. That Chrysostom sees justification as synergistic is evident in his view of baptism as the conduit through which an individual is justified:

⁷⁶ Ibid., 730.

⁷⁷ Cochran, "The Superiority of Faith: John Chrysostom's Eastern Theology of Justification," 9.

We promise to show you that they who approach the laver become clean from all fornication: but the word has shown more, that they have become not only clean, but both holy and just, for it does not say only you were washed, but also you were sanctified and were justified.⁷⁸

The reason that baptism demonstrates the synergistic nature of Chrysostom's view of justification is that baptism is a rite to which the individual freely submits. God's grace may encourage one to enter the waters of baptism, but it does not do so forcefully. Chrysostom's view also shows that, in his view, it is not enough to merely believe; one must participate in baptism in order to be justified.

That forensic justification is counter to Chrysostom's view is also made evident in that Chrysostom recognizes that the justification received at baptism does not guarantee salvation, and good works are a necessary part of an individual's ultimate salvation. While Chrysostom acknowledges that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law,⁷⁹ he also, on several occasions, declares the necessity of works:

Though a man believe rightly on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet if he lead not a right life, his faith will avail nothing towards his salvation. Therefore when He saith, "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God"

⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, "First Instruction," *Instructions to Catechumens*, Accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1908.htm>.

⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 11, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 750. See also Homily X on Romans 5:17.

let us not suppose that the (knowledge) spoken of is sufficient for our salvation; we need besides this a most exact life and conversation.⁸⁰

It is not, according to Chrysostom, enough for one merely to believe in order to be saved. Proper action must accompany one's faith. This presents the reader with a difficulty concerning how Chrysostom reconciles this manner of thinking with his acknowledgment that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. This problem is reconciled within his homilies on the Gospel of Matthew:

Then in order that not even these should put confidence in their faith alone, He discourses unto them also concerning the judgment to be passed upon wicked actions... For the garment is life and practice. And yet the calling was of grace; wherefore then doth He take a strict account? Because although to be called and to be cleansed was of grace, yet, when called and clothed in clean garments, to continue keeping them so, this is of the diligence of them that are called.⁸¹

In seeking to understand how it is Chrysostom reconciles justification by faith apart from works of the law, no passage is more important than this. First, he highlights the author's caution against placing one's confidence in faith alone, highlighting that individuals will be judged also by their actions. Finally, he declares that one's initial call and cleansing through baptism was due solely to the Grace of God, this cleansing was not permanent.

⁸⁰ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of Saint John and the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 14, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 215.

⁸¹ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 10, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 423.

He uses the metaphor of a garment to convey the reality that, even though once cleaned, it can once again be soiled.

For Chrysostom it is only our initial justification through faith and baptism that takes place apart from works of the law because our initial call and justification cannot be accomplished by merely adhering to the law without faith and baptism. However, once baptized and thus made a part of the Church and Body of Christ, it is necessary that one lives a life of purity as to not soil the purity that has been acquired through justification, which for Chrysostom is faith and baptism. Here Chrysostom seems closer to Libanius than his favorite saint, Paul. While Paul emphasizes throughout his epistles the importance of faith apart from the law, Chrysostom, like Libanius, emphasizes moral behavior and the importance of living a good life.

Comparing Chrysostom's view on justification with his Christian predecessors and contemporaries reveals that his view is both similar and distinct from the perspectives of other key commentators, and that a surprising level of diversity existed when it came to opinions on justification. Clement of Rome (death c. 100 CE), in his address to the Corinthians, states:

Let us cleave, then, to those to whom grace has been given by God. Let us clothe ourselves with concord and humility, ever exercising self-control, standing far off from all whispering and evil-speaking, being justified by our works, and not our words.⁸²

⁸² Clement of Rome, "The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus," *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 41.

Here Clement exhorts his listeners to live in a virtuous manner, and even states that individuals should strive to be justified by their works. Whether he uses justification here in its theological meaning is unclear. What is important is his emphasis on good works. He then continues, writing:

And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.⁸³

As in Chrysostom, Clement emphasizes both the importance of living morally, and emphasizes that our justification comes through faith apart from works.

Contemporaries of John Chrysostom likewise appear to have shared his view on the necessity of works for salvation. Ambrose of Milan (337-397 CE) writes that "...the sacred Scriptures say that eternal life rests on a knowledge of divine things and on the fruit of good works."⁸⁴ Gregory of Nyssa (335-395 CE), in his homilies on Ecclesiastes, writes:

Paul, joining righteousness to faith and weaving them together, constructs of them the breastplates for the infantryman, armoring the soldier properly and safely on both sides. A soldier cannot be considered safely armored when either shield is disjoined from the other. Faith without works of justice is not sufficient for

⁸³ Ibid., 43.

⁸⁴ Ambrose, "Ambrose: Selected Works and Letters," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 10, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 130.

salvation; neither is righteous living secure in itself of salvation, if it is disjoined from faith.⁸⁵

In Gregory, the necessity of good works for salvation is once again expressed. Finally, Augustine of Hippo writes:

You did not lend your consent so that God could make you. How could you have consented, when you did not exist? But he who made you without your consent does not justify you without your consent. He made you without your knowledge, but he does not justify you without your willing it.⁸⁶

While Augustine here is silent on how justification works, he expresses a synergistic view of salvation akin to that of Chrysostom. For one to be saved one must voluntarily allow God to justify her.

While this brief overview falls far short of sketching an exhaustive portrait of each of these commentators' perspectives on justification, it does show that Chrysostom's views were similar to his Christian predecessors and contemporaries. Justification was seen as synergistic, as an act that could not be completed by God or human individuals alone. Far from disregarding good works, these commentators shared Chrysostom's perspective that they are central to a proper Christian life.

⁸⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, "Homilies on Ecclesiastes," *Faith of the Early Fathers*, 2, ed. William Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 45-46.

⁸⁶ Augustine, "Sermons," *Faith of the Early Fathers*, 3, ed. William A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 29.

Summary

In his youth and early adulthood Chrysostom received an elite education in both rhetoric and the classics under Libanius, and then later in Christian theology at the famous school of Antioch. Although renouncing his education under Libanius, the emphases in Chrysostom's homilies betray him. His Christian theological views, at least superficially, are representative of the majority of Nicene Christians throughout history. He begins his account with the fall of humanity and death, recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God who overcomes this separation between humanity and the Father by fulfilling the demands of the Hebrew Law, or Torah, which humanity was unable to accomplish by their own power. This divorcement is overcome through the process of justification, which, for Chrysostom, is accomplished through faith in Jesus of Nazareth's saving power which leads one to baptism. Justification, for Chrysostom, is not an event that once-and-for-all makes one exempt from the punishments of sin and death, but more akin to the cleansing of a garment that may once again be soiled if proper action is not taken.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore John Chrysostom's understanding of justification in its Christian context and how his education influenced this understanding. First, it is noteworthy that, throughout his homilies on the Epistle to the Romans, Chrysostom emphasized the pedagogical and moral elements he finds within the epistle. He also understood *δύκν*-root verbs in Paul as they were used in the classical texts of Demosthenes, Homer, and Plato, all of whom would have been central to his early

education. Further, Chrysostom's homiletic method is reminiscent of the pedagogical method used by his first great teacher, Libanius, and also sheds light on why Chrysostom's exegetical method differed from that of his closest Christian peers at the School of Antioch, who tended to focus on the literal and historical elements rather than the moral and pedagogical. That said, Chrysostom's justification narrative shares similar elements with Theodore of Mopsuestia's, seeing death as the central problem which God seeks to overcome.

