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## A Quantitative Integrative Review of Personal Jurisdiction in Romans 1 Legal Exegesis and Its Implications on Christian Gentile Homonegative Doctrines

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# A Quantitative Integrative Review of Personal Jurisdiction in Romans 1 Legal Exegesis and Its Implications on Christian Gentile Homonegative Doctrines

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## Abstract

Seeking to understand how Mosaic Law became a barrier for Christian homosexuals, we completed a quantitative integrative review of N=110 scholastic sources; the results show that the barrier likely arose because 97.3 percent of homonegative exegesis is silent regarding Moses' and NT personal jurisdiction (PJ) statements; that silence results in an overinclusive argument that likely incorrectly implicates Gentile Christian homosexuality. More specifically, homonegative exegesis does four things: (1) 97 percent of exegetes omit citations and discussion of Moses' PJ that limit Moses' Gentile reach to "resident aliens" within Israel (e.g., Leviticus 18:2, 26, 20:2), (2) 92 percent of exegetes do not discuss Acts 10; 15:5-29, and 21:25, which reiterate Moses' PJ that exclude Gentiles from homosexual proscriptions, (3), 88.18 percent of scholars employ a different interpretive method to determine whom Romans 1 addresses than employed for the remainder of their analysis, and (4) 88.7 percent of exegetes engage *ipse dixit* when stating that the Romans 1 audience is Gentile when structural analysis and contextual evidence reflects that Paul addressed a Jewish audience concerning Jewish beliefs. Consequently, this research expatiates relevant PJ from Moses, NT, Didascalia, Halakha, Roman Law, and reflections of American Law, and adds the same to Romans 1 exegesis. The results—though unexpected—support the thesis that when added, Romans 1 forms no scriptural basis for Gentile Christian homonegative doctrine. We discuss the significance of the results.

*INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM DEFINITIONS<sup>2</sup>*

For decades, scholars have debated how Mosaic Law, as expressed in Leviticus and Romans 1, became a barrier to accepting Christian homosexuals. Some argue that the Levitical and Romans' condemnations remain binding on Christians (Baskett, 2018; Botha, 2004; Fowler, 2016; Hall, 2018; Hays & Johnson, 1997; Malick, 1993; Nordin, 2003; Smith, 1996; Starr, 2004; Zellentin, 2022). Others maintain that these proscriptions were time and context-specific and did not apply to modern Christians (Barnard, 2000; Boswell, 2015; Gnuse, 2016; Martin, 1995; Punt, 2007, 2008; Scroggs, 1983). Botha underscores this lack of concurrence, noting "that there is no consensus among scholars in understanding and interpreting these scripture passages" (2004, p. 1).

These scholarly disagreements have consequences, as Gaca (1999) observes: "Depending on the interpretive strategy one employs, the people's identity and the related scope of Paul's accusation vary considerably" (1999, p. 174). This dynamic is exemplified in the work of Lucas (2012) and Fowler (2016), whose contrasting conclusions regarding the scholastic agreement of the Jewish (Lucas) or Gentile (Fowler) identity of Paul's intended audience in Romans 1 demonstrate the profound ramifications of this textual determination. To date, no one has tested Gaca, Fowler, or Lucas's claims.

Although the field employs the legal-hermeneutic interpretive method more than any other for these passages, rigorous adherence to legal interpretation and analysis principles often needs to be improved. Informed by Smith's (1996) call for exegetical diligence, this research seeks to fill this gap, positing that a nuanced grasp of legal concepts, precisely personal jurisdiction, proves critical to the debate.

This research's quantitative integrative review of N=110 scholastic sources found that the exegetical barrier to accepting Christian homosexuals likely stems from an insufficient consideration of personal jurisdiction ("PJ") within both Mosaic Law and its New Testament ("NT") exposition. Specifically, homonegative exegesis frequently exhibits the following tendencies:

- Ninety-seven percent of exegetes omit citations and discussion of Moses' PJ that limit Moses' Gentile reach to "resident aliens" within Israel (e.g., Leviticus 18:2, 26, 20:2).
- Ninety-two percent of exegetes do not discuss Acts 10, 15:5-29, and 21:25, which reiterate Moses' PJ that excludes Gentiles from homosexual proscriptions.
- 88.18 percent of scholars employ a different interpretive method to determine whom Romans 1 addresses than they do for the rest of their analysis.
- 88.7 percent of exegetes engage in *ipse dixit* (i.e., making a conclusive statement based solely upon their authority) when stating that the Romans 1

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<sup>2</sup> The translations provided herein are the author's own; all NT Greek is from the NA28, and all NT citations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless otherwise specified. Hebrew Bible citations are from THE BIBLIA HEBRAICA STUTTGARTENSIA (BHS); my translations are corroborated (SCHERMAN, 1998). We do not analyze 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 within the dataset because Martin (2016) and Boswell (2015) addressed them, and the scope would be too extensive to manage in this review. We do not critique the natural law argument because Pope (1997) did so.

audience is Gentile, ignoring structural and contextual evidence that suggests Paul was addressing a Jewish audience about Jewish beliefs.

This study undertakes a multi-textual analysis of relevant jurisdictional statements found in Mosaic Law, the NT, the Didascalia, Halakha, Roman Law, and reflections within American law. This approach will elucidate the function of PJ within these texts, its historical interpretations, and its pivotal role in shaping the Christian discourse on homosexuality.

This research's thesis contends that incorporating Moses' and NT PJ into the exegesis of Leviticus and Romans 1 reveals no scriptural proscription and thus no basis for Gentile Christian homonegative doctrine. This work necessitates a greater degree of legal acumen among exegetes, generates a crucial reassessment of prevailing Christian homonegativity, and likely opens a new chapter in the conversation about Christian attitudes towards homosexuality.

### *APPROACH, ROADMAP, RESEARCH QUESTIONS & DEFINITIONS*

#### **Approach & Roadmap**

We conducted this study using a modified quantitative integrative review of homonegative exegesis, N=110 scholastic sources. In a quantitative integrative review, "each study is treated as a subject in a study of studies, and the combined, integrated effects of the agent under question are evaluated" (Needleman, 1990, p. 188). This approach is most appropriate because homonegative exegesis is qualitative, and scholars use various methods to exposit the legal proscription (Toronto & Torraco, 2020), which makes meta-analysis and a systematic review inapposite for this study (Doolen, 2016). Additionally, a quantitative integrative review allows us to elucidate underlying themes in hermeneutic choice, investigate what each study left unsaid, and decipher why that is. In contrast, a meta-analysis and systematic review do not. A quantitative integrative review allows us to transform elements of qualitative studies into a quantitative dataset that empirically reflects "(1) the current state of evidence of the [scripturally based Gentile Christian homonegative] phenomenon, (2) the quality of the evidence, (3) gaps in the literature, and (4) . . . the future steps for research and practice" (Toronto & Torraco, 2020, p. 357).

To improve information accessibility, we will present this research in a modified, sometimes nested, CREAC compositional form (Kraft, 2014).<sup>3</sup> We will first state our conclusion and provide definitions, PJ rules, and rule explanations. Next, we will discuss the methodology of the quantitative integrative review. When analyzing Romans 1 exegesis, we will focus on the predominate interpretive methods—structuralist and contextualists—to critique their application and add new insights. We will also critically discuss how Christian scholarship applies the rules within Romans 1 exegesis. Finally, we will discuss the exegetical and legal implications of the current scholarship's treatment of the PJ method upon the parties invoked and excoriated and the next steps.

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<sup>3</sup> Kraft (2014) argues the necessity of a flexible C.onclusion, R.ule, E.xplanation, A.pplication, and C.onclusion compositional form to address complex legal issues.

## Research Questions

In addition to and because of the above, this research provides several other contributions: (1) in response to Smith, we asked and sought to answer how Mosaic Law and Romans 1 exposition of the same became a barrier to acceptance of homosexual Gentile Christians (1996), (2) whether the data accords with Gaca's hypothesis that exegetes' interpretive strategies dictate their conclusions of the Romans 1 audience (1999), and (3) test the Lucas-Fowler audience claim, where Lucas posits that the majority of scholarship holds that the Romans 1 audience is Jewish and Fowler posits the majority holds a Gentile audience (Fowler, 2016; Lucas, 2012).

## *Concept & Term Definitions*

To improve accessibility, we provide definitions of relevant concepts and terms that are likely unfamiliar to those outside of the Jewish and American secular and religious legal fields. Definition sections are not typically riveting; we apologize. However, the definitions are simple and succinct to promote shared understanding and highlight the complex layers of analysis required for a thorough exposition of the scriptures.

## Homonegativity

Homonegative/homonegativity is a psychological term that describes the measurement and study of how religion shapes overt prejudice toward, objections to, and misconceptualization of the LGBTQIA+ community (Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Rosik et al., 2013). Here, the exegetical discussion of the Levitical or Pauline proscription is classified as homonegative exegesis regardless of a study's position on homosexuality.

## Jewish Legal Sources & Context

This research uses various Jewish legal sources that readers may be unfamiliar with; consequently, we provide the necessary context to increase accessibility. The Jewish legal sources used are the Tanakh, Mishnah, Talmud, and Mishneh Torah.

The **Tanakh** is an abbreviation that describes the contents of the Hebrew Bible (**T.aN.aK.h**). **Torah**: The law (first five books of Moses; also called the Written Torah). **Nevi'im**: the prophets. **Ketuvim**: the writings. We use the words “Torah”, “Moses”, and “Mosaic” interchangeably. The **Mishnah** and **Talmud** are the written versions of the Oral Torah that—per Orthodoxy—was transmitted by Moses to the Children of Israel concomitant with the Written Torah (Reese, 2022). The **Mishneh Torah** is the Medieval update to the Mishnah. **Halakha** is a broad term covering all Jewish law (i.e., Tanakh, Mishnah, Talmud, Mishneh Torah, rabbinic laws, and customs). Finally, the **historical Jewish context of these laws** is that they comprise an everlasting covenant that God made with Israel via Moses wherein Israel would love and obey God's commands, and God would protect, honor, and bless them among all nations in this world and the world to come (Deuteronomy 33:4; B. Sanhedrin 59a; B. Avodah Zarah 3a).

