

A Holistic Understanding of Pauline *Pistis*

Shuji Ota

The word *πίστις* (faith) in Galatians 1: 23 and 3: 23 to 25 is reasonably construed to refer to an eschatological phenomenon that involves not only believers' faith in Christ but also the coming of Christ. Therefore, it cannot be simply taken as describing human beings' act of believing or as denoting Christ's faith or faithfulness. This *πίστις* is a *term* or even a *name* to refer to the *holistic eschatological faith phenomenon as a whole*; it involves the singular coming of God's son Christ into the world, the repeated preaching of the gospel by Christ's missionaries, the repeated occurrences of faith in Christ and God created in people living in history by the word of preaching, and the bestowal of the Spirit to those people. Most of these are not parts of any *sense* of the word *πίστις* but are constituents of the phenomenon referred to by the term *πίστις*. We should not confuse the referent of a term with its sense.

Paul probably learned from his predecessors this particular use and meaning of *πίστις*, having its origin in the primitive church in Jerusalem (Acts 3: 16, 6: 7; see my previous paper). The first and last occurrences of *πίστις* in Romans (1: 5, 16: 25–26), then, also can be taken as having the same meaning as in Galatians 1: 23 and 3: 23–25; it should be understood holistically and the phrase *εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως* should be taken to mean “for obedience originating in the *πίστις* (the holistic *Pistis*)”.