CHAPTER III

PHILIP MELANCHTHON'S INTERPRETATION OF JUSTIFICATION

And the Intellectual Factors That Shaped His Perspective

Part I

John Chrysostom's view of justification has been established as a control of sorts with which Philip Melanchthon's justification theology will be compared. Positing Chrysostom as a rule of comparison should not, however, be seen as an implication that his view is superior or the norm, for it is due merely to his chronological preceding. This chapter focuses particularly on Melanchthon's justification theology as found in the first edition of his treatise *Loci Communes Theologici*, printed in 1521.¹ Its organization is similar to the previous chapter which outlined Chrysostom's educational background prior to exploring his formulation of justification and the intellectual factors that influenced this formulation. Where this chapter differs is in its latter portion, which, rather than simply describing Melanchthon's perspective on justification, compares and contrasts it with Chrysostom's in order to highlight how the intellectual and ideological currents of his age led the two commentators to their divergent perspectives.

Philip Melanchthon was born Philip Schwarzerdt on February 16, 1497 in Bretten, a small town in the German province of Baden. Like John Chrysostom, he was

¹ Philip Melanchthon, "Loci Communes Theologici," *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969). I am using the 1521 edition of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* in order to reveal his initial Christian perspective which he formulated in the first years of the Reformation.

born into a family of high social standing within their respective region. His father, George Schwarzerdt, was an armorer for Philip,² the Elector of the region, and his mother, Barbara, was the daughter of Bretten's mayor. These circumstances provided Melanchthon educational opportunities similar to those of Chrysostom, due to his family's socioeconomic status.³ His education began at Bretten's town school, although he was soon after withdrawn from the school and educated at home due to contagious diseases that spread throughout the region.⁴ Melanchthon's early education was similar to curriculum found in modern public schools, emphasizing knowledge of basic grammar and arithmetic. Both Philip Melanchthon's father and mother were pious Christians; his father practiced a rigorous rule of prayer, and his mother was known to give liberally to those in need.⁵ Thus Christianity was a visible and central aspect of Melanchthon's formation as a child. When Melanchthon was eleven years old, his father died after consuming poisoned water, and is purported to have said on his death bed "I am dying and wish for you to remain one with the Christian Church."⁶ These factors, no doubt, had a profound influence on Melanchthon's commitment to the Christian faith.

Following his father's death, Philip Melanchthon was sent to live in the care of his grandmother and his great-uncle, the well-known humanist Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522 CE), in Pforzheim. The town housed a prestigious Latin school and, under the guidance of his great-uncle, he began studying there.⁷ According to Wilhelm Pauck, it

² Philip Melanchthon was named after his father's employer, Philip the Upright, who was governor of Bretten.

³ Joseph Stump, *Life of Philip Melanchthon* (Reading, PA: Pilger Publishing House, 1897), 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁷ Wilhelm Pauck, ed., *Melanchthon and Bucer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 4.

was during this period that Philip changed his last name from Schweizerdt to its Greek form Melancthon, for, according to Reuchlin, it was fashionable for humanists to have a last name in the classical language.⁸

Johannes Reuchlin was the most important Greek and Hebrew instructor of his era, and second only to Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536 CE) in his influence on German humanism.⁹ He is perhaps best known for his defense of using Hebrew literature in Christian scholarship amidst a conflict that ultimately came to be known as the Reuchlin, or Pfefferkorn Affair. This debate pitted Reuchlin against the Dominicans of Cologne, who were led by Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469- c. 1521 CE), a Jewish convert to the Christian faith who viewed his former faith tradition and its texts as a threat to Christianity. In 1509, Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans of Cologne persuaded Emperor Maximilian I, then ruler of Germany, to confiscate and destroy Hebrew language texts, arguing that such texts undermined the authority of the Church. This attack, Erika Rummel argues, "...was an ugly combination of anti-Semitism and power politics with pseudo-doctrinal underpinnings in the common perception of Jews as heretics desiring to lead Christianity astray."¹⁰ This conflict exemplified the ever-growing conflict between Scholastics, who increasingly saw humanism as a threat to the established authority of the Roman Church, and humanists such as Reuchlin who saw knowledge of biblical languages as necessary for understanding their meanings. Further, it shows that

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Johannes Reuchlin," The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195064933.001.0001/acref-9780195064933-e-1189?rskey=qWizoE&result=6>.

¹⁰ Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 126.

prevailing ideologies of the time, in this instance anti-Semitism, hindered humanist biblical scholarship.

In 1510, during a brief hiatus in this confiscation, the emperor requested that Reuchlin provide a defense of using Hebrew texts, which Reuchlin titled *Eye Glasses*. Reuchlin's argument was ultimately victorious, and the seizure and eradication of Hebrew texts, at least formally, ceased.¹¹ Reuchlin's contribution in this debate would fuel the humanist, and ultimately the Reformation's cause. In light of these realities, it is little wonder that Melanchthon allied himself with his great-uncle's humanist cause. While Reuchlin "repudiated his nephew... and Luther in their separation from Roman Catholicism,"¹² it was, nevertheless, Reuchlin's influence in Melanchthon's early education that all but destined Melanchthon for a career in humanist scholarship.

Philip Melanchthon continued his education, earning a Bachelor of Arts at University of Heidelberg in 1511 and a subsequent Masters of Arts at the University of Tübingen in 1515 at the exceptionally young age of eighteen. His entrance into the University of Tübingen occurred in the wake of an era of academic reform that began in the century previous. The Roman Catholic Church, often the patron and regulator of university curricula, constructed the university education around the Scholastic method which had at its center a realist¹³ epistemology. However, two events occurred during the

¹¹ "Johannes Reuchlin and the Jewish Book Controversy," University Library: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, accessed March 3, 2015, <http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/exhibitions/Reuchlin/essay-section4.html>

¹² "Johannes Reuchlin," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed March 3, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/500213/Johannes-Reuchlin>

¹³ Realism: *a*, *b*, and *c* and so on exist, and the fact that they exist and have properties such as *F-ness*, *G-ness*, and *H-ness* is (apart from mundane empirical dependencies of the sort sometimes encountered in everyday life) independent of anyone's beliefs, linguistic practices, conceptual schemes, and so on. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Accessed February 12, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/realism/>.

fourteenth century that transformed German universities and Western European academies at large.¹⁴ First, general currents in epistemology began to distinguish the humanities from the natural science. Second, a monastic community in the Netherlands called the Brethren of the Common Life began to promote the *devotio moderna*, a Christian ideology that emphasized inner spiritual life as opposed to the outwardly ritualistic and speculative theology that had flourished under Scholasticism.¹⁵ As this ideology spread into other areas of Europe it was also transformed, within academies such as the University of Tübingen, into an academic approach called *via moderna*, as opposed to the *via antiqua* of Scholasticism. With this *via moderna* came nominalism,¹⁶ which would stand as a challenge to both the traditional model of Scholasticism and the very theological foundations of the Roman Catholic Church.