## Personal & Subject Matter Jurisdiction

Mosaic and Roman law exercised PJ and Subject Matter Jurisdiction (SMJ) (Nicholas, 2008). PJ is a legal entity's statutory right over the physical person(s) involved in a dispute and the entity's power to require the person to be present and answerable before the entity. PJ is a pre and post-first century ACE Roman and Jewish law practice (Nicholas, 2008; Hecht, 1996). PJ has enjoyed a long history dating back to 1780 BCE, and Christian *praxis* and exegesis reflect our understanding of P/SMJ, which makes its absence from Christian homonegative jurisprudence/exegesis peculiar (Urch, 1929; Witte, 1998). SMJ is the entity's statutory right to hear/try specific matters within its forum. For centuries, “[t]he requirement that jurisdiction be established as a threshold matter . . . is ‘inflexible and without exception,’ . . . for ‘[j]urisdiction is power to declare the law,’ and ‘[w]ithout jurisdiction the court cannot proceed at all in any cause’ ” (Ruhrgas Ag v. Marathon Oil Co., 1999, p. 577; Mansfield et al. R. Co. v. Swan, 1884; Ex et al., 1869). Mosaic Law established its judges' SMJ over civil and criminal cases when it promulgated Deuteronomy 1:1, 16-17. Mosaic Law criminalized homosexuality when it promulgated Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 that state, respectively, "You shall not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination" and "A man who lies with a man as one lies with a woman, they have both done an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon themselves." Mosaic Law established its PJ over those who practice homosexuality when it promulgated Leviticus 18:2, 26, and 20:2, respectively:

Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them . . .

But you shall safeguard My decrees and My Judgements, and not commit any of these abominations the native or the proselyte who lives among you. Say to the Children of Israel: Any man from the Children of Israel and from the proselyte who lives with Israel . . .

The Hebrew (בְּנֵי) and Greek (υἱός) state Moses' PJ extends to Jacob/Israel's descendants and the "resident alien" who is a proselyte to Judaism (גר; προσήλυτος) (Montanari, 2015a, p. 1811).<sup>4</sup> However, when English versions, such as NRSV, translate בְּנֵי (children) as "the people," it incorrectly broadens the population by removing the descendant requirement, leaving self-identification or geography as determinates. Additionally, when NRSV removes the word "proselyte" (גר; προσήλυτος), only leaving the phrase "resident alien," it incorrectly omits the conversion requirement; this requires that we closely examine Jewish interpretations of their law.<sup>5</sup>

The Talmud reinforces Moses' PJ by acknowledging that the non-proselyte Gentile is not required to follow the Torah, Noahide laws, nor required to become a proselyte to Judaism because it is a "fact that they [Gentiles] are not commanded

<sup>4</sup> See also B. Sanhedrin 59a: "A gentile who engages in Torah study is liable to receive the death penalty; as it is stated: 'Moses commanded us a law [torah], an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob' (Deuteronomy 33:4), indicating that it is an inheritance for us, and not for them."

<sup>5</sup> Moffitt and Butera (2013)'s argument that προσήλυτος does not mean "proselyte" but "resident alien" is not persuasive because (1) προσήλυτος harmonizes with the rabbinic consensus and the Tanakh and (2) their conclusion is based upon an Egyptian tax document, not a Jewish or religious text (i.e., compositional fallacy).

to do so" (B. Avodah Zarah 3a:2, See also B. Avodah Zarah 2b, B. Bava Kamma 38b), and that the non-proselyte Gentile who either follows the Noahide laws or any portion of the Torah receives no reward for doing so, in this life or after that (B. Avodah Zarah 3a:1). This means that under no permutation of Jewish law is a non-proselyte Gentile bound to follow Mosaic law.

### ***Ipse Dixit***

*Ipse dixit* is a conclusory statement based solely upon the authority of the communicator and offers no evidence or rationale to justify the conclusion (Legal Information Institute, n.d. a).

### **Christian Hermeneutics & Interpretive Methods**

Christian **hermeneutics** are various methodologies, heuristics, and rules employed by exegetes to interpret scripture, while **exegesis** is the use of hermeneutics within one's critical explanation of the biblical text (Virkler & Ayayo, 2007; Zimmermann, 2015). Such heuristics include the "type and shadow" hermeneutic that mandates exposition postulate how the Tanakh points toward Jesus and exclusive Christian doctrines, which can be problematic when the Christian perspective conflicts with well-established Jewish interpretations (Douglas, 2018; Hall, 2018; McDowell, 1999; Saint Justin, 1948; Schubert, 2017; Virkler & Ayayo, 2007; Zimmermann, 2015).<sup>6</sup> Some rules bar using anachronism to explicate scriptures (Snodgrass, 2018), while others, like Virkler, restrain interpretations by stating that the concept that every scripture applies to every Christian "[p]ious though it sounds, the concept is hermeneutically invalid;" holding that every exegete must determine who the passage under consideration addresses and that finding is dispositive of its application to the reader and humanity (Virkler & Ayayo, 2007, p. 89). Virkler's hermeneutical restraint is precisely what the legal hermeneutic requires (Tate, 2012). Tate (2012) details hundreds of **interpretive methods**, which we consulted to understand better the lens through which authors explicated Leviticus and Romans 1's homosexual proscription. Those interpretive methods are apocalyptic eschatology, exegetical-church doctrine, biblical criticism and natural law, demythologization (approach that distinguishes cosmological, sociological, and historical claims from teachings about philosophy, theology, and ethics), anthropocentrism (interpreting humans as God's most important creation), theodicy (reconciling divine good with the presence of evil), historical criticism, ecocriticism (examining the relationship between environment and the scriptures), myth, cultural criticism, law, and confessional statements. These methods span various disciplines: legal, religion, sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, and anthropology.

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<sup>6</sup>Douglas (2018) urged the field not to "concentrate exclusively on [interpreting the Prophets through] the role of law within Judaism" but to explore the Prophets' meaning "in non-Jewish legal contexts."

## Supersessionism

Supersessionism is an antisemitic Christian doctrine that purports that Gentile Christians replaced/superseded the Jews in God's plan. Thus, Gentile Christians now receive most laws and all promises that God initially gave to Jews. As Holmes and Pregill show, within the first-century ACE, our Church Fathers—not the NT—purported—against the Tanakh—that the Golden Calf resulted in the forfeiture of Jewish peoples' possessory right to the Tanakh and memorialized covenant(s), transferred those right(s) to Jesus, and Jesus' death bequeath the Tanakh and covenants to the Gentile Christian (The Epistle of Barnabas 14:4-5; Origen, 1980; Pregill, 2020). Reformer Martin Luther echoed that sentiment (Luther, 2018, p. 110). Homonegative exegesis does not discuss this issue and applies Moses' proscription to non-proselyte Gentiles.

## First Century BCE & ACE Sources That Are Important To Christian Exegesis

**Philo** was an Alexandrian Jewish philosopher of the first century BCE who wrote several legal treatises for Jews that interpreted Mosaic law through Hellenistic logic and philosophy. His work is now highly regarded by Christian theologians but not in Jewish religious scholarship. It is also used for polemics against sexual sins (Hadas-Lebel, 2012).

The Wisdom of Solomon ("**Wisdom**"), composed in Greek in Alexandria, Egypt, in the first century BCE, is a deuterocanonical book (i.e., part of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox canons but not the Protestant canon). It, too, is essential to Christian scholarship because it offers "insights" into God, wisdom, the afterlife, and Messiah; it influenced the theology of the early Church Fathers and provides vivid excoriation of Jewish idolatry and God's reaction to sin (Coogan et al., 2007).

The **Sibylline Oracles** are a collection of prophecies composed by Jewish and Christian authors between 150 BCE and 180 ACE. They reflect the syncretism between pagan and Christian beliefs, borrowing from familiar pagan imagery to spread Christian ideas. Some people believe that the Oracles accurately predicted historical events, which gave some prophecies credibility. The Sibylline Oracles reinforced Christian teachings, such as creation, divine wrath and judgment, and the afterlife, while ironically condemning paganism by promoting Christian "monotheism" (Charlesworth, 2010).

The **Letter of Aristeas** is a fictional letter purporting to have been written in 150 BCE by Aristeas of Marmora, which details the circumstances surrounding King Ptolemy II's order to have seventy-two Jewish scholars translate the Torah into Greek (i.e., the Torah portion of the Septuagint). The Letter of Aristeas is significant to Christianity because it "legitimizes" the Septuagint and its divine inspiration. Additionally, the letter criticizes idolatry, moral corruption, non-sanctioned Jewish ritual practices, and Jewish ignorance (Law, 2013).

**Didascalia Apostolorum**, Latin for "Teaching of the Apostles," is a Syrian third-century ACE Christian legal treatise that provided guidance on church organization, rituals, and conduct to end Gentile dependence on and inquiry into the Torah. The Church recognized that the Torah did not extend to the non-proselyte Gentile (Boismard & Taylor, 1992).



## ***The Halakhic & NT PJ Rule Definitions & Explanations***

### ***Relevant Halakhic PJ Statements***

As it relates to homonegative exegesis, PJ statements arrive from both the Torah and the NT (Leviticus 18:2, 26; 20:2; Deuteronomy 1:1, 4:1, 33:4; Acts 10, 15:28-29, and 21:12-26). This research addresses these rules. A precise understanding of PJ—as articulated in both the Torah and the NT—proves indispensable to analyzing homonegative exegesis.