This conflict between the *via antiqua* and *via moderna* must also be recognized as a conflict between Scholasticism and Humanism. Scholastics within the academy relied upon a system that combined Aristotelian logic and Christian doctrine, whereas Humanists had adopted a method that focused on language skills and language arts such as rhetoric to analyze their subjects.¹⁷ A tension existed between these two schools of thought due to the perceived threat the adherents of each respective camp saw in the other. Erika Rummel indicates that “the Scholastics were faulted for their addiction to Aristotle, for their barbarous Latin, and for obscurantism; the humanists for shallow

¹⁴ Heiko Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁶ Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 660: Nominalism is the philosophical view that only particulars exist, and there are no abstract, universal categories in which these particulars are categorized.

¹⁷ Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation*, 11.

estheticism and an admiration for classical civilization that bordered on paganism.”¹⁸ It was into this conflict that Melanchthon entered and in which he would ultimately become a participant. It was a world where intellectuals questioned whether rhetoric was more harmful than it was beneficial, whether classical literature would lead to apostasy, and where the mere learning of Greek and Hebrew was seen as a recipe for heresy.¹⁹

Philip Melanchthon entered the University of Tübingen seeking to find some way in which the *via antiqua* and *via moderna* could complement one another.²⁰ Heiko Oberman notes that “Tübingen would seem to have been a southern metropolis of early German humanism.”²¹ Both rigorous scholarship and Christian devotion modeled on the *devotio moderna* were the foundations of study at Tübingen, and for this revolutionary emphasis Melanchthon praised the university.²² However, he had many criticisms and complaints towards the university that he expresses in exchanges with colleagues. The most notable of these exchanges occurred between him and his patron, Johannes Reuchlin. Melanchthon, favoring the humanistic methods of inquiry and scholarship, sought to revive the ancient pedagogical methods of dialectic and rhetoric, and criticized Tübingen for its opposition to classical educational models.²³ He complained that he had made no progress at Tübingen but had rather been forced back to the education level of a child.²⁴ Melanchthon desired an education akin to that of John Chrysostom, one that focused on great classical Greek orators and poets and emphasized the rhetorical art.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Ibid., 8.

²⁰ Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation*, 22.

²¹ Ibid., 16.

²² Ibid., 7-9.

²³ Ibid., 6.

²⁴ Ibid., 19.

Despite his misgivings about Tübingen, Philip Melanchthon's love for the Greek language grew ever deeper during his sojourn at the university and was, in 1518, appointed as instructor of Greek at the University of Wittenburg.²⁵ It was also at this time that Melanchthon first met Martin Luther who was, at this time, in the midst of defining his own new theological perspective. The relationship between Melanchthon and Luther was one of both affection and utility. Timothy J. Wengert writes that "If Martin Luther was the preacher and pastor of the Reformation, Melanchthon was its orator and logician."²⁶ Neither Melanchthon nor Luther can be cast as mentor to the other, for they acted as partners, influencing one another and providing to each other's' theologies what was lacking due to their own unique approaches. Luther initially oversaw the formulations of Melanchthon's theological theses at Wittenburg, but it was he who eventually relied upon Melanchthon for his theological understanding, referring to Melanchthon as his "organon, the instrument for gathering knowledge."²⁷ As Luther's right-hand man, Melanchthon eventually had a role in shaping some of the most important treatises written during the Reformation, such as the Augsburg Confession and the Wittenberg Concord.

As with John Chrysostom's education, Greek texts were central to Melanchthon's studies, and there is much information pertaining to the provenance of the texts to which Melanchthon would have had access. Following the Great Schism between the Latin

²⁵ Timothy Wengert, "Beyond Stereotypes: The Real Philip Melanchthon," in *Philip Melanchthon, Speaker of the Reformation*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 16.

²⁶ Timothy Wengert, ed., "Introduction," *Philip Melanchthon, Speaker of the Reformation*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), vii.

²⁷ Timothy Wengert, ed. "Melanchthon and Luther/ Luther and Melanchthon," in *Philip Melanchthon, Speaker of the Reformation*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 85.

Church and the Eastern Patriarchates, the sack and occupation of Constantinople in 1204, and the steady decline of the Byzantine Empire, contact between the East and West was severely reduced due to these social and political strains. As a result, there was a reduction in the number of Greek texts available to the West. However, Greek manuscripts were reintroduced to the West when in 1394, at the behest of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, the Greek scholar Manuel Chrysoloras was sent to Italy to obtain help combatting the Ottomans. He brought with himself both knowledge of the Greek language and select Greek manuscripts that were then duplicated by Western scribes. In addition to the manuscripts introduced to the West by Chrysoloras, the Dominican monastery in Basel, Germany housed several Greek New Testament manuscripts dating between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, meaning limited access to Greek manuscripts may have existed prior to Chrysoloras' sojourn.²⁸ Such texts were invaluable in the wake of Renaissance humanism which sought to return to original source material. It was, in part, from these manuscripts that Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536 CE) compiled his version of the New Testament, titled *Novum Instrumentum omne*. This edition of the New Testament was published in 1516, making it the first in the West and the version upon which both Philip Melanchthon and Martin Luther relied.²⁹

Nearly one-hundred years after Manuel Chrysoloras reintroduced Greek texts to the West, Aldus Manutius, in 1494, established a press that printed and circulated many of the Latin and Greek language texts available during the early sixteenth century.

²⁸ Bo Reicke, "Erasmus und die neutestamentliche Textgeschichte," *Basler Theologische Zeitschrift*, XXII (1966), 254-265.

²⁹ Lowell C. Green, "The Influence of Erasmus Upon Melanchthon, Luther, and the Formula of Concord in the Doctrine of Justification," *Church History*, no. 2 (June 1974): 183-184.

Additionally, Manutius established an academy that trained students in the ancient languages, the most notable of whom was Erasmus. Understanding his influence on sixteenth century discourse is essential for understanding Melanchthon's intellectual environment. While Erasmus remained a member of the Roman Catholic Church, believing that the Church should be reformed from within, he shared much in common with Melanchthon, largely due to their devotion to Humanism, and "Melanchthon always acknowledged Erasmus' beneficial influence."³⁰

Inspiring Reformers such as Melanchthon, Desiderius Erasmus, as a proponent of Humanism, desired to return to the scriptures, or more specifically, return the theological discipline to its scriptural roots, but unlike the Reformers did not perceive that such an endeavor would undermine the core truth claims of his Roman Catholic Church. Essential to this rhetorical methodology was mastery of the languages in which scriptures were originally written.³¹ Such mastery was especially necessary since Erasmus believed that scripture had been corrupted as it was copied and transmitted from language to language over the centuries.³² Thus, unlike certain Reformers who would later emphasize the need for individuals to read scripture for themselves, Erasmus was critical of commoners who read scripture without the linguistic and rhetorical training necessary for properly understanding their true meaning. That said, he was also critical of academics, primarily of Scholastic inclinations, who he accused of imposing modern, anachronistic rules upon

³⁰ Ibid., 189.

³¹ Manfred Hoffman, *Rhetoric and Theology: The Hermeneutic of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 5.

³² Ibid., 83.

the interpretation of scripture.³³ Erasmus' emphasis on understanding scripture as it existed before its supposed corruption, however, is paradoxical since Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum omne* was plagued by errors and had to undergo many revisions to correct these myriad errors present in the first edition.³⁴ Daniel Wallace, professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, states:

He (Erasmus) was under pressure to get it to the press as soon as possible since (a) no edition of the Greek New Testament had yet been published, and (b) he had heard that Cardinal Ximenes and his associates were just about to publish an edition of the Greek New Testament and he was in a race to beat them.

Consequently, his edition has been called the most poorly edited volume in all of literature! It is filled with hundreds of typographical errors which even Erasmus would acknowledge.³⁵

Erasmus had only portions of manuscripts to work with, and would often times simply translate the Vulgate's Latin into Greek for the sake of completion.

That Melanchthon relied primarily on Erasmus' Greek New Testament, plagued by error at the time he wrote his *Loci Communes Theologici*, is only the first of the issues raised by the Greek texts to which Melanchthon had access and relied upon for his theological writings. The biblical commentaries of John Chrysostom, the patristic author with whom Melanchthon was most familiar, functioned as Melanchthon's chief patristic

³³ Ibid., 8.

³⁴ Green, "The Influence of Erasmus," 184-185.

³⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, "Why I Do Not Think the King James Bible Is the Best Translation Available Today," Bible.org, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://bible.org/article/why-i-do-not-think-king-james-bible-best-translation-available-today>.

source.³⁶ Unfortunately, the version of Chrysostom's commentaries used by Melanchthon was Theophylact of Ohrid's synopses of the Greek fathers, compiled in the eleventh century. Because Theophylact was interested primarily in the exegetical aspects of Chrysostom's homilies, he excluded all but the exegetical insights within Chrysostom's homilies.³⁷ This absence of the pedagogical and moral aspects of Chrysostom's scriptural homilies provides crucial insight into why Chrysostom was so well received among Reformers such as Melanchthon and Calvin. They were unaware that Chrysostom held theological views they would have rejected, such as freedom of the will and works as a necessary aspect of one's salvation.

Melanchthon, like both Erasmus and Chrysostom, was familiar with rhetoric and promoted a return to the rhetorical arts as practiced during the Classical Age of Hellenism. However, while he admired Erasmus greatly, praising his contributions to the humanities, Melanchthon's acceptance of nominalism against Scholastic realism led to his reliance on scripture alone since he discounted the existence of universal truths accepted by Erasmus and especially Scholastics. Doubting that truths could be apprehended through natural reason, revelation as found in scripture became for Melanchthon the only reliable source of Christian truth: "Anyone is mistaken who seeks to ascertain the nature of Christianity from any source except canonical scripture."³⁸ Scholasticism, and especially Thomism, became for Melanchthon the enemy of Christian

³⁶ D.C. Steinmetz, ed., "'Qui vigilantissimis oculis veterum omnium commentarios excusserit': Philip Melanchthon's Patristic Exegesis," in *Philip Melanchthon, Speaker of the Reformation*, ed. Timothy Wengert (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2010), 120.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

truth in his *Loci Communes Theologici*. He accused Scholastics as offering “... Aristotle instead of the teachings of Christ”³⁹ and even sought to provide his own translation of Aristotle so that he could free the philosopher from “the Christianizing straitjacket of the *via antiqua*.”⁴⁰

Despite their disagreements with Erasmus, Melanchthon and Luther were both greatly indebted to his ideas and writings, especially concerning their formulations of the doctrine of justification. As Lowell C. Green highlights, Erasmus, in his 1516 publication *Novum Instrumentum omne* was the first scholar to distinguish between *imputare*, which implies favor given to an individual apart from their own efforts, and *reputare*, which indicates favor earned based on one’s own merits.⁴¹ Further, Erasmus abandoned Scholastic notions positing grace as a substance that has the potential to make individuals, in actuality, righteous, and instead adopted a view of imputed righteous akin to that that would be promulgated by Luther and Melanchthon.⁴² This revelation is especially significant since the idea of imputed righteousness is most often associated with reformers such as Melanchthon and Luther rather than the Roman Catholic humanist who inspired their understanding.

This, then, establishes the intellectual environment in which Melanchthon’s theological ideas arose. The perceived abuses and errors of the Roman Catholic Church and the traditional Scholasticism it promoted in universities led to ideologies that provided a basis for challenging the Church’s authority. Chief among these ideological

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation*, 59.

⁴¹ Green, “The Influence of Erasmus,” 185.

⁴² Ibid., 188.

currents were humanism and nominalism, which challenged Scholasticism's metaphysical claim that there were universal truths that could be apprehended through human reason and specifically through Aristotelian logic. This challenged not only the philosophical bases of late Medieval Roman Catholic theology, but the idea of authoritative Christian tradition apart from scripture, which Melanchthon saw as based more in the philosophies of men than as divine truth. For instance, he strongly criticized Church Fathers such as John of Damascus, Origen, Ambrose of Milan, and Jerome. Augustine, however, was generally praised by Melanchthon perhaps due to his dear friend Martin Luther's admiration of the saint. E.P. Meijering notes that Melanchthon depended upon Augustine more than any other patristic author because he saw Augustine as an authoritative and orthodox source on the person of Christ and the Trinity.⁴³ Further, it has been shown that Melanchthon had access to many Greek sources, both scriptural and patristic, but these resources were victims of various errors and negations that compromised their originality and authenticity, and led to interpretations and conclusions that familiarity with original source materials would not have allowed.

Part II

While there are a number of similarities between Chrysostom's and Melanchthon's perspectives on justification, there are significant differences, and when

⁴³ E.P. Meijering, *Melanchthon and Patristic Thought: The Doctrines of Christ and Grace, the Trinity and the Creation* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, No 32) (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1983), 19-20.

these arise special attention will be given to the factors leading to these disagreements. First presented is what is and is not known about the written sources Melanchthon relied upon for discerning and establishing his theology of justification, which provides further insight into the intellectual factors that shaped his perspective. A brief overview will then be offered which will segue into a more detailed consideration of terms central to Melanchthon's discussion of justification, namely death, sin, law, righteousness, works, baptism, and confession. This more detailed account, which will be compared to Chrysostom's definitions of these terms, will provide a comprehensive picture of Melanchthon's view of justification, and will ultimately reveal what makes his Western, Reformer's perspective distinct from that of Chrysostom.

As previously noted, the treatise Melanchthon presents on justification in *Loci Communes Theologici* is similar to Chrysostom's discussion of justification. Many of the same terms are central to their discussion, namely law, sin, and death, and thus this section will be ordered like the previous chapter on Chrysostom's perspective on justification. Following this summary will be a more scrupulous survey of Melanchthon's perspective on justification in light of the ideas and manuscript resources upon which he relied for his formulations.