The Torah's relevant PJ statements are Leviticus 18:2, 26; 20:2, Deuteronomy 1:1, 4:1, 33:4. God gives commands to the Children of Israel, and they obey them, including the Gentile proselyte who lives among them. (Portion, 2020). As a PJ statement, this creates two categories: (1) those bound by birth (גֵּרִי; υἱός) and (2) aliens bound by conversion (גֵּרִי; προσήλυτος) and residence. Look deeper into what it means to be “a resident alien.” To qualify as a resident alien, the Gentile must do more than sojourn into Israeli territory; s/he must achieve *Ger Toshav* status. *Ger Toshav* is “a 'resident alien' who has made a formal commitment toward the observance of certain mitzvot” and retains the right of residence in the land of Israel (Alder, 2002, pp. 24-25; Klawans, 1995). However, there is a “circuit split” on the exact level of observance. One belief holds that *Ger Toshav* is a Noahide who “pledge[s] in the presence of a learned tribunal not to commit ‘*avodo zara*’” (i.e., strange worship, idolatry), the second holds that the Gentile “make[s] a commitment to observe all seven Noahide laws” (which also forbids idolatry), and the third, requires the Gentile to “commit to observe all negative commandments [which includes the prohibition to idolatry] with the exception of *nevela*” (consumption of animal meat that has died by non-valid slaughtering) (Alder, 2002, p. 25).

A Christian cannot be *Ger Toshav* because *Ger Toshav* forbids *avodo zara* (idolatry). Halakhic texts, including Mishneh Torah (Avodat Kochavim 9:4) and Mishnah (Avodah Zarah 1:3), associate Christianity with idolatrous practices, strictly forbidden for *Ger Toshav*. Furthermore, the Talmudic charge against Jesus for incitement to idolatry (B. Sanhedrin 43a), coupled with Deuteronomy 13:6-18's condemnation of unfamiliar deities, prevent Christians from fulfilling *Ger Toshav*'s requirements.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, where all *Ger Toshav* qualifications forbid idolatry and halakha classifies Christianity as idolatry, then the Christian cannot be *Ger Toshav*.

### ***Relevant NT PJ Statements***

Regarding homonegative exegesis, the NT PJ statements are Acts 10, 15:28-29, and 21:12-26. Each provides valuable insights into how PJ shaped the Apostles' approach to Gentile Christians: Acts 10 (Peter's revelation to apply no Mosaic law nor labels upon the Gentile), Acts 15 (Apostles Decree not to apply Mosaic Law upon Gentile Christians), and Acts 21:12-26 (Apostolic reiteration to Paul not to apply Mosaic Law upon Gentile Christians but that Jews were still required to keep the law). While all three passages warrant thorough examination, this discussion, due to space constraints, will prioritize the Apostles' Decree in Acts 15.

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<sup>7</sup> See also Mark 11:18, 12:12; Luke 22:1-2, Acts 18:12, 22:20-31

In Acts 15, the Apostles, after prayerful deliberation, addressed the contentious question: “is [it] necessary for [Gentiles] to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5b).<sup>8</sup> The Apostles concluded that:

It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you [Gentiles] no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts 15:28-29)

Crucially, the Decree's language, along with the specific questions prompting it, underscores the limited applicability of Mosaic Law to Gentile believers. Paul and other Christian brothers were charged with disclosing this news to Gentile believers starting in Syria, Cilicia, and Antioch. Acts 15 thus reaffirms the personal jurisdictional boundaries inherent in Mosaic Law itself, namely the applicability of Mosaic law to Israelites and proselytes but not non-proselyte Gentiles (i.e., Gentile Jesus followers).

The understanding of the Syrian Church, memorialized in the third-century legal treatise *Didascalia Apostolorum*, aligns with the above (Boismard & Taylor, 1992). There, Peter told those assembled before the Council of his vision and made his appeal just as detailed in Acts 15:8-12. However, unlike Acts, the Syrian brothers recall Peter stating the following before his closing:

For the Lord hath come to us, and hath loosed us from these bonds, and hath said to us, Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am quiet and humble in My heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is pleasant and My burden is light. If, therefore, our Lord loosed us and lightened from us, why do ye wish to put a halter on yourselves? (Didascalia, 1903, p. 109)

The Didascalia does not mention Paul's report nor James' statement regarding where and when one reads Moses, which further suggests a focused intent to clarify the non-applicability of Mosaic Law for Gentile Christians (Boismard & Taylor, 1992). Finally, it is noteworthy that Acts 15 does not suggest that the prohibition of sexual immorality (i.e., πορνείας) means anything more than its denotative meaning: prostitution or extra-marital sex, not homosexual sex (Brackens, 2010; Harper, 2012; Montanari, 2015b; *Contra Botha*, 2004).<sup>9</sup>

The exposition of Mosaic and Acts' PJ statements, along with their implications for Gentile Christians, concludes here. The following section will detail the methodology and materials used in the quantitative integrative review conducted for this study.

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<sup>8</sup> Note: We do not include Matthew 5:17 as an extension of Moses PJ because Jesus and all Jews must fulfill the mitzvot within the Tanakah. See B. Avodah Zarah 3a:3.

<sup>9</sup> See also Genesis 38:24 and Numbers 14:33; the Septuagint uses the word "prostitution," while the BHS uses the word "harlotry." *Contra Botha* (2004): Botha assumes that πορνείας means pre-marital sex. This understanding may be why, as Zellentin (2022) found, Christian tradition declined to evoke the Decree, and likely why Olson & Perry (2012), in note 2, chose—without textual support—to assume that πορνείας carried the same classifications of sexual immorality enunciated within Levitical law.

## ***Romans 1 Exegesis: Materials & Methods***

### **Operationalization**

This research used the `lm()` function in RStudio Build 353, 2022.12.0, to complete chi-squared tests and Simple (SLR) and OLS regression and the `glmnet()` function to complete Rigid regression (RR). Findings are expressed as Chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ), expected value for Chi-Squared distribution (E), degrees of freedom (df), p-value, alpha ( $\alpha$ ), adjusted-R<sup>2</sup>, lambda-value ( $\lambda$ -value), mean squared error (MSE), sum of squares total (SST), sum of squared estimate of errors (SSE), and F-statistic (F).

### **Methodology**

The Toronto and Remington (2020) method for quantitative integrative reviews requires that we specify eligibility criteria, identify all potential homonegative literature, screen them for completeness, inspect for full-text eligibility, detail how we executed the above, and depict the process within a PRISMA diagram (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). We now discuss how we executed the Toronto and Remington (2020) method; then we provide the PRISMA diagram. The literature reviewed that comprise our dataset arose from successive searches of (a) seven electronic scholastic databases (i.e., JSTOR, ProQuest, Gale Academic, DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals, University of Edinburgh Library Database, EBSCOhost Humanities, and Google Scholar (n=87)) using the search term "Romans 1", (b) two Google searches using the search term "Romans 1" for the first search (n=3) and "THE GOLDEN CALF EPISODE IN POSTBIBLICAL LITERATURE" for the second search, because this trend found within the literature (n=1), (c) n=5 resources were found through reviewing works cited, and (d) n=4 sources were in the authors' library. Additionally, we reviewed the denominational statements of faith (SOF) from the Top-Fifteen American Protestant denominations—per Pew Research Center—and the Catholic Catechism as an indicator of Christian doctrine and *praxis* (Pew, 2015). Regarding the timeline for data collection, we identified all sources in N=3 days in Q1-23, screening took N=3 days, and eligibility verification took N=38 days.

The source must speak to the Romans 1 decline narrative, define the audience composition, justify its position, and provide full-text access to be eligible for this study. N=3,893 unique sources arose from searching seven electronic scholastic databases; however, we excluded N=3,713 records because they did not address the Romans 1 decline narrative *and* audience composition or provide full-text access. Additional N=72 resources were removed as "out-of-scope" because they were catalogs, circulars, clippings, diaries, field notes, memoirs, oral histories, or pamphlets that provided no scholastic references and consisted of conclusory statements. Additional N=26 resources were removed as "insufficient detail" because they were book reviews. Next, we excluded N=6 of the top fifteen Protestant denominations because they either did not provide a formal statement or cite scriptural support for their decision.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, there were N=110 eligible

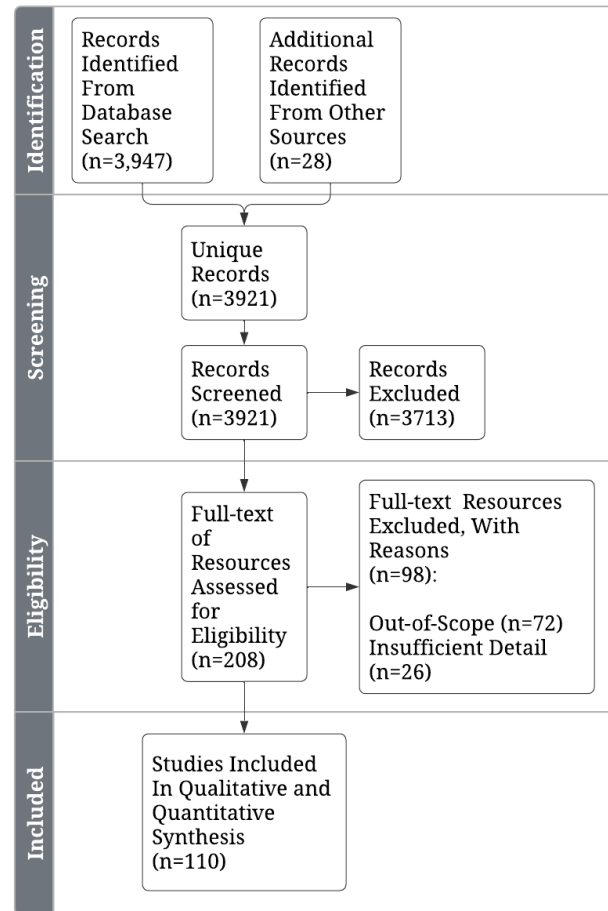
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<sup>10</sup> United Methodist Church, American Baptist Churches USA, Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, National Baptist Convention, and Episcopal Church.

sources, and given that we reviewed more than 100 resources, we hold that our dataset is sufficiently large to speak to the exegetical population (Healey & Healy, 2010). Finally, the composition of the N=110 eligible sources are as follows: N=46 journal articles (n=40 English, n=6 Non-English (n=2 Afrikaans, n=1 Polish, n=1 Slovakian, n=2 German)); N=45 books, N=6 dissertations, N=2 theses, N=1 newspaper article, and N=1 sermon (by a minister unknown to the researchers), which were in English.

**Figure 1**

*PRISMA Flow Diagram for Homonegative Literature*



### Deriving The Interpretive Analysis Variables

Nineteen variables added to the dataset of 110 sources, N=6 are nominal variables (i.e., source type, specific interpretive method, Tate-interpretative method, general interpretive method-1 (GM1), general interpretive method-2 (GM2), and audience), and the remainder are binary dummy variables (i.e., *ipse dixit*, *ipse* cited, GM2 categories, citations of Acts 10, 15, 21 and Moses' PJ, and the evidence variables: whether Romans 1 was influenced by/conforms with the Tanakh and Judaism, Philo, Wisdom of Solomon, Sibylline Oracles, or Letter of Aristeas) (Tate, 2012). The source type variables represent whether the source is a

journal article, dissertation, thesis, book, newspaper article, or sermon. The specific interpretive method variable represents N=16 standard interpretive methods found by reading the material and identifying frequently shared terms, heuristics, themes, and references such as "wrath," "historicity," "Adamic narrative," and "natural law"; see Table 1, below. The Tate-interpretive method derives from matching the author's specific interpretive method to Tate's (2012) catalog of biblical interpretive methods. This matching standardized the authors' methods with established biblical hermeneutics as opposed to relying solely on the researchers' understanding garnered from observed patterns, which would effectively create a new, untested variable within homonegative literature, which was not the goal. GM1 represents N=2 variables (i.e., structuralist, coded "1" or contextualist, coded "0") derived or verified from observing the general method authors employed within their exposition of Romans. Almost all authors stated their general method within their research, which made it easy to derive this variable. For the few that did not specify a GM1, it was derived by analyzing the employed methodology and matching it to the GM1 criteria discussed below. GM2 represents N=3 variables (i.e., structuralist, contextualist, *ipse dixit*) derived from observing authors' general method to identify the Romans 1 audience. The audience variables represent whether the author posited a Jewish or Gentile Romans 1 audience, "1:Jew" and "0:Gentile". Where authors declined to enunciate the culture but used terms such as "human" or "humanity," those designations were coded "Gentile." Four binary dummy variables represent whether the author cited Acts 10, 15, 21, or any of Moses' PJ statements; coded "1:Yes" when cited and "0:No" when not. Next, the N=5 dummy evidence variables coded "1:Yes" when cited and "0:No" when not; these variables arose because at least N=10 sources proffered the evidence. Lastly, N=5 dummy variables represent whether the author determined the Romans 1 audience using or citing another author who used *ipse dixit*, and one for each GM2 category.

To test Gaca's assertion and because the data is nominal, we completed chi-squared tests to determine whether the specific and general interpretive methods impact how the author determines the Romans 1 audience. Using the audience as the dependent variable, we used OLS regression to understand how much GM1 and GM2 impact an author's determination of the Romans 1 audience, which later required SLR and Ridge regression. We used basic descriptive statistics to test the Lucas-Fowler assertion regarding the scholarly consensus of the Romans 1 audience.

Lastly, there may be merit in deriving and analyzing more variables like authors' origin and denominational affiliation; however, because a quantitative integrative analysis is a new concept in homonegative literature, we seek to provide a global assessment and hope to build upon this research with the field's help.

### Understanding GM1 Variables

GM1's values are contextualist and structuralist; the former performs contextual analysis or criticism when they engage the text—typically within its original language—and compare the text(s) usage within other scriptures or historical documents to help elucidate who the author is, the source of the author's belief, or the profundity of the author's point (Virkler & Ayayo, 2007). The contextualist must test whether the (a) "general historical milieu in which the writer

speaks," (b) "specific historical-cultural context and purpose of the book," (c) "immediate context of the passage under consideration," and (d) "who is being addressed in the passage" match that of the compared text to meet the threshold of relatability between compared texts (Virkler & Ayayo, 2007, pp. 82, 89). A structuralist—sometimes referred to as a lexical-syntactical analyst—observes the use of the text's language and determines topical patterns and boundaries to help explain what and to whom the author addresses; furthermore, structural analysis also requires contextual analysis, but not vice versa (Eagleton, 2008; Lucas, 2012; Milne, 1989; Virkler & Ayayo, 2007). Structuralists "claim that the meaning of each image is wholly a matter of its relation to the other (Eagleton, 2008)."

The paramount difference is that the structuralist looks within, whereas the contextualist looks to the external.

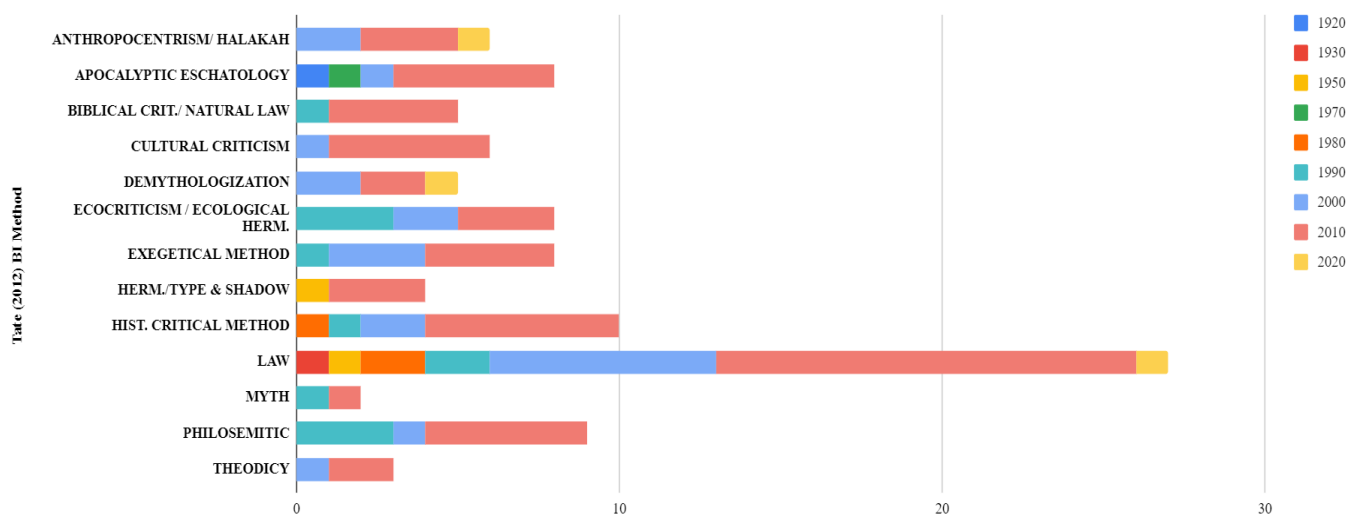
### ***Romans 1 Exegesis: Results***

#### **Overview**

The sources' publication years range from 1926 to 2024 ( $\mu=2012$ ,  $\bar{X}=2006$ ,  $\sigma=16.06$ ). There are publications from each year from 1994 to 2022, with the exception of 1998 and 2021.<sup>11</sup> We grouped each source by their specific, general, and Tate (2012) interpretive methods employed to analyze Romans 1. As detailed in Table 1, we found N=16 specific interpretive methods and N=13 Tate (2012) interpretive methods. When grouped by their Tate (2012) interpretive method and publication year to elucidate methodological propensity, the results showed that the most significant scholastic response to homosexual issues occurred during the 2010 decade.

**Figure 2**

*Evolution & Frequency of Biblical Interpretations Regarding Homosexuality Within Each Decade*



<sup>11</sup> This was not an intended result but the product of the quantitative integrative review methodology detailed above.

During that time, countries like the US, Argentina, Ireland, France, and England legalized same-sex marriage, while India, Angola, Botswana, and Mozambique decriminalized homosexuality (Constitution of Ireland 1937 art. 41, 2015; Letsweletse Motshidiemang v Attorney General, 2019; Ley de Matrimonio Igualitario, 2010; Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act, 2013; Naz Foundation v.

Government of NCT of Delhi, 2009; Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015; Opening Marriage to Same-sex Couple, 2013). Thus, the proliferation of Christian responses during this timeframe makes sense. Next, there appear to be four additional trends. First, during the 2010 decade, there was a return to the "natural law" debate that had remained dormant for approximately ten years. Second, there was a scholastic call for exegetes to return to the "type & shadow" hermeneutic to "properly" explicate homosexuality within "God's" plan for humanity (Hall, 2018; Martin, 2012; Mustol, 2017; Thomas, 2010). That hermeneutic remained dormant since Lilly (1951). Third, the legal interpretive method has been used since the 1930s and is the most used within homonegative exegesis. Finally, Romans 1 homonegative exegesis (GM1) forms two general interpretive camps: structuralist (N=13) and contextualist (N=97), see Table 2 below.