Both Chrysostom and Melanchthon see death as an important aspect of the Christian narrative, since death is the reason for which Jesus of Nazareth becomes incarnate to save humanity from their sins. However, Melanchthon's discussion of the initial fall of humanity in Adam focuses less on the physical death and mortality resulting as does Chrysostom's, and instead moves immediately to the guilt and depravity resulting

from this Original Sin, which Melanchthon defines as “a depraved affection” by which we are drawn to sinning rather than God.⁴⁴ Further, unlike Chrysostom, Melanchthon does claim that all humans, including innocent children, who have committed no personal sins, share in Adam’s guilt. Because they are subject to the same punishment, being physical death, “... it must be that children are guilty of sin and have sin.”⁴⁵

In this state of depravity, a human being “... by his natural powers can do nothing but sin,”⁴⁶ and those works which are good in appearance are also sins for a bad tree cannot bear good fruit, in Melanchthon’s view. It is law, according to Melanchthon, that reveals unto humanity its sinful, depraved state. Having rejected Scholastic notions that human beings, by their own reason can discover truths, Melanchthon believes that all knowledge of law, whether from scripture or nature, is revealed by God. All humans, according to Melanchthon, are aware of three imperatives: the existence of God, the immorality of harming others, and that property ought to be used for the benefit of all.⁴⁷ Additionally, there are laws as revealed through scripture that fall into three categories: moral, judicial, and ceremonial.⁴⁸ The most important aspect of these laws, though, are not the guidelines they provide, but that these laws reveal to us our depravity, our inability to perform good works.

From this Melanchthon establishes the idea central to his treatise on justification, being that the law reveals to us our death and the gospel reveals to us how it is that we

⁴⁴ Philip Melanchthon, “Loci Communes Theologici,” *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 30-31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

might obtain life. These are the two parts in which all of scripture can be categorized.⁴⁹ As revealed in Romans 3:20, an individual is made aware of their depravity by the law, according to Melanchthon. This awareness accomplishes "...the first work of God," which is "... to reveal our sin... to terrify."⁵⁰ However, the gospel, which Melanchthon defines as the good news that Jesus died to pay the debt accrued by our sins, casts out the fear brought about by law as long as one trusts that what Jesus did indeed satisfies this debt.⁵¹ In Melanchthon's own words, "... we are justified when, put to death by the law, we are made alive again by the word of grace promised in Christ."⁵² This justification, for Melanchthon, is accomplished by faith alone. By trusting that Jesus has made satisfaction for one's sins, righteousness is imputed to the sinner, or Christ's righteousness becomes the sinner's righteousness, regardless of her actual status.

In this brief summary, one sees important distinctions between Chrysostom's and Melanchthon's respective views of justification, the most notable being their different understandings about how a human being becomes righteous. For Melanchthon, our justification is imputed, or given to us by Jesus regardless of our actual condition, whereas Chrysostom adheres to a model of justification in which God works within the individual to make her, in actuality, righteous. The final section will provide closer examination of where and why the divergence between Melanchthon's and Chrysostom's respective formulations of justification occurs by showing the different ways in which key terms are understood, and by focusing on the ways in which their respective

⁴⁹ Ibid., 70-71.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 82.

⁵¹ Ibid., 84.

⁵² Ibid., 88.

ideologies and intellectual environments shaped their opinions. Attention will be devoted primarily to Melanchthon's intellectual environment, since Chrysostom's was detailed in the previous chapter.

In both Philip Melanchthon's and John Chrysostom's commentaries on justification, the terms death, sin, law, righteousness, works, baptism, and confession or absolution are crucial for understanding the systems they propose. This final section will compare the ways in which each respective commentator understands and defines these terms in order to highlight areas of congruence and disagreement. Where appropriate, the ways in which their intellectual environments shaped their understandings of these terms will be detailed. Ultimately, this study will demonstrate that the crucial differences between Chrysostom's ancient, Antiochene perspective on justification and Melanchthon's Reformation view is rooted in their distinctive understandings of righteousness and the mechanics of justification itself, or the way the way in which justification functions and leads to one's rightness with God.

Philip Melanchthon presents death as the sentence God places upon Adam and Eve for their disobedience.⁵³ He understands this penalty of death to be physical, the entropy and suffering that culminates in one's demise, arguing that this is the reason that children, though having committed no personal sin, share in Adam's guilt and are subject to physical death. Accordingly, if an individual were not guilty of sin, he or she would live forever, never tasting of death as God had initially intended in the garden. Accompanying death is the separation from God and resulting depravity that leads

⁵³ Ibid., 104.

humanity to self-love and sin.⁵⁴ According to this reason, one might then ask Melanchthon why those who become righteous through faith still experience death. This inquiry reveals a potential contradiction within Melanchthon's framework, for he indeed acknowledges that only those guilty of sin experience death and likewise posits that the righteous are cleansed of their sins. It must be the case that Melanchthon sees those acquitted of their sins as in some way still affected by the punishment of sin, which Melanchthon understands to be mortality and depravity.

John Chrysostom likewise presents death as an outcome of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, and centers much of his commentary on justification on the reality of death. Whether he would classify death as a punishment exacted upon Adam and Eve is unclear, but in his comments on the innocence of infants, he shows his understanding of death as distinct from Melanchthon's by not associating the effects of death with personal guilt.⁵⁵ In several significant ways Chrysostom's and Melanchthon's positions on death are more or less congruent. Both see death as physical mortality and further highlight that this mortal quality inclines an individual towards things and actions displeasing to God. Importantly, both see this mortality as an ailment remedied by Jesus's death. A minor yet significant difference, though, remains the emphasis Chrysostom places upon death in his salvation narrative. Whereas Melanchthon seems primarily concerned with the depraved

⁵⁴ Ibid., 30-31.

⁵⁵ Augustine, "Against Julian," *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 35, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 25.

symptoms of death, Chrysostom seems centered upon the root cause, being mortality itself.⁵⁶

Paradoxically, sin is seen by both Melanchthon and Chrysostom as the cause of death and as a symptom of it.⁵⁷ Sin was first committed when Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of God, and afterwards became the disposition of themselves and their descendants. The difference, once again lies in emphasis. For both Chrysostom and Melanchthon, sin's definition is multifaceted; it is both a disposition towards certain actions and those actions themselves. For Melanchthon, human beings who have not become righteous through faith are completely depraved and are capable of nothing but sin. Even their "good" works are sin because, according to Melanchthon, a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.⁵⁸ Chrysostom, however, does not speak in terms of depravity, and at times argues, like the Scholastics, that even those who have not been justified through faith are still capable of discerning and committing moral actions.⁵⁹ However both stress that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom's emphasis on death over sin can be attributed to the Antiochene School, where this same focus on mortality was emphasized by influential minds such as

⁵⁶ Archimandrite Vasilios Nanos, "Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification According to His Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans" (master's thesis, Durham University, 1991), 10.