**Table 1**  
*Specific & Tate (2012) Interpretive Method Frequency Table*

Code	Specific Interpretive Method	Tate (2012) Interpretive Method	N-Sources	Source
1	"Philosemitic" Rereading of Romans	Philosemitic*	9	Brown (2016); D.A. Campbell, Tilling, and Adams (2014); W.S. Campbell (2013); Cornelius (2003); Fowler (2016); Kittredge and Elliott (2016); Rogers (2011); Stowers (1994); Tobin (1993)
2	Divine Wrath	Apocalyptic Eschatology	8	Esler (2004); Gushee (2015); Hogan (2017); Kowalski (2018); McFadden (2013); Pieper (1926); Stagg (1976); Wasserman (2018)
3	Churches' Doctrinal Response To Homosexuality	Exegetical Method 1	8	Banister (2009); Grimes (2014); Richard B. Hays and Johnson (2003); Jung and Jung (2013); Newheiser (2015); Pope (1997); Stephens (2019); Wenz (2005)
4	Aquinas, Natural Law in Roman Discourse	Biblical Criticism/Natural Law	5	Cooper (2012); Gignac (2015); Levering (2014); Rogers Jr (1999); Van Druenen (2012)
5	Reading Adam/Fall Within Romans Argument	Demythologization	5	Dunn (2012); Elliott and Reasoner (2011); Keener (2009); Ryan (2022); Skipper (2017)
7	Anthropological Critique Upon Paul's Gentile Application of Halakha	Anthropocentrism/Halakha	6	Botha (2004); Crawford and Riley (2019); Green (2008); Javornicky (2019); Pregill (2020); Yeo (2008)
8	Reconciling Humanity's Notice	Theodicy	3	A.T. Smith (2014); Swart (2005); Tilling (2014)
9	Type & Shadow	Hermeneutics/Type & Shadow	4	Lilly (1951); P. Martin (2012); Mustol (2012); Origen (2001)
10	Romans' Rhetoric In Global/Historical Contexts	Historical-Critical Method	10	Antuñia (2013); Richard B Hays (1986); Keck (2005); Malick (1993); Marchal (2012); D.B. Martin (2013); Penner and Lopez (2012); Schott (2008); Thorsteinsson, Thiessen, and Rodriguez (2016); Urbano (2008)
11	Male and Female Sexuality in Rome	Ecocriticism / Ecological Hermeneutics	8	Gruse (2015); Knust (2006); Miller (1995); Punt (2007); Sanders (2016); M.D. Smith (1996); Sprinkle (2015); Ward (1997)
12	Reconciling Jewish Law, Paul, Christ, & Gentiles	Law	27	Bassler (1984); Berkley (2000); Black, Smith, and Spivey (2019); Borg and Crossan (2010); Boswell (2015); Boyarin (2007); Catholic Church (2000); Gupta (2012); Herzberg (2014); Himbaza et al. (2012); Jackson (2019); Jeremias (1954); Jewett (1986); Klostermann (1933); Longenecker (1999); Alec J Lucas (2010); Alexander James Lucas (2012b); Alec J Lucas (2012a); OH (2003); Olliffe (2014); Olson and Perry (2012); Starr (2004); Viljoen (2003); Ware (2011); Watson (2007); Zellentin (2022); Zetterholm (2009)
13	Greek Worship: Polytheism	Myth	2	Gaca (1999, 2017)
14	The Homosexuality Debate in Malawi	Cultural Criticism 1	1	Mawerenga (2018)
15	Greek Sexual Expressions in Paul's Rome	Cultural Criticism 2**	5	Dodson (2017); Hall (2018); Hoke (2018); Townsley (2013); Wilson (2002)
16	Confessional Statement	Confessional Statement	9	Assemblies of God (USA) (2014); Church Of God (2022); Church of God in Christ (2012); Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (1999); Presbyterian Church in America (2004); Presbyterian Church USA (2015); Seventh-day Adventist Church (2024); Southern Baptist Convention (2024); United Church of Christ (2022)
Σ			110	

Notes: \*Tate did not have a category for this method, so we imported the specific method; \*\* Same Tate Category as above. Source: Brackens (2024)

**Table 2**  
*GM1 & Audience Identity*

	Audience				
	Gentiles		Jewish		$\Sigma$
GM1	N	Row %	N	Row %	
Contextualist	97	100.0%	0	0.0%	97
Structuralist	9	69.2%	4	30.8%	13
$\Sigma$	106		4		N=110

Notes:  $\chi^2 = 22.814$ , df = 1, p-value < 0.000

### Testing Lucas-Fowler & Gaca

Testing the Lucas-Fowler hypothesis, we found that N=106 postulates a Gentile audience, while N=4 postulates a Jewish audience, meaning that Fowler is correct; most of the field postulates a Gentile audience (Research Question-3). Next, Chi-Squared was used to test Gaca's claim that "Depending on the interpretive strategy one employs, the people's identity . . . vary considerably;" the results show that Gaca is partially correct (1999, p. 174). A Chi-squared test reflects with 95 percent confidence that no correlation exists between the specific interpretive or Tate (2012) method employed to analyze Romans 1 and audience determination. A correlation does exist between the structuralist-GM1 and a Jewish audience determination, where  $\chi^2=22.814$ , df=1, p-value <0.000, and  $\alpha=0.05$ . However, there is more behind this correlation than immediately seen.

Most scholars (88.18 percent) use a different method to determine the Romans 1 audience than what they employ to exposit the remainder of Romans 1 (Contextualist (91.75 percent), Structuralist (69.23 percent)); see Table 3 below. Additionally, the data reflects that 88.7 percent of those postulating a Gentile audience do so via *ipse dixit* or by citing scholars who postulated a Gentile audience via *ipse dixit*. For contextualists, E (the expected value for  $\chi^2$  distribution) suggests that more contextualists should have used contextualism to determine a Gentile audience, and four contextualists should have cited structuralists to determine a Jewish audience; meaning fewer should have relied on *ipse dixit* and thus their actual reliance is significant. For Structuralists, E anticipated more would have relied on *ipse dixit* to arrive at a Gentile designation and that no structuralist using structuralism would have determined a Jewish audience, making that conclusion significant. We grouped and reviewed scholarship by their GM1-GM2 interaction to better understand why 88.18 percent of scholars employ a different interpretive method to determine whom Romans 1 addresses than they do for the rest of their analysis. Unfortunately, nothing explained this phenomenon; however, the GM1-GM2 grouping revealed seven unique exegetical outcomes whose cumulative effect impacts Gentiles and Jews' due process/PJ rights, which the literature does not address; thus, this research will be within the "Criticism" section; see Table 4, below.



**Table 3**  
*GM1, GM2 & Audience*

GM2	Audience	GM1 <i>Contextualist</i>			<i>Structuralist</i>			$\Sigma$
		N	Row %	Column %	N	Row %	Column %	
<i>Contextualist</i>	<i>Gentiles</i>	8	66.67%	8.25%	4	33.33%	<u>30.77%</u>	12
<i>Ipse Dixit</i>	<i>Gentiles</i>	89	94.68%	<u>91.75%</u>	5	5.32%	<u>38.46%</u>	94
<i>Structuralist</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	0	0.00%	0.00%	4	100.00%	30.77%	4
$\Sigma$		<b>97</b>			<b>13</b>			<b>N=110</b>

**Notes: GM2:**  $\chi^2 = 38.986$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.000$ ; **Audience:**  $\chi^2 = 22.814$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.000$

**Table 4**  
*The Seven Exegetical Outcomes From The Interaction Between GM1 & GM2*

WHEN	THEN	Sig. $\chi^2$
Structuralists defer to Contextualists, who use contextualism to determine the audience of Romans 1:18-32.	<b>Cited Contextualists use Wisdom</b> and avoid Moses' and Acts' PJ, state the audience is Gentile, and adjudge Gentiles guilty by charging Gentiles with actual or constructive knowledge of a later codified Jewish prohibition.	Yes
Structuralists use structuralism to determine the Romans 1:18-32 audience	<b>Structuralists review the written structure and conclude that the audience is Jewish</b> , which does not violate Moses' or Acts' PJ and does not mirror Supersessionism.	Yes
Contextualists use contextualism to determine the Romans 1:18-32 audience	<b>Contextualists use "tradition" as a contract</b> and tacitly acknowledge that Gentiles do not meet Moses' PJ but contract to abide by Moses; however, these contracts do not disclose Acts' prohibition to apply Mosaic law to Gentiles.	No
	<b>Contextualists—via the Adamic Narrative and Philo—avoid Moses' and Acts' PJ</b> , state the audience is Gentile, and adjudge Gentiles guilty by charging Gentiles with actual or constructive knowledge of a later codified prohibition given by or shortly after universal creation. This view also mirrors Supersessionism.	No

	<b>Contextualists construe Acts as a long-arm statute</b> <sup>12</sup> acknowledge that Moses does not extend to the Gentile Christian but argue that when the Gentile Christian fears God or because Gentiles purportedly descend from Noah, that such creates sufficient contacts with Israel as to bring them under Moses' <i>Ger Toshav</i> laws, which violates Acts 10 & 15.	No
	<b>Contextualists use Mosaic divorce law in Matt. 19 and exclude Jewish identity from it to include Gentiles</b> and thus violate Jewish religious law and cultural rights along with Gentile Christians' Acts rights and mirror Supersessionism.	No
Structuralists and Contextualists Engage <i>Ipse Dixit</i> to determine the Romans 1:18-32 audience	<b>They avoid Moses' PJ, violate Gentile Christians' Acts 15 rights</b> , do not answer to whom Romans 1:18-32 addresses, and create disjuncture between the assumed Gentile applicability and the evidence/arguments used to answer whether modern homosexuality is of the kind that Romans proscribes.	Yes

Next, since GM2 appeared to have the most significant impact on decision-making, we completed OLS regression to determine its extent; the results were significant. Controlling for GM1, regression analysis holds with 95 percent confidence that when the author employs GM2-structuralism to determine the Romans 1 audience, s/he is 100 percent more likely to conclude a Jewish audience than those employing a different method;  $AR^2 = 1$ ,  $F(2, 107) = 1.217e+31$ ;  $p < 0.000$  (Model-1). See Table 5, below. Typically, when  $AR^2 = 1$ , this signals multicollinearity, alerting the researcher to design flaws, measuring derivative or identical variables, inapposite use of dummy variables, or insufficient data. Since we used all available data, our use of dummy variables is consistent with the discipline, and the audience of a first-century document did not inform the creation of twentieth-century literary approaches (i.e., structuralism and contextualism); then, to validate the findings, we created a second model using one dummy variable and SLR and used Ridge regression ("RR") to reevaluate the first model.

<sup>12</sup> "A long-arm statute is a statute that allows . . . a court to obtain PJ over an out-of-state defendant based on certain acts committed by an out-of-state defendant, provided that the defendant has a sufficient connection with the state" (Legal Information Institute, n.d. c).