⁵⁷ This may reveal why Melanchthon emphasizes sin itself rather than death, since it may be the case that Melanchthon sees sin rather than death as the origin of the issue. In other words, Melanchthon may see death as a consequence of sin rather than sin primarily being a consequence of death. This also explains why contemporary Eastern Christians see the fall of Adam and Eve not as a trespass for which they are culpable, but as a natural consequence suffered without consideration of culpability.

⁵⁸ Melanchthon, "Loci Communes," 47.

⁵⁹ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 11, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 660.

Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus. However it is difficult to trace the lineage of Melanchthon's perspective. To blame it on a legal, Western soteriological framework that emphasized morality and law would indeed bear some truth, but would fall far short of explaining Melanchthon's disposition, since emphases on both death itself and its effects are to be found among both Eastern and Western Christian commentators. What can be said is that, having abandoned the Scholastic idea that human beings by their own reason can discover moral truths, Melanchthon necessarily fell back on the notion that, without God, human beings are ignorant of moral truths and are thus capable only of sin. This disposition in itself leads one to focus more on the moral failings of human beings than on their mortality.

Melanchthon's view of the law echoes Chrysostom's, as both recognize the law not as a once-for-all means for salvation, but as a tool by which God revealed to us our sin. However, subtle yet critical nuances are presented in their works. For instance, commenting on Romans 3:20, which reads "...through the law comes the knowledge of sin,"⁶⁰ Chrysostom states that "...the Law accomplished the disclosure of sin to you, but it was your duty then to flee it. Since then you have not fled you have pulled the punishment more sorely on yourself, and the good deed of the Law has been made to you a supply of greater vengeance."⁶¹ Whereas Melanchthon believed God had instituted law knowing it was impossible for humanity, since good fruit cannot come from a depraved source, and that it acted solely to reveal humanity's depravity, the above and other passages from Chrysostom, such as his statement that even those who do not know the

⁶⁰ Romans 3:20 (NRSV)

⁶¹ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans," 680.

law are still able to follow its statutes, suggest that he saw it as theoretically possible that an individual could in actuality meet certain demands of the law. However, Chrysostom, like Melanchthon, recognizes that humanity is unable to fully obey the law.⁶² The understandings of both Melanchthon and Chrysostom is summarized well by Archimadrite Vasilios Nanos, who states that the law "... prepared the way for the one who would save," for the law convinces of sin and grace undoes sin.⁶³

Another distinction between Melanchthon and Chrysostom is what each categorized as "law" in their commentaries on justification. Melanchthon identified two categories of divine laws, being natural laws and laws revealed through scripture. Distinguishing himself from his Scholastic opponents, Melanchthon stressed that natural law was not a product of human reason and discovery, but knowledge implanted in all of humanity by God. Melanchthon held that there were three laws naturally possessed by all humans: one ought to believe in and obey God, one is not to harm others, and property ought to be divided to meet the needs of all.⁶⁴ The second category of law was the Law of Torah, consisting of the moral, judicial, and ceremonial laws revealed in the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁵ Both natural law and scriptural law were emphasized in Melanchthon's treatise on justification, and he stressed the necessity that humanity fully meet the demands of both sets to be justified. Chrysostom did not make these systematic distinctions, and instead referred only to the Jewish Law, which he saw as containing both moral and ceremonial demands. Ultimately, though, there is congruence between Melanchthon's

⁶² Nanos, "Basic Aspects of St. John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Justification," 31.

⁶³ Ibid., 24-25

⁶⁴ Melanchthon, "Locis Communes," 50.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 53.

and Chrysostom's understanding of the purpose of the law, and thus it can be concluded that it is not at this point that their respective views of justification diverge.

Perhaps the most critical distinction between Melanchthon's and Chrysostom's constructions of justification rests in righteousness. As previously mentioned, Melanchthon viewed righteousness as a quality that was imputed to those justified by faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice. In other words, one was not in and of themselves made righteous, but were given Christ's righteousness, though they remained, in and of themselves, sinners.⁶⁶ Melanchthon is likely indebted to Erasmus for his view of righteousness, as Erasmus was the first scriptural commentator to distinguish between *imputare* and *reputare*, ultimately adopting the view that righteousness was imputed. This separated Erasmus and his followers from the Scholastics who saw righteousness as a quality God actualized in the believer themselves.⁶⁷ Chrysostom, like the sixteenth century Scholastics, viewed righteousness as a quality God brings to fruition within the believer rather than being an imputed declaration of righteousness. Bradley R. Cochran identifies that Chrysostom interpreted "δικαίω" not as God *declaring* the believer righteous, but *making* the believer righteous:

The righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith

[δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν] is a

righteousness Paul is exhorting his hearers to live by, not one he is declaring has been counted for them. Not only does Chrysostom not see a forensic emphasis in Paul's language here, but he argues that Paul's adding the word "righteousness"

⁶⁶ Ibid., 89.

⁶⁷ Green, "The Influence of Erasmus," 188.

[δικαιοσύνη] in Romans 1:17 was precisely to keep his hearers from presuming a mere escape from penal consequences.⁶⁸

Commenting on Romans 4:25, Chrysostom states that “For the purpose of His (Christ’s) dying was not that He might hold us liable to punishment and in condemnation, but that He might do good unto us. For for this cause He both died and rose again, that He might make us righteous.”⁶⁹ While Melanchthon sees righteousness as an imputed declaration based of God’s favor, Chrysostom perceives righteousness as a quality God actualizes in the faithful.

The most important ideological factor contributing to Melanchthon’s view of righteousness, beyond his indebtedness to Erasmus’ theory, is the concern Melanchthon and Luther had for the laity, and specifically the fear that they believed arose from the traditional Roman Catholic view of righteousness.⁷⁰ For Melanchthon, the Roman Catholic view of justification was works-based. For adherents of the Roman Catholic faith, works were necessary for salvation, but as they were unable to perform good works, the inevitable result was the terror they would experience believing they are hell bound due to their impotence. This fear of hell had been the very reason that Martin Luther became an Augustinian monk; however, having found no solace or sense of forgiveness in the penitent life of a monastic, Luther formulated his reformed

⁶⁸ Bradley R. Cochran, “The Superiority of Faith: John Chrysostom’s Eastern Theology of Justification,” accessed February 4, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/5610613/The_Superiority_of_Faith_John_Chrysostoms_Eastern_Theology_of_Justification, 4.

⁶⁹ Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans,” 712.

⁷⁰ Robert Kolb, “Melanchthon’s Doctrinal Last Will and Testament: The “Responsiones ad articulos Bavaricae inquisitionis” as His Final Confession of Faith,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 104.

understanding of the gospel.

For Melanchthon and Luther, that Roman Catholicism advocated works-based salvation was no more evident than in its doctrines regarding of indulgences and merits that arose under Pope Urban II (1035-1099 CE) when he declared that soldiers who died serving the cause of the Crusade would be absolved of all sins regardless of whether they had formally received the sacrament of penance.⁷¹ This ultimately led to a system of indulgences in which sinners could perform some penitent act, ranging from monetary donations to pilgrimages, which added to a treasury of merit that could reduce the time they themselves or the one on whose behalf they interceded would spend in purgatory. Luther's *95 Theses*, the document that sparked the Reformation, argued against the notion that the pope had authority to grant such indulgences or, more importantly, that the pope had any authority over the fate of souls in purgatory.⁷² Melanchthon adopted Luther's perspective, rejecting the efficacy of the Roman Catholic Church's system of indulgences and merits.

It is on the subject of righteousness that Melanchthon's and Chrysostom's perspectives of justification diverge, but this divergence continues in their understandings of works, baptism, and ultimately justification itself. It is difficult to obtain a clear understanding of the role works played in Melanchthon's formulation of justification. On one hand, he saw the Roman Catholic view of works-based salvation as reprehensible,

⁷¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 384.

⁷² Martin Luther, *The 95 Theses*, The Spurgeon Archive, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/history/95theses.htm><http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/history/95theses.htm>.

stating in his 1521 edition of *Loci Communes Theologici* that "... faith alone in the mercy and grace of God... is our righteousness"⁷³ and further that "... justification must be a work of God alone."⁷⁴ Yet in his last will and testament, "Responsiones ad articulos Bavaricae inquisitionis," written in 1559, he rejects also the antinomian view that works are unnecessary for salvation.⁷⁵ Melanchthon reconciles these two seemingly contradictory points, stating that "... works are... signs of His presence."⁷⁶ In other words, works are necessary because they are the sign that one has been saved, but play no part in one obtaining salvation, which comes through God's grace alone. The basis for this line of thinking rests in Melanchthon's conviction that good works are impossible for the unrighteous, and thus cannot in any form contribute to one's salvation. Chrysostom's view of the role of works in salvation is more clearly established:

Though a man believe rightly on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet if he lead not a right life, his faith will avail nothing towards his salvation. Therefore when He saith, "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God" let us not suppose that the (knowledge) spoken of is sufficient for our salvation; we need besides this a most exact life and conversation.⁷⁷

Works are necessary, in Chrysostom's soteriology, not because they are a sign that one has been saved, but because leading a good life is what, in actuality, leads to salvation.

⁷³ Melanchthon, "Loci Communes," 89.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 106.

⁷⁵ Kolb, "Melanchthon's Doctrinal Last Will and Testament," 105-106.

⁷⁶ Melanchthon, "Loci Communes," 109.

⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of Saint John and the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 14, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 215.

The reason for this distinction between Melanchthon's and Chrysostom's and views of the necessity of works lies in their perspectives of the mechanics of justification itself, including their respective views regarding the freedom of the will. For Melanchthon one is justified by faith alone, or by trusting in God's promise that he will redeem those who believe Christ has died to redeem them from their sins. There is also a much more immediate link between justification and our ultimate salvation for Melanchthon. One is saved, in his view, at the moment of faith, and as long as this faith is maintained the believer is assured of their salvation. Baptism, for Melanchthon, is the sign that one has repented and now trusts in God. It is "... a submersion of the old Adam into death and revival of the new."⁷⁸ On the symbolism of baptism Melanchthon and Chrysostom are in agreement; however Chrysostom has a very different understanding of the life that is to follow baptism. For Chrysostom, baptism is not only the sign of justification, but the very conduit through which justification is actualized. Further, it does indeed grant one absolution from previous sins, but it does not absolve one from sins that follow, for he states that, following baptism, one must live a life fitting of the new life they have received through it.⁷⁹

The distinction between Melanchthon's and Chrysostom's perspectives on the life that follows justification is shown to be less clear, though, by Melanchthon's insistence on the necessity of both baptism and confession or absolution.⁸⁰ Baptism was one of the

⁷⁸ Melanchthon, "Loci Communes," 136.

⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 10, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 423.

⁸⁰ Melanchthon, "Loci Communes," 136-137 and Kolb, "Melanchthon's Doctrinal Last Will and Testament," 107.

two sacraments that Melanchthon, Luther, and their Lutheran successors insisted must be maintained by the Reformed Church, and while he rejected the Scholastic categories of repentance, being contrition, confession, and satisfaction, he maintained that private absolution between the individual and God was necessary when one fell into sin.⁸¹

Melanchthon would likely argue that these are not meritorious works, but rather submissions to God, for one does not baptize oneself, and confession in and of itself is a recognition that one has sinned and a subsequent reorientation towards God. However, it is difficult to see how Melanchthon reconciles these necessities with his denial of human free will. He states that “Since all things that happen, happen necessarily according to divine predestination, our will has no liberty.”⁸² He must, then, believe that rather than baptism or confession taking place due to our own volition, God compels us to submit to these necessities. Chrysostom, maintaining that human free will has a part in one’s salvation is, in contrast, able to maintain a role for humans in the working out of their salvation.

Summary

While Melanchthon has been lauded as a master linguist, humanist, and even “the father of modern historical research,” he was, like all great intellectuals, the inheritor of the intellectual riches that preceded him.⁸³ This chapter reveals the indebtedness of his

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Melanchthon, “Loci Communes,” 24.

⁸³ Lowell C. Green, “Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development Under Luther and Melanchthon,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1 (April 1973): 84.

theological views, and justification in particular, to the ideological currents and attitudes of the sixteenth century. The nominalist ideas that began with the Brethren of the Common Life and ultimately made its way into German universities gave Melanchthon grounds for criticizing the realism upon which Roman Catholic Scholasticism was established, and thus grounds for rejecting their theological framework. Erasmus' unmatched contributions to the humanities provided not only the biblical text upon which Melanchthon relied for his Greek New Testament, but also offered an imputed view of righteousness that predated both Luther's and Melanchthon's own formulations.

The fear of damnation Luther had experienced as an Augustinian monk led both Luther and Melanchthon to a concern for the way in which works-based models of justification had the potential to lead laity to terror, which in turn led to a formulation of justification that freed one from the fears associated with works-based righteousness. Along with Melanchthon's rejection of free will, these ideas explain why his salvation narrative differed from John Chrysostom's, primarily on justification, which was, for Chrysostom, only the starting point in one's pursuit of salvation; and righteousness, which Chrysostom viewed as a process in which God makes the believer herself righteous rather than simply declaring them righteous due to imputation.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Motivating the efforts of Philip Melanchthon and his fellow reformers was a belief that, through their endeavors, they would restore Christianity to its apostolic foundations, to understand scripture as God Himself had intended it to be understood. This conviction is of special note in light of Melanchthon's view of Greek Christianity, which had preserved and been influenced by John Chrysostom's scriptural homilies:

Like Luther, Melanchthon believed that their "reformed" faith — as a "peeling away" of the numerous developments and supposed abuses of the Latin Church over the centuries — would be virtually one and the same as the faith of the "Greeks" in the east.¹

It was thus surprising and disappointing for the authors of the Augsburg Confession when Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople (c. 1530-1595 CE), then head of the Greek Orthodox Church, rejected their theological interpretations and penned a response that outlined the errors he saw present in the Augsburg Confession. At the conclusion to his third response, Patriarch Jeremias entreated its authors to abandon their theological errors:

...having researched diligently some of the passages of Holy Scripture, which you referred to in your first and second letters which you sent to us, we saw clearly