**Table 5***Model Review of GM1 & GM2 Interaction with Audience Determination*

Variable	Input-Value	Model-1 (OLS LR)		Model-2 (SLR)		Model-3 (RR)	
Intercept		1.01E-16		-1.06E-17	**	0.12247	
GM2-Contextualist	1:Yes, 0:No	-1.02E-16				-0.12114	**
GM2-Structuralist	1:Yes, 0:No	1.00	**	1.00	**	0.77431	**
GM2-Ipse Dixit	1:Yes, 0:No	N/A (Singularity)				-0.12223	**
GM1	1:Structuralist, 0:Contextualist	N/A (Singularity)				0.02872	**
$\lambda$ -value						0.01872	
Model Summary	**p<0.05	AR <sup>2</sup> =1, F(2,107)=1.217E+31; p<0.000		AR <sup>2</sup> =1, F(1,108)=9.904E+33; p<0.000		AR <sup>2</sup> =0.992, F(2, 107)=1.218E+31; p<0.000	

The SLR (Model-2) and RR (Model-3) results validate the correlation between the GM2-Structuralist approach and a Jewish audience determination. The SLR model set the audience as the dependent variable and the dummy variable of GM2-Structuralism as the independent variable, providing significance where  $AR^2=1$ ,  $F(1, 108)=9.904e+33$ ;  $p<0.000$ . Using RR, we sought to select a  $\lambda$ -value that provides the lowest possible test MSE; there, we made the audience "y" (dependent) and four dummy variables independent/predictor variables (i.e., "x"): contextualist, structuralist, *ipse dixit*, and GM1 (as the control variable). Employing the `glmnet()` function in R and setting  $\alpha=0$ , `glmnet()` standardized each predictor variable. Next, the `cv.glmnet()` function within `glmnet()` identified the  $\lambda$ -value with the lowest MSE, where the k-fold cross-validation is tenfold, finding that the best  $\lambda$ -value is 0.01871933. Afterward, we reviewed the model's performance and new coefficients and determined that using the RR model (Model-3) was best.

### Standard RR Model

$$\text{Audience} = 0.12114 + (-0.12114 * GM2^C) + (0.77431 * GM2^S) + (-0.12223 * GM2^I) + (0.02872 * GM1)$$

### Implication of Standard RR Model

$$\text{Gentile} (0.12247) = 0.12247 + (-0.12114 * GM2^C) + (0.77431 * GM2^S) + (-0.12223 * GM2^I) + (0.02872 * GM1)$$

**Notes:** Audience (Jewish=1, Gentile=0),  $GM2^C$ =Contextualist,  $GM2^S$ =Structuralist,  $GM2^I$ =Ipse Dixit, GM1 (Structuralist=1, Contextualist=0)

As Table 5 above details, the intercept reflects exegetes' propensity to conclude a Gentile audience before they engage any method to answer that question (i.e., 87.8 percent). In other words, before an exegete applies either structuralism, contextualism, or *ipse dixit* to determine the Romans 1 audience, s/he is only 12.2

percent likely to conclude a Jewish audience; thus, a Gentile audience is the exegete's innate thought. A contextualist (GM1) using contextualism to determine the Romans 1 audience (GM2<sup>C</sup>) is 99.87 percent likely to conclude a Gentile audience and 99.98 percent likely to conclude a Gentile audience if they engage *ipse dixit* (GM2<sup>I</sup>). A structuralist (GM1) that engages structuralism (GM2<sup>S</sup>) to answer to whom Romans 1 addresses is 92.55 percent likely to conclude a Jewish audience. The 7.45 percent differential among structuralists' determination may confound Lucas about his peers when he found that structuralists' evidence points to Jewish identification. However, the exegete was reluctant to conclude the same (Lucas, 2012a, 2012b). Finally, GM1 has little impact on the authors' cultural determination. These results mean that Gaca is partially correct: (1) scholars use N=13 Tate (2012) interpretive methods, but all GM1-Contextualists posit a Gentile audience, (2) most scholars use a different method to determine the Romans 1 audience than what they employ to exposit Romans 1, and (3) only structuralists who employ structuralism to answer to whom Romans 1 addresses posit a Jewish identity (Research Question-2) (Gaca, 1999).

### **The State of Evidence and PJ**

Over 78 percent of scholars posit that Paul's Romans 1 argument applied or was influenced by the Hebrew Bible/Jewish Law and Judaism. Forty-eight percent state that Romans 1 is a Hellenistic-Jewish exposition of Jewish law and thought, evidenced by its consonance with Philo—almost 42 percent posit Romans as Wisdom's identic (see Table 6, below). However, 97 percent of homonegative exegesis does not cite Moses' PJ (Research Question-1).<sup>13</sup> The trend to omit Moses' PJ is in the Catholic Catechism and the Top-Fifteen Protestant denominations' SOF. Zellentin noticed and researched the field's silence on Acts 15 and 21, concluding—without explanation and in a footnote no less—that it is Christian tradition not to evoke the Apostles' Decree (Zellentin, 2022, p. 150, f.n. 48). This may be why 94 percent of homonegative scholarship declines to comment on Acts 10 and of the 6 percent that do, they do not discuss its PJ statement. Ninety-two percent of homonegative scholarship declines to comment on Acts 15 and 21, and of the 8 percent that do, only Boswell discusses its PJ effect.<sup>14</sup> Finally, neither the Top-Fifteen Protestant denominations' SOF nor the Catholic Catechism mention Acts PJ statements. When taken together, the proffered evidence creates a disjuncture between it and the conclusion of a Gentile audience. Additionally, the near-ubiquitous silence regarding Moses' and Acts' PJ, coupled with the assumption of a Gentile audience and applicability, forms an exegetical custom that appears as the functional equivalent of Supersessionism, which replaces a Jewish audience and applicability with a Gentile one.

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<sup>13</sup> Three contextualists cite Moses' PJ: Starr (2004) acknowledges that Leviticus 18:2 addresses Israel, and Knust (2006) argues that 18:2 makes v. 22's proscription implicative of Gentile behavior; both omitted that 18:2 limits Leviticus' PJ to the Children of Israel and the proselyte. Zellentin (2022) argues that 18:2 limits applicability to Israel but that Paul, inexplicably, extended Leviticus to Gentiles in Romans 1.

<sup>14</sup> Boswell states that “non-Jewish converts to Christianity found most of the provisions of Jewish law extremely burdensome . . . [resulting in a] fierce dispute . . . over whether Christians should be bound by [Mosaic law]” (Boswell, 2015, p. 103).

**Table 6**  
*Proffered Pauline Romans 1 Influences & Consonance*

Source	Scholarship	N-Sources	% of Field's Use
Romans 1 Based on the Hebrew Bible & Judaism	Antuña (2013); Assemblies of God (USA) (2014); Banister (2009); Bassler (1984); Black, Smith, and Spivey (2019); Borg and Crossan (2010); Boswell (2015); Botha (2004); Boyarin (2007); Brown (2016); W.S. Campbell (2013); Catholic Church (2000); Church Of God (2022); Church of God in Christ (2012); Crawford and Riley (2019); Dunn (2012); Elliott and Reasoner (2011); Fowler (2016); Gaca (1999, 2017); Gignac (2015); Grimes (2014); Gupta (2012); Gushee (2015); Hall (2018); Herzberg (2014); Himbaza et al. (2012); Hogan (2017); Javornicky (2019); Jewett (1986); Jung and Jung (2013); Keener (2009); Kittredge and Elliott (2016); Klostermann (1933); Kowalski (2018); Levering (2014); Lilly (1951); Longenecker (1999); Alec J Lucas (2010); Alexander James Lucas (2012b); Alec J Lucas (2012a); Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (1999); Malick (1993); Martin (2013); Mawerenga (2018); McFadden (2013); Miller (1995); Mustol (2012); Newheiser (2015); OH (2003); Olson and Perry (2012); Origen (2001); Penner and Lopez (2012); Pope (1997); Pregill (2020); Presbyterian Church in America (2004); Presbyterian Church USA (2015); Punt (2007); Rogers (2011); Rogers Jr (1999); Ryan (2022); Sanders (2016); Schott (2013); Seventh-day Adventist Church (2024); Skipper (2017); A.T. Smith (2014); M.D. Smith (1996); Southern Baptist Convention (2024); Sprinkle (2015); Starr (2004); Stephens (2019); Stowers (1994); Swart (2005); Thorsteinsson, Thiessen, and Rodriguez (2016); Tilling (2014); Tobin (1993); Townsley (2013); Urbano (2008); Van Drunen (2012); Viljoen (2003); Ware (2011); Wenz (2005); Wilson (2002); Yeo (2008); Zellentin (2022); Zetterholm (2009)	86	78.18%
Romans 1 Consonant with Philo	Banister (2009); Bassler (1984); Black, Smith, and Spivey (2019); Boswell (2015); Botha (2004); Boyarin (2007); D.A. Campbell, Tilling, and Adams (2014); Cooper (2012); Crawford and Riley (2019); Dodson (2017); Elliott and Reasoner (2011); Esler (2004); Gaca (1999, 2017); Gnuse (2015); Gupta (2012); Hall (2018); Richard B Hays (1986); Richard B. Hays and Johnson (2003); Himbaza et al. (2012); Hogan (2017); Hoke (2018); Jackson (2019); Keener (2009); Kittredge and Elliott (2016); Klostermann (1933); Alec J Lucas (2010); Alexander James Lucas (2012b); Alec J Lucas (2012a); Martin (2013); Mawerenga (2018); McFadden (2013); Miller (1995); Newheiser (2015); OH (2003); Olkiffe (2014); Olson and Perry (2012); Pregill (2020); Punt (2007); Sanders (2016); Schott (2013); Skipper (2017); M.D. Smith (1996); Sprinkle (2015); Starr (2004); Stowers (1994); Tobin (1993); Townsley (2013); Urbano (2008); Ward (1997); Wilson (2002); Zellentin (2022); Zetterholm (2009)	53	48.18%
Romans 1 Based on, Influenced, or Consonant with Wisdom of Solomon	Bassler (1984); Berkley (2000); Black, Smith, and Spivey (2019); Botha (2004); D.A. Campbell, Tilling, and Adams (2014); Cooper (2012); Crawford and Riley (2019); Dodson (2017); Dunn (2012); Elliott and Reasoner (2011); Gaca (1999, 2017); Gnuse (2015); Gupta (2012); Hall (2018); Richard B Hays (1986); Himbaza et al. (2012); Hogan (2017); Jackson (2019); Keener (2009); Kittredge and Elliott (2016); Klostermann (1933); Knust (2006); Kowalski (2018); Levering (2014); Lilly (1951); Alec J Lucas (2010); Alexander James Lucas (2012b); Alec J Lucas (2012a); McFadden (2013); Miller (1995); Ryan (2022); Sanders (2016); Schott (2013); Skipper (2017); A.T. Smith (2014); Starr (2004); Stowers (1994); Thorsteinsson, Thiessen, and Rodriguez (2016); Tobin (1993); Townsley (2013); Urbano (2008); Viljoen (2003); Ward (1997); Watson (2007); Zellentin (2022)	46	41.82%
Romans 1 Based on, Influenced, or Consonant with Sibylline Oracles	Gaca (1999); Gnuse (2015); Himbaza et al. (2012); Jackson (2019); Keener (2009); Knust (2006); Kowalski (2018); McFadden (2013); Miller (1995); Olson and Perry (2012); Sanders (2016); Skipper (2017); Stowers (1994); Thorsteinsson, Thiessen, and Rodriguez (2016); Tobin (1993); Zetterholm (2009)	16	14.55%
Romans 1 Based on, Influenced, or Consonant with Letter of Aristeas	Himbaza et al. (2012); Jackson (2019); Keener (2009); Knust (2006); Alec J Lucas (2010); Alexander James Lucas (2012b); Alec J Lucas (2012a); McFadden (2013); Sanders (2016); Thorsteinsson, Thiessen, and Rodriguez (2016)	10	9.09%

Source: Brackens (2024)

This concludes the Results section. In the next section—Criticism—we address three of the seven unique exegetical outcomes detailed in Table 4, above. While all seven outcomes deserve exposition, page limitations necessitate that we address the statistically significant results now and discuss the remainder in a separate article.