¹ Gabe Martini, "Lutherans Write the Patriarch: How the "German Orthodox Church" Almost Happened," Православие.Ru, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/print61852.htm>.

that you had misinterpreted them, perhaps in following your new teachers. For this reason we again entreat you to understand the passages as the Ecumenical Teachers of the Church have interpreted them and which interpretations the seven ecumenical synods and the other regional ones have ratified. For as we have already said, it is not necessary to rise up and remove everlasting boundaries which the Fathers have established, so that we will not violate the definition which was mentioned at the beginning of the Sixth Synod and be subject to penalties.²

This passage highlights the differences between the distinct methods of scriptural interpretations characteristic of the fourth and sixteenth centuries, respectively. In Reformation Europe, scripture began to be interpreted with less concern for extra-biblical records and methods, whereas the interpretation of scripture in Eastern Christendom continued to emphasize the necessity of relying on patristic consensus and relevant rulings from ecumenical councils in order to understand its words properly. That said, Reformers including Philip Melanchthon continued to use patristic sources, as long as they served their cause of restoration, and John Chrysostom was among the most admired and widely available of these patristic sources.

The subject of this thesis reveals and clarifies the ideological reasons for John Chrysostom's and Philip Melanchthon's disagreement on justification, and the intellectual environments that led to this disparity. Because both Chrysostom and

² George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 1982), 210.

Melanchthon were among the most influential contributors to the theology of their era, this thesis also sheds light on the elements that distinguish Eastern Christian and Reformation Christian interpretations of justification in general. That Chrysostom's view of justification was shown to be irreconcilable with Melanchthon's reformation perspective is further significant since, due to incomplete manuscripts of Chrysostom's homilies, Melanchthon and additional reformers such as John Calvin had considered Chrysostom "one of theirs." While Philip Melanchthon's and John Chrysostom's soteriologies were shown to be, at least superficially, similar, a close examination of terms that were mutually central to their justification theologies revealed significant divergence in their views, and especially in their respective understandings of justification and righteousness themselves.

In this work, John Chrysostom's view of justification presented an early, Eastern interpretation of justification and was later used to reveal points at which Philip Melanchthon's view of justification diverged from Chrysostom's. Chrysostom's view was reflective of soteriological formulations similar to those found among the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox communion, both past and present. He viewed justification not as a pivotal event at which one became confident that they had been saved, but as the first step of a new life in which one began the process of being saved. This justification was actualized in baptism, and righteousness came in the life to follow, according to Chrysostom, which ought to be one of adherence to the tenets of the Christian faith. While Christians throughout time and of various persuasions affirm that the purpose of justification is to realize our righteousness, Chrysostom believed that

justification was meant to make the justified become, in actuality, righteous through a synergistic process of development that changed their very behavior and being. The view of human depravity adopted by Philip Melanchthon is absent from Chrysostom's view of humanity. While Chrysostom recognizes humanity's fallen nature and their inability to be saved apart from Christ, he maintained that human beings were still capable of performing good works.

Chrysostom's view of justification reflected that of his peers at the Christian School of Antioch, and much of fourth century Christendom at large. He began his narrative much like his colleague Theodore of Mopsuestia, positing death and its consequences as the central problem addressed by Christ's sacrifice. Thus, for Chrysostom, justification through baptism is a means of overcoming the death resulting from the Fall of Adam. However, perhaps due to his moral and rhetorical education under Libanius, Chrysostom's homilies emphasized the moral qualities in scripture rather than offering mere, academic exegesis. This is shown throughout his homilies on justification which are more concerned with conveying standards for a proper Christian life than providing a systematic explanation of how justification works. Nevertheless, his homilies display his familiarity with the Pauline epistles and the broader Christian tradition, and the lack of systematic formulation presents only a minor obstacle in understanding his formulation of justification.

Due to his historical proximity, and the availability of extant resources on the subject of intellectual trends in sixteenth century Europe, much more can be said about how Melanchthon's constructions of justification and righteousness were shaped by his

intellectual environment. For Philip Melanchthon, justification could come through no other means than faith, which Melanchthon defined as a trust in the promise of salvation found throughout the New Testament. Further, unlike John Chrysostom who believed the believer herself became righteous, Melanchthon adopted an imputed view of righteousness, which posited that one's righteousness was not their own, but was received from Christ. In other words, it was Christ's righteousness given to the believer that allowed them to be declared righteous, despite their being, in actuality, in a state of depravity.

Melanchthon's theology was influenced by the humanist movement, which challenged the traditional Scholastic method predominant in European universities and favored by the Roman Catholic Church. Humanism emphasized relying more on biblical texts themselves and learning the languages in which scripture had first been written, Hebrew and Greek, whereas traditional Scholasticism emphasized the need to study scripture and formulate theology using the tools provided by philosophy and logic. Underlying this dispute were realist and nominalist epistemologies. The realism characteristic of Scholastics, following Aristotle, held that universal truths about the observable world could be deduced through human reason, and that these truths acted as both evidences for the existence of God and indicators for moral behavior. Nominalists, however, questioned the dependability of human reason and thus how one could know their philosophical deductions were reliable.

Melanchthon, who adopted both the humanist and nominalist perspectives, concluded that, since human reason was suspect, the only way in which divine truths

could be known was through revelation. Thus scripture, divorced from the authoritative voice of the Roman Church, and most notably the philosophy, logic, and traditions of Scholasticism, became the rule of faith. However, despite his new rule of faith, Melanchthon's theology was still a product of extra-biblical realities. First, Melanchthon initially relied on Erasmus' hastily compiled translation of the Greek New Testament, *Novum Instrumentum omne*, which was compiled from incomplete manuscripts, and in which Erasmus often translated from the Latin Vulgate where the original Greek text was missing. Further, the imputed view of righteousness often attributed to the reformers' interpretation of scripture was, in actuality, inherited from the Roman Catholic humanist, Erasmus. Finally, and perhaps most revealing, Melanchthon's and Martin Luther's views of justification and righteousness were an emotional response to the fear and dread that resulted from works-based salvation. They believed that, since human beings were depraved and unable to perform good works through their own efforts, they would see themselves as hell bound, which would naturally lead to dread and despair. Thus Melanchthon concluded that justification, righteousness, and ultimately salvation could come only through trusting in the one capable of being righteous, Jesus Christ.

John Chrysostom's and Philip Melanchthon's irreconcilable views of justification diverged in their understandings of justification and righteousness themselves, which resulted from the ways in which their intellectual backgrounds and ideological environments shaped their epistemologies and views of humanity's moral status. For Chrysostom, humanity existed in a fallen, mortal state and required something or someone who could save them from death and its consequences, and then subsequently

lead them into a life of righteous living. For Melanchthon humanity had fallen into a state of depravity and could only be declared righteous by taking on the righteousness of Christ, who was able to fulfill the demands of the law. This thesis has detailed the ideological currents in Chrysostom's and Melanchthon's environments that led to their diverging interpretations of justification, and, as a result, provides insights into the theological differences between Eastern Christianity and Reformation Christianity at large.

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