### *Criticism*

#### **Looking Without: When Structuralists Defer to Contextualists**

When structuralists defer to contextualists, those contextualists answer to whom Romans 1:18-32 addresses by suggesting that Romans is Wisdom 13-14's identic (Byrne, 1996; Gupta, 2012; Klostermann, 1933; Longenecker, 1999). That approach avoids Moses' and Acts' PJ and makes Gentiles guilty by charging Gentiles with actual or constructive knowledge of a later codified Jewish prohibition. For example, Gupta—a structuralist—cited Byrne—a contextualist—who holds Romans as Wisdom 13-14's identic. Byrne and his contextualists cohorts posit contextual parallels between Romans 1 and Wisdom 13, reasoning that “[t]he description of pagan idolatry together with its moral consequences in [Romans] 1:19-31 coincides factually with the description of paganism in the Wisdom Book Ch. 13” (Flückiger, 1954, p. 156; McFadden, 2013). Structuralists, like Gupta, find that reasoning convincing and thus defer to it. In contrast—as Lucas points out—those structuralists' findings contradict their imported conclusion that the Romans 1 audience is Gentiles (Lucas, 2012a, 2012b).

However, perhaps, the more significant—and unaddressed—issue when making the argument that Romans, as Wisdom's "identic," addresses Gentiles is that

Wisdom's "real audience seems to have been young Jews in danger of slipping away from their Jewish heritage into pagan materialism," "purpose . . . is to demonstrate the superiority of the Jewish religion and its great wisdom," Chapters 13 and 14 depict "wisdom's role in the early history of Israel," and Wisdom is "not canonical in the Jewish . . . tradition[]" (Harrington, 2016, p. 1). Recall the four-prong Contextualism test detailed in the "Understanding GM1 Variables" section above. Now consider where 99 percent of contextualists postulate that Paul's purpose in Romans 1 and throughout Romans is to implicate both Jew and Gentile behavior, placing both in need of Christ's redemption, rendering Moses nonredemptive, and wisdom insolvent (Romans 1:14, 22; 11:25; 12:16), then Wisdom and Romans do not meet the relatability required for the first, second, and third prong of the contextualism test. It is unclear why no counterpoint has raised this issue.

### Looking Within: When Structuralists Use Structuralism

Structuralists arrive at a significant finding when they use structuralism to answer to whom Romans 1 addresses; they hold that Paul addressed a Jewish audience in Romans 1. For example, in his comprehensive work, Alec Lucas (2012a) critiques prominent structuralists (Bassler, 1982; Bouwman, 1973; Klostermann, 1933; Jeremias, 1954; Lyonnet, 1957; Schulz, 1958) and reorients the structure of Romans 1, highlighting a cyclical "change" ((μετ)ηλλαξαν) and "handover" (παρέδωκεν) pattern. The above led Lucas to conclude that the Romans 1 audience was Jewish.

Lucas builds upon several methodological approaches to arrive at a Jewish identification: structural analysis, rhetorical analysis, discourse continuity, and contextual reinforcement. Regarding structural analysis, Bouwman is Lucas's actual jumping-off point. Bouwman frames Romans 1:21-32 as a palindrome, with verses 21-25 reading the same as 28a-32 (Lucas, 2012).<sup>15</sup> Lucas excludes verse 21 and argues that Romans 1:22-32 reads as Change (vv. 22-23)—Handover (v. 24)—Change (v. 25)—Handover (v. 26a)—Change (vv. 26b-27)—Handover (vv. 28-32). To Lucas, this reorientation of the Romans 1 structure necessitated by "the triadic interplay between (μετ)ηλλαξαν and παρέδωκεν, [that] depicts the cyclical vortex of idolatrous, even the idolatrous, acts and their sinful consequence" (Lucas, 2012a, pp. 124, 132, 141). Next, Lucas draws on Schulz's (1958) rhetorical analysis; Schulz identified that Romans 1 shared constituent qualities of Jewish apocalypticism seen within the Hebrew Bible and elements of Hellenistic apologetics typical of indictments (Lucas, 2012a; Schulz, 1958). This analysis explains why eight researchers within the dataset addressed that topic. Jeremias identified Romans 1:22-24 shared textual parallels to Acts 7:41-42 (Israel's worship of the golden calf) and the Testament of Naphtali 3:2-4, a sentiment shared by Hall, discussed below (Lucas, 2012a). Those textual correlations and the succeeding verses in Romans 2:1-3:20 also led Jeremias to believe that Paul addressed Jews, not Gentiles.

Third, regarding discourse continuity, Bassler (1982) held that the discourse of Romans 1 is not limited to "Chapter 1" but must extend to "Chapter 2"; she reasoned that the continuity in ποιέω and πράσσω concerning τά αὐτά and τά

<sup>15</sup> Guilt (vv.21-23)—Punishment (v.24)—Guilt (v. 25)—(Punishment (vv. 26-27))—Guilt (v.28a)—Punishment (vv.28b-31)—Guilt (v.32).

τοιαύτα seen within 1:28, 32 and 2:1-3 requires that determination. Lucas agreed. Lastly, concerning contextual reinforcement, the context of Romans 2:1-3 and "Chapter 2" in general led Bassler to conclude that Paul addressed a Jewish, not a Gentile, perpetrator. Lucas points to Romans 2:17 and Romans 1's parallel to Hellenistic Jewish excoriations to evince why scholars believe "the broader context and overall characterization [found in Romans 1] . . . commend . . . a Jewish identification" (Lucas, 2012a, p. 135).

Structuralists' use of structuralism leads to a Jewish audience determination and does not violate Moses' or Acts' PJ nor mirror Supersessionism. However, structural analysis is complex, not frequently used, and requires the exegete to know Greek grammar and perform additional contextual analysis. Moreover, structuralism neither calls out PJ, advises Gentiles of their PJ rights, nor ensures its protection if applied to other scriptures (e.g., 1 Corinthians 6:9 or 1 Timothy 1:10).

### When Structuralists and Contextualists Engage *Iipse Dixit*

A critical issue arises when structuralists and contextualists engage in *ipse dixit* to determine the Romans 1 audience. Their reliance on unsupported assertions avoids Moses' and Acts' PJ and creates a disjuncture between the assumed Gentile applicability and the evidence/arguments used to answer their research question.

Bassler (1982) and Jewett (1986) are examples of this phenomenon. Bassler (1982) sought to prove God's impartiality in judgment; to do so, Bassler refers to "conventional wisdom" as the reason for her assumption of a Gentile audience (p. 45). However, as discussed above, she proceeded to provide structural evidence that brings her to say all but that the Romans 1 audience was Jewish. Next, Jewett (1986) sought to understand how Romans reflect the "principles promoted by the rhetorical handbook of antiquity" (p. 382), not to whom Romans 1 addresses; thus, he resorted to *ipse dixit* for that matter. Jewett's findings invaluabley divided Romans into four sections: Exordium 1:1-12, Narratio 1:13-15, Partitio 1:16-17, and Probatio 1:18-15:13. However, Jewett's analysis suggests that the "they," "them," and "their" of Romans 1:18-32 knew God's commands, but instead turned from those commands, committed idolatry, adultery, theft, and other "transgression[s] of the law" just like the explicitly named Jews in Romans 2:17-24. Jewett declined to discuss the inherent contradiction of his structural evidence and the determination of the Gentile audience.

As Table 7 shows, Hall exemplifies contextualists who fixate on the contemporary relevance of Paul's condemnation of homosexuality rather than rigorously determining the Romans 1 audience (Hall, 2018). Hall's research is puzzling because Hall's seven unique qualities discovered within Romans 1 suggest that though Paul's homonegative statement relates to the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish writings whose audience was Jewish, such relation does not merit challenging his assumed Gentile Romans 1 audience (Hall, 2018). Those qualities are (1) **Biblical Framework:** Paul grounding his moral argument in the Hebrew Bible (Hall, 2018, pp. 32, 40; Fee, 1971), (2) **Linguistic Parallels:** Romans's use of the Septuagint term ἀρσενης for homosexual actions mirroring Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Hall, 2018, p. 33), (3) **Wisdom Tradition:** Similarities to Wisdom of Solomon regarding idolatry and sexual sin (Hall, 2018, p. 33), (4) **Golden Calf Resonance:** An echo of Israel's sin in Romans 1's critique (Hall, 2018, p. 33), (5)

**Jewish Pseudepigrapha Link:** Thematic correlation with the Testament of Naphtali. In The Testament of Naphtali, "God" warned the Jewish actors and readers not to "change[] the order of nature" because doing so results in God's judgment from heaven (Hall, 2018, p. 36), (6) **Consonance With Philo:** Shared Hellenistic interpretations of Mosaic Law present in both Paul and Philo (Hall, 2018, p. 29), and (7) **Shared "Jewish" Aversion:** Hall states that "Paul's [Romans 1] attitude toward homosexual behavior could hardly be more adversely expressed. For [Paul] condemns it totally—as did also **all Jews** and all **Jewish Christians of his day**" (Hall, 2018, p. 40).<sup>16</sup>

As Lucas held:

Contextually, the parallels with Hellenistic Jewish excoriations of Gentile idolatry and immorality, including Wisdom 13-15 [Wisdom of Solomon]; Let. Aris. 128-71 [Letter of Aristeas] ; Sib. Or. 3:8-45 [Sibylline Oracles]; and Philo, Decal. 52-81 suggests that Paul utilizes a Jewish line of argument in Rom 1:18-32, which further suggests that, when Paul suddenly opposes someone who embraces such sentiments, he is almost certainly opposing a fellow Jew. The subsequent emphasis on judgment and reward for the Jew first in Rom 2:9-10 corroborates this claim, as does the explicit Jewish identification in 2:17. (Lucas, 2012a, p. 135)<sup>17</sup>

There are real consequences for unexamined assumptions: failure to rigorously address PJ in Romans 1 can lead to erroneous and overinclusive interpretations that undermine the internal consistency of scriptural analysis and harm unintended audiences.

### *Discussion & Implications*

#### **Changing 48.93 Million Minds: Current Research on Homonegative Beliefs Among American Christians**

While this research challenges scriptural foundations for homonegative Christian doctrine, its immediate impact may not yield sweeping change. A 2013 Pew Research Center political survey revealed that of the 206 American Christian respondents who held homonegative beliefs, only 48 (23.30%) stated their beliefs were based on the Bible (Pew, 2013). Extrapolating, scholarly efforts to reinterpret Mosaic Law and Romans 1 may shift the views of about 48.93 million individuals. However, the remaining 76.7 percent are likely resistant to exegetical arguments alone.

#### **Alternative Scriptural Bases & Limitations:**

Some individuals within the respective 23.3 percent may dispense with Levitical and Romans' proscriptions and seek to justify their views by turning to 1 Corinthians 6:9 or 1 Timothy 1:10. However, that may prove problematic: (1) **1 Timothy's Challenges:** Pseudepigraphical authorship and ambiguous Greek terms

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<sup>16</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>17</sup> Rodríguez's *ipse dixit* presents a serendipitous legal outcome that merits brief discussion. While arriving at a Gentile audience, he suggests that the statement "But if you call yourself a Jew" (Romans 2:17) means that the Gentile was a proselyte to Judaism (2016, pp. 2, 24). If we believe Rodríguez, Paul appropriately applied Jewish law to a proselyte.



undercut the long-term defensibility of using this passage (Boswell, 2015; Harrison, 1921; Martin, 2016), and (2) **1 Corinthians' Contextual Weakness**: Many exegetes do not acknowledge that Paul and Sosthenes coauthored 1 Corinthians; Sosthenes was the Jewish leader of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth where Paul preached (1 Cor. 1:1, Acts 18:4, 17); that they explicitly cite Oral Torah; and that 1 Corinthians 5:1 makes it clear that Paul addressed Jews because he "reported . . . that there is fornication among [them] . . . not so much as named among the Gentiles [ἑθνοῦς]" (KJV). A rigorous quantitative integrative review could elucidate this under-explored area.

### **The Influence of Religious Leadership:**

Approximately 30 percent or 63 million Christians with antipathy toward homosexuals do not rely directly on scripture; those Christians root their views in broader religious beliefs (Pew, 2013). These broader beliefs are where clergy and denominational initiatives may be most effective through statements of faith, doctrinal revisions, and outreach efforts. These results highlight the potential influence of institutional religious guidance alongside rigorous scholarship.

### **The 'Unexplained' Group:**

A substantial 46.7 percent (approximately 98 million) Christians hold homonegative views for non-scriptural and non-religious reasons (i.e., wrong for the family unit, no procreation, unnatural, *ipse dixit*) (Pew, 2013). Understanding their motivations remains a complex sociological issue beyond the immediate scope of this theological research. Additionally, several factors potentially shape the accuracy of these estimates: (1) **Survey Reliability**: Respondents may conceal true beliefs due to sensitive subject matters (Dillman *et al.*, 2009), and (2) **Attribution Theory**: Existing prejudices could shape how individuals interpret scripture, suggesting scriptural correlation rather than causation (Haider-Markel & Joslyn 2005, 2008; Spilka *et al.*, 2019).

### **Potential Ramifications of PJ Implementation**

Implementing PJ within our churches will be disruptive and, for some, disincentivizing because the potential damage is significant. This approach impacts more than homonegative beliefs; it affects all Christian doctrines tied to Moses. Currently, sixty percent of US laity have "a lot" of confidence in their clergy's ability to provide helpful guidance in scriptural interpretation (Mitchell, 2020, p. 3). The PJ approach requires disclosure, and for unadvised parishioners who made significant life and relationship changes based upon uninformed beliefs, there could be a loss of confidence in clergy competence and, to some degree, their religion.

Nevertheless, positive outcomes may flow from this research because it provides a more nuanced understanding of the role of PJ in religious law. This understanding could lead to a more accurate interpretation of religious texts and a more just application of religious law. Lastly, it highlights the importance of careful legal analysis when interpreting religious texts. Such analysis could lead to a more informed and respectful discourse about the role of religion in public life.

### ***Limitations and Call For Further Research***

The study comes with its limitations. First, a quantitative integrative review of N=110 scholarly sources forms the basis, and while N=100 is sufficiently large to represent the exegetical population, having more sources available might yield different results. However, we used all available sources. Second, the study only focuses on Christian attitudes toward Gentile homosexuality and thus does not address attitudes towards homosexuality in other religious traditions nor the implications upon homosexual Messianic Jews (Saal, 2016). Third, the limitation of the study stems from its reliance on scholarly sources, the Catholic Catechism, and the Top-Fifteen Protestant Christian denominational statements of faith. It does not consider the views of the non-affiliated, non-denominational, or those from non-Top-Fifteen Christian denominations. Fourth, only 6.4 percent of the reviewed sources needed to be written in English, meaning that most of the resources might reflect a Western-English perspective.

Additionally, while the Catholic Catechism reflects a global perspective, the data from the Top-Fifteen American Protestant denominations reflects an American interpretation. Even if the reviewed resources reflect the total available data, it may not be generalizable to all global populations. Fifth, silence means something; however, it is not quantifiable in an integrative review. Thus, the strategic decision of the N=6 denominations, which we excluded because they either did not provide a formal statement or cite scriptural support for their position, to not enter the debate speaks incalculably. Sixth, page limitations prevent expatiating the results. Lastly, because quantitative integrative reviews prioritize data synthesis (i.e., generalization), the data does not capture the full context of each author's individualistic expressions. Moreover, while the criticism section allows for the exposition of some authors' unique contributions because the focus of this study is narrow, a complete exposition of all the authors' points was neither done nor was it reasonable to do so.

Researchers should consider these limitations when interpreting the study's results; nonetheless, these constraints do not impact the legal interpretations of Mosaic law or the New Testament's explication of it.

More research is needed to understand Christians' ability to answer questions about Moses' and Acts' PJ and the effects of the PJ approach on laity, clergy, exegesis, liturgy, ethics, *praxis*, reputation, feasibility, and Biblical Studies, Covenantal Apologetics, and Systematic Theology curriculum. Also, the dataset is in an open-source repository so that the field can add more explanatory variables, studies, and, hopefully, what we are missing from this analysis (Brackens, 2024). Such will aid the Church in responding to the social responsibility Americans require from their religious *praxis* (Batchelder, 2020).

### ***Conclusion***

This research has important implications for understanding and interpreting Mosaic Law and its NT explication. By employing a quantitative integrative review on N=110 scholastic sources, this research joined and analyzed the scholarly debate on how Mosaic Law, expressed in Leviticus and Romans 1, became a barrier to

accepting Christian homosexuals. The results support our thesis that incorporating Moses' and NT PJ into the exegesis of Leviticus and Romans 1 reveals no scriptural proscription and thus no basis for Gentile Christian homonegative doctrine.

The analysis demonstrates that while the field predominantly uses the legal/law interpretive method to explicate Levitical and Romans' homosexual proscriptions, scholarship neither does nor requires exegetes to adequately address the fundamental and threshold legal issue of PJ. Generally, this (1) creates an exegetical custom that fails to treat Mosaic Law and its NT exposition as law and (2) forms an overinclusive argument that incorrectly implicates Gentile Christian homosexuality. These factors create an exegetical barrier to accepting Christian homosexuals (Research Question-1). Precisely, scholarship does four things:

- Ninety-seven percent of exegetes omit citations and discussion of Moses' PJ that limit Moses' Gentile reach to "resident aliens" within Israel (e.g., Leviticus 18:2, 26, 20:2).
- Ninety-two percent of exegetes do not discuss Acts 10, 15:5-29, and 21:25, reiterating Moses' PJ exclusion of non-proselyte Gentiles from its homosexual proscriptions.
- 88.18 percent of scholars employ a different interpretive method to determine whom Romans 1 addresses than they do for the rest of their analysis.
- 88.7 percent of exegetes engage in *ipse dixit* when stating that the Romans 1 audience is Gentile, ignoring the disjuncture from the structural and contextual evidence that suggests Paul was addressing a Jewish audience about Jewish beliefs.

Next, the results addressed issues raised by and within the field's research. For instance, it showed that Fowler (2016) is correct; most of the field postulates a Romans 1 Gentile audience (Research Question-3). Additionally, Gaca is partially correct when she stated that "Depending on the interpretive strategy one employs, the [Romans 1] identity . . . vary considerably" (1999, p. 174)(Research Question-2).

This research has the potential to open a new chapter in the conversation about Christian attitudes toward homosexuality. It may lead some people to revise their beliefs about whether there is a scriptural basis for homonegative doctrine. Admittedly, these findings are disruptive, and more research is needed to understand how, where, and when to implement—and even respond to—these findings.

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